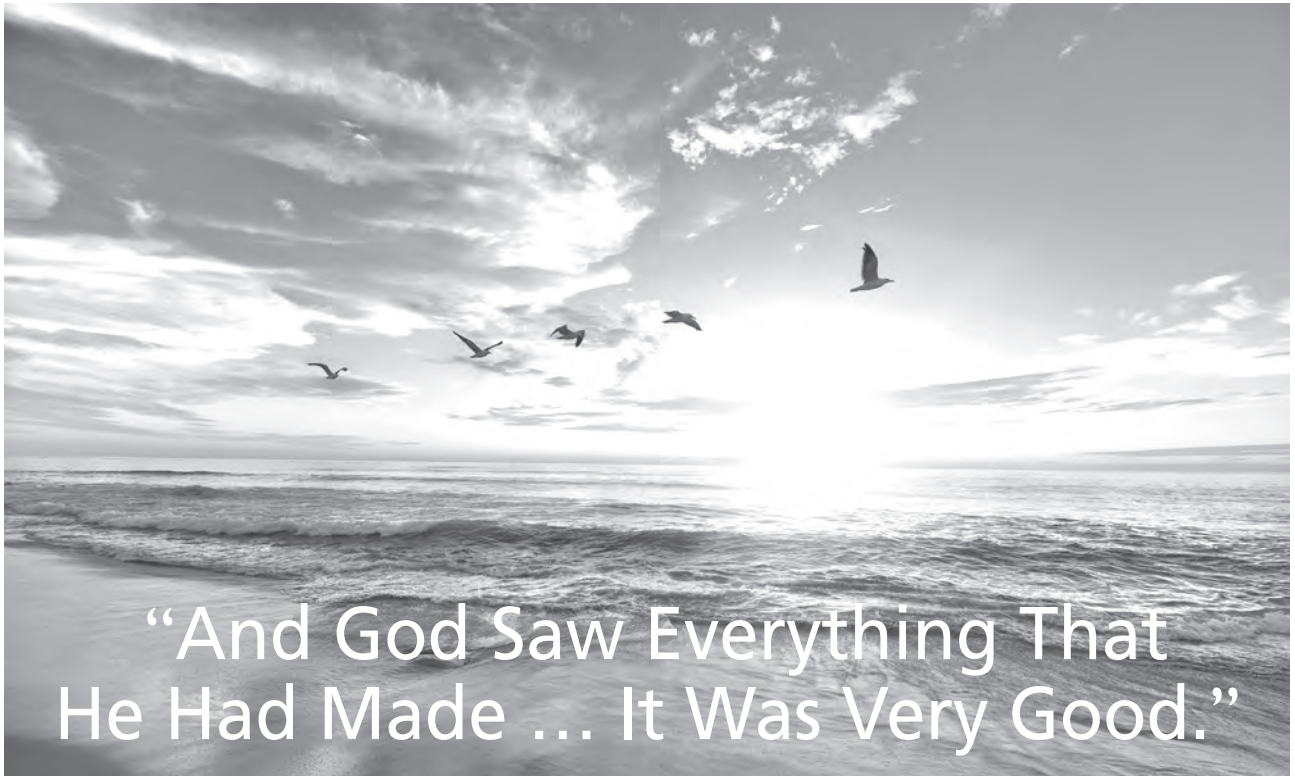


President's Message



“And God Saw Everything That He Had Made ... It Was Very Good.”

Faith, Character, and Choices

Christian faith is about spirituality and character. As for spirituality and character, they are about how we love God and our neighbors, which means how we have fellowship with God and with others, hence involving how we care for the environment, which belongs to God, and how we cherish the world our neighbors inhabit. Our choices reflect our character and every choice has consequences. Our choices can bring destruction to other creatures, and when other creatures are threatened, we are also threatened because all creation is mutually dependent for survival.

Our character and choices are subject to our faith. **Faith shapes our character and affects our choices.** What do we believe in? We believe that God is the Creator and we see the world He created as a gift. As a faith community, we should not take God's gift lightly; instead, we should appreciate, enjoy and love His creation. We must have a grateful heart for God's gift and thank Him for giving us a beautiful world.

The World in the Eyes of a Psalmist

Faith affects how we view everything in the universe.

Psalm 104 is a hymn of thanksgiving and praise. On behalf of the faith community, the psalmist expresses gratitude and praise to God for His wonderful creation.

Joshua Cho

The psalm can be divided into seven sections.

In the first section (vv. 1-4), the psalmist praises God in heaven. God is the King in heaven, covering Himself with splendor, majesty, dignity, and light. He created **the heavens**, rode on clouds and winds, and sent lightning and winds to carry out His will.

In the second section (vv. 5-9), the psalmist directly talks about the creation of **the earth**. The Lord made the earth stand on its foundations, separated the earth and the water, and spread the water over the earth.

The third section (vv. 10-13) mentions **water** nourishing the earth. Springs gush out, flow through valleys, and nourish the whole earth. The earth rejoices in the flowing water; trees are watered and grow; animals come to drink the water, and birds build nests by it.

The fourth section (vv. 14-23) depicts, in a more direct way, God's **provision for the earth's needs**. Grass grows for cattle, plants are for humans to eat, oil makes their faces shine, and wine makes their hearts happy. High mountains allow goats to run and jump on them; the land covered with rocks provides a home and play area for the rock badger. The moon marks the seasons. When the sun sets, darkness comes, and animals come out and move around; when the sun rises, animals retreat, and humans



ascend the stage until the evening.

The fifth section (vv. 24-26) is the psalmist's **praise** to God. He praises the diversity and wonder of God's creation: the vast sea is filled with a variety of creatures; Leviathan, a deep sea monster, plays in the sea, flapping its huge tail.

In the sixth section (vv. 27-30), the psalmist talks about **the creatures on earth**, which are all dependent on God for life.

In the seventh section (vv. 31-35), the psalmist sings and praises God for the world, which manifests **His glory**, and prays that sins be removed from it.

The World in God's Eyes

Let us compare Psalm 104 with Genesis 1 to see what they have in common. In Genesis 1, we see that before creation, the world was chaotic waters; God brought order out of this chaos. God said, "Let there be," and it was so, and everything created was very good.

... And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ... the first day.

And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."... the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear."... And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation ... each according to its kind, on the earth." ... the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. ... and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." ... the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ... the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ... And

it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. ... the sixth day. (Gn 1:3-31)

Both Genesis 1 and Psalm 104 describe the world in God's eyes a number of times. **Both acknowledge that everything God "saw" was "very good"** (Gn 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25); "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gn 1:31). Although Psalm 104 does not use the word "good" directly, the psalmist's praise indicates that God's creation was "exceedingly good." The psalmist invites the readers to join him in seeing this world and experiencing the beauty of God and the world that He has created.

The Evil and Goodness of the World

However, do people really see "everything" that is good in the eyes of God and the psalmist? When we look at this world, do we only see chaos, suffering, and evil? Is this world not full of indifference, cruelty, deprivation, and destruction? In fact, the writer of this psalm also sees the reality of chaos, suffering, and evil, realizing the fragility of life. The psalmist talks about lions searching for prey (v. 21); he also points out that fear and death are common realities among humans and animals, "...they die and return to their dust" (v. 29). Furthermore, he sees the destruction of earthquakes and volcanoes (v. 32), and mentions the existence of "sinners" and "the wicked" (v. 35). Therefore, **the psalmist is definitely neither ignorant nor naive, ignoring the evil and suffering of the world.**

However, the psalmist calls on those who see the world as full of chaos, suffering, and evil to take a fresh look at it and invites them to see the beauty of "everything," the beauty of "everything" as God sees it (Gn 1:31). When we can see the beauty of this world through God's eyes, we cannot help but sing with joy and praise God:

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, you are very great! ...

O LORD, how manifold are your works!

In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures. ...

May the glory of the LORD endure forever ...

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praise to my God while I have being ...

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Praise the LORD! (Ps 104:1, 24, 31, 33, 35)

The psalmist invites readers to see the world with God's eyes, to "see everything" with God (Gn 1:31), and to see the beauty of the world.

This Is the Father's World

In particular, the psalmist urges us to observe nature, study it, and look for God's imprint in it. The psalmist says: "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (v. 24). He also says, "There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it" (v. 26). Leviathan is a sea monster associated with chaotic forces (Ps 74:14; Jb 41:1-34), but here it has become God's toy! Leviathan, the fierce sea monster, leaps and swims leisurely in the sea like a whale in the presence of God (Ps 104:26).

Therefore, humans must open their hearts to the God who can tame this sea monster, and learn to see "everything" in the world through the eyes of God and the psalmist. When one sees all of this and its beauty, the chaos, suffering, and evil in the world will pale into insignificance. ***Even in the abyss of the world and in its complexities, we can see the miracles of God; in all this chaos, pain, and evil, we can see deeper goodness.*** So we must see this world of the Father with eyes of goodness, and celebrate it all with a joyful and praising heart. Finally, we can rejoice and sing with the psalmist (v. 34) and praise God, saying: "Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!" (v.35b) Seeing the beauty of all creation as God sees it is our first step toward loving nature. Our love for the natural world begins with our love for God and for everything.

We and Nature

However, do we love nature? Have there been any stories or moments in our lives that are related to nature? Recall the times when we strolled alone in the fields and rocks, jumped along the creek, or fished or climbed mountains with friends, hiking at night together and gazing at the stars in the sky. If you have ever climbed a mountain, you will find that it is a sacred place that can amaze us. The Holy One is there. These memories of our connection with nature can bring us peace.

However, an indisputable fact is that, unknowingly, we are becoming more and more detached from nature; it is as if we have lost touch with it. The world is no longer the same as it was when we were children. At some point, we

struggled in our academic or professional pursuits, hurrying through life, burying ourselves in the concrete jungle, unable to see the sky above us, and the surrounding ocean and trees. We have gradually lost our connection to and appreciation of nature.

In *The Singing Wilderness*, Sigurd Olson talks about a camping experience where he saw a mouse climbing up his tent. The mouse desperately climbed up, exhausting all its strength to reach the top, and then slid down the smooth surface of the tent to the ground. It repeated this process of climbing and sliding until it mastered the technique with proficiency. The mouse was immersed in this novel experience and spread its limbs when sliding down. Olson wrote, "As I lay there, I became convinced that the mouse was enjoying itself hugely, that I was witnessing an activity that had no purpose but pleasure." He also said, "And I knew that if humans could abandon themselves as my dear mouse had done and slide down the face of the earth in the moonlight once a month or once a year, perhaps it would be good for their souls."

Love the World That Manifests the Glory of God

Truly, the psalmist is right in Psalm 104: how can you not love this world when you see it? Look at the vast oceans and the sea creatures frolicking in them; look at the moonlit forest, where a mouse slides down the tent again and again with a joyful look on its face. These sights invite us into the heart of God. This is our Father's world indeed, worthy of praise and our utmost protection. We protect this world because we know it is our Father's world; like God, we "see everything he has made ... and it is very good." ***Caring for nature begins with love. Knowing all the beauty of the world is the first step to loving nature.***

May we, like God, see everything He has made as "very good" so that we can take good care of nature. May we immerse ourselves more in the embrace of nature, and run with friends and family to the mudflats and mid-levels, where we can open our hearts to God, thereby inspiring our gratitude to and love for God, embracing all creation, and connecting with our Creator.

* This article is adapted from the writer's speech delivered at our chapel service (February 28, 2023). All scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.

Starting from the Bible Conference ...



What was discussed in the first Bible Conference organized by HKBTS? And what were the highlights?

How is this academic conference related to the practical theology promoted by HKBTS?

How does HKBTS's direction of teaching and research promote Bible-based praxis?

Just recently the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary (HKBTS) held its first Bible Conference, which received an enthusiastic response and achieved ideal results. This article will report on the highlights of the day. We have also invited President Joshua Cho, Associate Deans Prof. Wong Fook-kong and Prof. Nathan Ng to discuss this academic conference and its relationship with the practical theology promoted by the seminary, as well as how HKBTS's direction of teaching and research promotes praxis based on the Bible.

2023 Bible Conference

Aspects of Chinese Biblical Scholarship in Asia

The first Bible Conference of the seminary was held on March 13 with the theme "Aspects of Chinese Biblical Scholarship in Asia." Chinese biblical scholars from four different regions in Asia were invited to gather at the grand conference hall on the third floor of the newly opened academic building to present and discuss their latest biblical research. In addition to the speakers and responding speakers, there were teachers and students from the seminary, alumni, as well as teachers and students from other theological seminaries participating online. With over 100 participants, the event could well be described as lively and bustling.

The academic conference was divided into four sessions, each lasting about an hour. The speakers first presented their research results and explained their papers, followed by a response from another professor,

as well as a question and answer period. The four scholars' papers covered theoretical, hermeneutical, and practical matters, and used different research approaches, such as historical criticism, social-science criticism, literary criticism, or even cross-disciplinary approaches. These papers combined theology and biblical studies to explore different biblical issues, presenting the rich dimensions and connotations of biblical research and providing new perspectives for readers to explore the Bible and its praxis.

The speakers' papers were all related to **identity**: Dr. You Bin from the mainland, as a Chinese scholar, discussed Chinese biblical hermeneutics; Singaporean scholar Dr. Chan Yew-ming explored the identity of Singaporean Chinese from the perspective of the Old Testament history; New Testament scholar Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan explored Matthew's Gospel from the perspective of how to build up the identity of a disciple community; and another New Testament scholar, Dr. Ho Sin-pan, discussed the issue of constructing a Christian identity in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The first two papers were about identity issues in political and cultural contexts, while the latter two were about Christian identity in the New Testament.

Chinese Biblical Studies



Dr. You Bin

The first session was presented by Dr. You Bin, the Director of the Academy of Religions at Minzu University of China, on the topic **“Three Basic Awareness for Biblical Studies in Mainland China,”** with Dr. Wong Fook-kong, Professor of Old Testament at HKBTS, as the responding speaker. Dr. You proposed a dialogue between Chinese biblical studies and Chinese classics, contrasting Western and Eastern civilizations, each with a rich history spanning over thousands of years, and comparing Chinese classical works with the Bible, suggesting that the methods used to study Chinese classics could also be applied to the study of the Bible. Dr. Wong Fook-kong agreed to use Chinese classics as a starting point for discussing the approach to Chinese biblical hermeneutics, and hopes that Dr. You and his students could continue to delve into this topic and even construct a system of “Chinese biblical hermeneutics,” making it a subject for study and research in theological seminaries, which would be a beautiful thing.



Dr. Wong Fook-kong

The Narrative Structure of and Disciple Community in Matthew's Gospel

The second session was presented by Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan, Assistant Professor of New Testament at HKBTS on the topic **“Narrative Structure and Reader-Response in Matthew's Gospel: A Proposal That Focuses on the Community of Disciples,”** with Dr. Xue Xia-xia, Associate Professor (Biblical Studies) at China Graduate School of Theology, as the responding speaker. Dr. Chang pointed out that there has always been controversy in the academic community regarding the structure of the Gospel



Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan



Dr. Xue Xia-xia

of Matthew. Therefore, he proposed a new analysis and perspective, dividing the structure of the Gospel of Matthew based on the main thread of kernels (events that advance the plot) from the angle of plot analysis. Dr. Xue believed that Dr. Chang's article adds an ecclesiological dimension, the theme of "establishing a disciple community" in particular, to the structural study of the Gospel of Matthew, which had previously mainly focused on Christology. This has renewed our understanding of Matthew's narrative structure. Additionally, Dr. Chang's article differs from past analyses by emphasizing the function and role of the discourse in the overall narrative of the Gospel.

Singapore Chinese Identity



Dr. Chan Yew-ming

The third session was presented by Dr. Chan Yew-ming, the Bishop William F. Oldham Professor of Old Testament at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, on the topic "***Singapore Chinese Identity: A Double-edged Sword for Immigration and a Hyperconnected World,***" with Dr. Craig Ho, Visiting Associate Professor of Old Testament at HKBTS as the responding speaker. Dr. Chan started with the perspective of Jewish exiles returning to Judah in the sixth century BC and struggling with their national identity, supported by rich data, in



Dr. Craig Ho

considering the issue of modern Singapore Chinese identity from different dimensions. Dr. Ho responded by saying that Dr. Chan's article had broadened his horizons and allowed him to see how the Bible could be vividly applied to specific national and ethnic identities, showing the struggles of two communities in their respective situations.

Constructing Christ Followers' Community Identity in a Spirit World



Dr. Ho Sin-pan

The fourth session was presented by Dr. Ho Sin-pan, Professor of New Testament at Lutheran Theological Seminary, on the topic "***Constructing Christ-followers' Identity in a Spirit World: The Use of 'spirit' Language in 1 Cor 12:1-13,***" with Dr. Bernard Leung, Assistant Professor of New Testament at HKBTS, as the responding speaker. Dr. Ho interpreted related words like "spirit" or "spiritual" in 1 Corinthians 12 in the context of ancient Greek evil practices to highlight how Paul sought



Dr. Bernard Leung

to construct the readers' identity through the use of related vocabulary like "spirit." In response, Dr. Leung expressed his delight in reading Dr. Ho's article, which was very inspiring to him. He also raised questions on certain details and arguments for discussion, believing that these areas necessitate deeper exploration and reflect places where the article needs to be read carefully.

An Academic Feast That Integrates Eastern and Western Cultures

The atmosphere of the conference was enthusiastic, with professors and students actively raising questions and giving responses during the public question and answer period of each session, stimulating everyone's thinking. The speakers also made further remarks or



President Joshua Cho

explanations, and everyone discussed and debated academic issues, making it a wonderful and enriching feast for Chinese Christian academia.

Finally, President Joshua Cho expressed his gratitude to all the speakers and the teachers of the seminary. He said that the conference was a feast, and he enjoyed the atmosphere of honesty, humility, and mutual hospitality during the discussions. He was also amazed by the careful and serious academic work of the scholars. President Cho was very delighted that all participants could work together to promote Asian Chinese biblical scholarship, and believes that *the academic research of the scholars meaningfully integrates the cultures of the East and the West*. Although they drew on the nourishment of Western academia, they could apply what they learned to the context of the East when researching their topics. He hopes that the seminary can continue to hold similar conferences in the future and promote Chinese biblical research so that more people could enjoy this wonderful intellectual feast together.

Participants' Enthusiastic Response

According to the participants' feedback, most of them expressed that the content of the conference was appropriate in depth and they benefited greatly from it. Quite a number of participants said that the most profound thing was the opportunity to allow biblical scholars with different research specialties to have dialogues and discussions. The response and discussion time were inspiring and thought-provoking. This conference allowed them to understand the research achievements of biblical studies in different fields and learn the thinking process of academic research, which greatly expanded their horizons and inspired them to learn to understand and think about the Bible from multiple perspectives and new angles. Some other participants expressed that they were greatly motivated to study the Bible more deeply and put it into practice in their daily lives.

Many participants said that they benefited a lot from the speakers' speeches. For example, Prof. You's method of interpreting the Bible incorporated the perspective of Chinese culture, providing a good starting point for discussions with Chinese people; Prof. Chan's discussion of the identity issues of Singaporean Chinese also strengthened their understanding of the identity issue, which was conducive to Hong Kong people's reflection.

Teachers and Guests Enjoying Themselves

The teachers felt that the atmosphere of the conference was pleasant, the content was exciting, and there were high-quality discussions. Both the guests and the speakers



responded positively and enjoyed themselves. Some even revealed that their seminary students had benefited greatly from the conference. Prof. Wong expressed his delight in the research of the scholars and noticed that the students enjoyed reading the speakers' articles and the critical thinking process. President Cho also expressed appreciation for the research topics and content of the speakers, believing that ***their research could rightly address social realities.***

Prof. Nathan Ng was impressed with the response sessions and greatly appreciated them. He pointed out that the responding speakers were well-prepared, their responses were on-point, and they sparked many discussions. Furthermore, he was impressed with the tone of the responding speakers which was friendly and polite, and the discussion which was lively yet harmonious. President Cho agreed, finding the atmosphere truly impressive and appreciating the sincere and polite attitudes of the speakers and responding speakers. He was pleased to see the friendship shown at the conference, where there was an academic atmosphere as well as fellowship. This was not just a knowledge exchange among scholars, but also a meeting with friends. ***This could be considered an occasion where knowledge and friendship converged.***

Some teachers and participants expressed their desire for more time allocated for responses and questions in the future in order to foster even more engaging and fruitful discussions. Moreover, the conference was packed with such insightful content that several sessions exceeded their allotted time. As a result, participants hope for improved scheduling in future conferences to ensure ample time for all sessions. Finally, ***many participants expressed their hope for more Bible conferences of this kind in the future, spanning across regions, seminaries, and fields, to share in the latest research and developments.***

Teaching, Research, and Bible-based Praxis

After the meeting, we invited President Joshua Cho, and both Associate Deans, Prof. Wong Fook-kong and Prof. Nathan Ng, to discuss the academic conference and the teaching and research direction of HKBTS.



Biblical Research and Practical Theology

Regarding the launching of the Bible Conference, President Cho pointed out that over the past decade, society and churches have faced many challenges, resulting in the rising popularity of various theologies. However, could these theologies help churches and believers respond to the social situation practically? This led him to reflect on these issues. Finally, he recognized the importance of thinking biblically and wanted to engage in more work on this front.

Therefore, at HKBTS's Platinum Jubilee Thanksgiving Worship, in addition to telling the "Four Pages" story of the seminary, President Cho also drew up a blueprint for future development. He pointed out that the seminary was striving to deliver a spiritual as well as teaching and research project, including promoting practical theology. Practical theology not only explains the Bible and theological tradition but also points out what praxis is faithful to the Bible. ***The theology we do must be practical and viable, but this kind of practice must be based on the Bible, as only the Bible is the foundation of faith practice.***

To deepen our biblical foundation and promote biblical research, President Cho invited Prof. Wong to organize this Bible Conference. After considering the scheduling of the

seminary's programs and activities, Prof. Wong believed that March was an ideal time for holding the conference. He then invited biblical scholars from different regions to share their recent research results. Accordingly, all speakers were from Asia, and all their research was themed around "identity."

Promoting Biblical Research and Fostering an Academic Atmosphere

President Cho hopes that this type of academic conference could create an academic atmosphere for biblical research, and more importantly, strengthen our emphasis on and critical interpretation of the Bible. In addition to inviting scholars from other regions to share at the seminary, he believes that we could also reciprocate by sending our teachers and students to other regions for academic exchanges, as this is not only the work of the seminary but also the work of all theologians.

Therefore, President Cho expects that this conference is only the beginning and hopes that such conferences will be held regularly and continuously to show that HKBTS attaches great importance to Bible studies. Moreover, it does not have to be grand in scale like a "banquet"; having just a few scholars and friends discussing and exchanging ideas is adequate. If there are excellent articles, they can also be compiled into a book for a wider readership, subject to the consent of the authors. ***President Cho hopes that this kind of meeting where scholars exchange research experience with one another can continue steadily and become a feature of HKBTS.*** He also earnestly hopes that Chinese biblical scholars will make joint efforts in this field and that we will have the opportunity to collaborate with other scholars.

Both Associate Deans agree that the seminary should continue to hold such academic conferences, in less formal settings, perhaps once a year. In fact, to tie in with the curriculum reform of our Graduate School, the seminary is planning to hold an academic conference every spring term, where our Master of Theology (Th.M.) and Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) students can present their research. Consideration may be made to combine these two kinds of academic conferences in the future.

HKBTS and Bible-based Praxis

The Bible Conference is part of HKBTS's efforts to deepen our practical theology. The practice of faith has to be rooted in a strong biblical foundation and mindset; the emphasis on the Bible is in line with the spirit of the Baptists. President Cho emphasized that ***the Bible Conference worked together with the education programs and other activities held by HKBTS toward the same goal of promoting Bible-based praxis.***

Prof. Wong pointed out that HKBTS's annual Baptist Week and Mission Week, the biennial Belote Lectures, and the future academic conferences to be held in every spring term, as well as the various seminars and lectures, are all efforts geared in this direction of deepening faith practice based on a solid biblical foundation.

Prof. Ng believes that these activities, lectures, and conferences are inseparable from the seminary's curriculum and they are an integral part of the overall theological education. The seminary's curriculum is also designed with a practical approach, with the expectation that students can apply biblical and theological knowledge to real-life situations and continue to reflect and integrate their learning in their future pastoral work. For example, our Th.M. students study a variety of subjects in class (e.g. Bible study, theology, practical studies) but

most importantly, they are required to participate in the Senior Integrative Colloquium before graduation. Students have to integrate what they have learned, apply it to their potential ministry fields, and carry out their unique biblical research and theological reflections, putting their faith into practice in their lives and pastoral work.

Walking with God's Churches and Practicing His Word

Prof. Ng added that the theological training provided by the Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) and Master of Divinity (M.Div.) programs is only foundational. As for how students can put the Bible's teachings into practice in their pastoral situations in the future, it cannot be resolved by directly applying the theories of practical theology. Therefore, students' self-reflection, discernment, and integration skills are of paramount importance, and the seminary provides support in this regard. The seminary will continue to walk with students after they graduate and become pastors. For example, the Pastoral Continuing Education Centre at HKBTS offers courses for pastors as well as alumni to extend their learning. More importantly, if alumni encounter pastoral difficulties, they are welcome to come back for help. *HKBTS hopes to continue helping students practice their faith and truly respond to God's call.*

By the same token, in order to help churches meet the challenges in society through the teachings of the Bible, President Cho has organized a number of "President's Classrooms" and "President's Tea House" in recent years to bring together pastors, deacons, leaders and alumni of various churches for fellowship, discussions, learning, and mutual aid.

Finally, the new academic building and the nurture of talents are also crucial for promoting Bible-based praxis. Prof. Ng pointed out that in addition to the grand conference hall on the third floor, where academic conferences can be held to promote biblical research and discussion, space is also reserved to establish the Advanced Theological Research Centre and the Hong Kong Baptist Archive Centre to tie in with future research development. It is hoped that such development can effectively assist in serving churches in the future.

As for the nurture of talents, President Cho pointed out that the seminary not only actively recruits scholars with foundations in biblical and systematic theology from various places, but is also committed to cultivating local talent, especially in the area of practical theology. Prof. Ng said that the curriculum reform of the Graduate School was in line with this direction. In addition to Biblical Studies and Christian Thought, the major areas of study for the Th.M. and Th.D programs now include Practical Theology, for students to specialize in missions, pastoral care, or religious education. This has opened a door for training local talents engaged in practical theology teaching and research.

Stepping Out on the Path of Faith Practice in Unity

The Baptists have been known as the "People of the Bible." When facing difficulties and challenges in personal life, faith communities, and society, may we first return to the precious Word of the Lord and take divine revelation as our foundation, stepping out on this path of faith practice in our lives. HKBTS will continue to walk with churches and believers, hoping that through on-campus and off-campus programs, academic conferences and seminars, and rigorous academic publications, we may be inspired by God's Word, turn it into action, and implement it in our lives so that Jesus Christ's disciple community may become a bright lampstand on earth, shining on the dark world.

The Magnitude of Salvation Revealed in Psalm 65

Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan

Assistant Professor of New Testament



God's salvation is not only about "atonement for sin"; it also involves the transformation of life, the shaping of communities, and the realization of God's Kingdom on earth. This is what the apostle Paul says

about salvation in Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through this statement, Paul advances his concept of "being justified by faith" which he develops in earlier chapters, and so Paul describes our lives as "being united with God" in chapters 6-8. After that, he further discusses the interactions of different ethnic groups in Christ from the perspective of shaping communities, as well as how the Kingdom of God manifests in history and contemporary times (Rom 9-15).

God's salvation is not only about "atonement for sin"; it also involves the transformation of life, the shaping of communities, and the realization of God's Kingdom on earth.

The magnitude of salvation is vast, including not just "atonement for sin"; salvation is also not only a New Testament concept but one consistent with many concepts in the Old Testament (such as the emphasis on the covenant and the hope for the Kingdom). I think a close reading of the ingenious parallelism and movements found in the verses of Psalm 65 can help us understand the magnitude of salvation as a gift from God.

Movements and Echoes

If we consider Paul's discourse on salvation to be based on logical reasoning, advancing his ideas step by step from "being justified by faith" to "being united with

God," then *in the Book of Psalms, the psalmists often present the whole picture through literary parallelism, as well as movements and echoes in the parallel verses.*

For example, in Psalm 19:1 the psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." These two cola have a parallel relationship. But they are not just repetition; there is a movement within them from the first colon to the second and echoes between them. The God of Israel has not only unparalleled "glory" but also more practical and direct means ("his handiwork") to influence people because He is in charge of history. If we see His "glory," we would more readily see "his handiwork." Conversely, if we know more about "his handiwork" in history and practical life, we would bow down in worship before His "glory."

Similarly, there are movements and echoes in the parallel lines of Psalm 65. We can divide the psalm into three strophes: verses 1-4, 5-8, and 9-13. To begin with, the first strophe shows a very similar movement as in Romans 5:1. In verses 2-3 of the first strophe, the psalmist describes himself as a human sinner. He comes to God who hears prayers and atones for his sin. Then, in verse 4 the psalmist says he dwells peacefully in the house of God and enjoys himself in His temple, where he comes near God and is satisfied with the good things there. Moreover, the movement in the first strophe is not only similar to that in Romans 5:1; each of the two elements that constitute the movement in the first strophe, namely "atonement for sin" and "coming near to God in His temple," also echoes the subsequent strophes (vv. 5-8 and 9-13) respectively. The echoes found in the entire psalm can help us explore the nature and magnitude of salvation.

God's Initiative of Salvation

Many commentators have noticed that the scene in the psalm suddenly changes in verse 5. All of a sudden, the psalmist is not in the temple but goes out to the farthest seas, is among the mountains, and at the ends of the earth. In the vast expanse of nature, the psalmist describes the God of Israel who arms Himself with great strength, calms the mountains, stills the seas, and instills awe in the hearts

of the inhabitants at the ends of the earth. The abrupt change of scene between verses 1-4 and verse 5 makes people think about the relationship between the scenes described in the first and second strophes. Indeed, these two scenes complement each other; they are mutually explanatory and cross-referencing. Through one of them, we can know more about the other.

First, these two pictures show complementary directions. The picture in the first strophe shows humans (“all flesh”) coming to the temple, while the direction reverses in the second strophe: God Himself comes to the created world. The first strophe is about the atonement for human sins, but the second is about God’s calming of the entire creation. Not only does God calm the mountains, but He also stills the roaring seas and even the tumult of the nations. It is as if the sinful thoughts of human hearts and the tumult of the nations, just like the rest of the creation, are all quieted before God.

In other words, the second strophe (vv. 5-8) leads us to rethink verses 2 to 3. ***God’s salvation is not only about humans coming to God to seek salvation but also about God Himself coming to a fallen world to redeem those oppressed by sin, as well as the whole creation that groans in labor.***

Cosmic Salvation

Secondly, ***the movement from the first strophe to the second strophe shows us salvation is cosmic.*** As the Book of Romans says, not only humans groan in our mortal bodies, but the whole creation has been groaning together in labor (8:22). In Psalm 65, the psalmist obtains atonement for his transgressions in verses 2-3, and in verse 4, he says he is satisfied to be with God in the temple. But at the moment of his contentment, the psalmist suddenly sees that God is the One who comes to the troubled world in person and whose deeds are all over the earth. Then, the psalmist’s vision opens up, and he sees the magnitude of God’s salvation.

We may say that being satisfied in the presence of God, the psalmist is meditating in the temple and realizes the magnitude of salvation, making him feel like he is in a vast universe. Yet, we may also say, conversely, that the psalmist is in the midst of worldly turmoil and experiencing the mighty deeds of God, hence gaining a deeper understanding of His salvation and presence. He may have been caught up in mundane problems, setbacks, troubles, and worldly commotion before experiencing God’s mighty salvation and finding himself in “his handiwork” which the sky above proclaims. All of a sudden, the psalmist feels like

being no longer in the world but in the presence of God.

From exactly which direction do the echoes come? Is it that the psalmist suddenly finds himself in the fullness of the universe while worshipping in the temple? Or is it that he is in the midst of worldly commotion only to be calmed by the mighty power of God and enter into His presence in peace? Regardless of the direction, these two types of echoes are worth experiencing. These two pictures complement each other and mutually evolve, provoking us to think deeply.

Nature of Salvation

We know that the grace of forgiveness is like a judicial verdict, similar to acquitting a guilty person in a court of law. That is why in verse 4, a human sinner, like the psalmist David, can enjoy the presence of God even though he has committed numerous transgressions because verse 3 says all his sins have been forgiven.

He needs more than a declaration of forgiveness; instead, he needs further salvation.

However, the first strophe of the psalm already mentions that David is not merely a man who has sinned; the problem is not just about all those transgressions. David in verse 3 describes himself as a man who is “prevailed against” by iniquities. He is not simply a person who has sinned in the past; the fundamental problem is that he is weak, a man of flesh and blood who cannot overcome sins and is overwhelmed by them. He needs more than a declaration of forgiveness; instead, he needs further salvation. He needs the almighty God who can save him from his sins.

Hence, the second strophe (vv. 5-8) broadens our knowledge of God not only through the depiction of nature and the created world but also with an emphasis on His mighty power that stills the roaring waves of the seas and calms the tumult of the nations, showing us another dimension of God’s salvation. That is: God not only forgives our past sins but also enters our hearts with His power as if He were entering the created world to calm all the tumult and disturbances that are against Him.

This type of forceful, conquering imagery is also often used in the New Testament to describe the gospel. The four gospels describe Jesus’ good news as the Kingdom and power of God. The holy power brought by Jesus is in confrontation with the power of evil.

After driving out the unclean spirit from a person, Jesus said nobody could enter the strong man's house to plunder his goods; the strong man (Satan) needed to be tied up before his house could be plundered (Mt 12:29). This kind of forceful, conquering imagery is necessary because all of us are overwhelmed and controlled by sins. Paul also says he has the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out and thus feels wretched (Rom 7:13-24)! We need a more powerful force to enter our hearts to deliver us from our sins and save us. We need God who is more powerful to be our lord, displacing sin as our master so that we will no longer be slaves to sin; we will become servants of God.

Rule of Grace

This brings us to the parallelism and echoes in the last strophe. As the psalm moves from the second strophe (vv. 5-8) to the third (vv. 9-13), the psalmist opens before us an imagery of a bountiful harvest. This imagery is full of peace and grace: showers of blessing fall from the sky, and the river beds and the furrows of the earth are filled with water, while the land is full of life; even the paths we tread on are dripping with fats and oils. The psalm moves from the forceful, conquering imagery in the second strophe to the rich, grace-filled imagery in the third strophe. It shows us **not only that God's salvation can defeat the forces of sin that hold us hostage but also that God's rule can allow our lives to flourish and thrive in it.**

Only the rule of grace is the gospel.

If there is only conquest and calming of tumult, it can hardly be called the gospel. Only the rule of grace is the gospel. After driving out the unclean spirit from the person, Jesus said that if the person walked away after the unclean spirit had been driven out and did nothing more, before long the unclean spirit would return and bring with him seven other spirits even more wicked than itself to inhabit that person's body. Then the situation would be much worse than it was before (Mt 12:45).

The third strophe seems to demonstrate the ultimate manifestation of God's salvation. **God's dominion of grace not only appears in our hearts but in every creation.** In the second strophe, God arms Himself with "strength" and forms the mountains with His power. Thanks to the power that forms the mountains, when it comes to the third strophe, "the hills gird themselves with joy", and "the

meadows clothe themselves with flocks." All things shout for joy and sing.

Verses 2-3 in the first strophe correspond to the second strophe (vv. 5-8), and verse 4 corresponds to the third strophe (vv. 9-13). These echoes tell us that we should come to God, get near Him more often, and rejoice in Him only. In doing so, we can experience God's works and grace in all things in the universe, and better appreciate His rule of grace. As with the case of Jesus's casting out of the unclean spirit, grace must point to an abundant life. If one does not come under His rule of grace, the unclean spirit will eventually return. We will ultimately be ruled by some kind of authority, but all we need is God's rule of grace.

God's grace is ultimately a cosmic rule. At first, the psalmist is satisfied with being in the temple, but suddenly his eyes are wide open, seeing the magnitude of grace. God's salvation and rule are like what Paul says in Colossians 1:13: "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." **First, salvation; then, rule.** Concerning this beloved Son, Paul also says: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (1:19). No wonder, the psalmist is suddenly delighted to discover the fullness of the whole universe because salvation is not only about our coming to the temple or Christ; it is more about God sending His beloved Son to the world and bringing about the Kingdom of His beloved Son, as well as Christ bringing all the fullness into our lives.

Experiencing Multidimensional Grace

Have we experienced the various dimensions of God's grace? **This psalm not only shows us God's initiative of salvation but also leads us to broaden our vision, extending it from the inner to the outer, and from the individual to the community and the church. It also leads us from meditating in the temple to rejoicing with all the things in the universe.** In the process, we would do well to remember that we need to first experience salvation which will quell the tumult. This kind of salvation is like the case of Jesus driving out the unclean spirit, and it is through the power of God which makes us submit ourselves to God and understand that His authority is a new authority that replaces sin—an authority of greater power. We must learn to be quiet before God's authority. Quietude and submission like this are good because the one to whom we submit is none other than our Creator, who can shower us with blessings, making us shout for joy and sing. He has all the rich treasures hidden in Jesus Christ.

* All Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.

Academic Affairs News

2022-2023 Spring Opening Convocation

This school year the spring term began on January 16. The Spiritual Formation Day, led by the chaplain Rev. Brian Lam, was held the next day to help prepare our students spiritually for the new school term. There was a spiritual retreat during the morning, during which our students left campus to walk mindfully in groups. There was also a reading and sharing session in the afternoon.

Experiencing Seminary Life Day Camp

The “Experiencing Seminary Life Day Camp” on the theme “Run the Way of Your Commandments” was

held from March 8 to 9. Its programs included sit-in-class lessons, talks with professors and current seminary students, testimonies of God's calling, a workshop, etc. Throughout the day camp, participants experienced the community lifestyle of seminary students and gained an in-depth understanding of God's call and full-time ministry.

Baptist Mission Week

The Baptist Mission Week was held from March 14 to 16 at the Sai O Chapel on the theme “A Missionary Opportunity for Churches in Hong Kong: Local Missions Ministry: A Case Study in Kowloon City Baptist Church Mission.” The 3-day lecture was delivered by the ministers of the Kowloon City Baptist Church Mission.

From the Chaplain

Retirement: From James Loder to Numbers 8:23-26

At the end of November this year, I will turn 65 and reach the seminary's retirement age. As retirement approaches, there are many issues worth reflecting upon and exploring, and many books I would like to read more thoroughly. The first author that comes to my mind is the late Princeton Theological Seminary teacher James Loder. The final chapter of his book *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* is titled “Beyond 65: Dreaming Dreams and Talking with God,” which is highly relevant to the life of a retiree.

If I want to take a practical theology approach and attempt interdisciplinary dialogues in considering the retirement issue, I will reread William Bridges' *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. He is an expert in studying transitions. Be they changes in life stages or mergers and acquisitions in the business world, he stresses the potential for individual self-renewal and transformation through the process.

If I want to explore the issue in the context of Hong Kong and try interdisciplinary dialogues, I can read the articles written by Eric Ma and Edward Leung concerning the “young old,” referring to the group aged between 55 and 75 (for some, the age range is defined as 65-74), who remain physically and mentally healthy. Both authors have deep insights into this life stage.

Rev. Brian Lam Chaplain

Eric Ma is an HKBTS alumnus who graduated from the seminary and then studied at the University of London before teaching at the School of Journalism and Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong, specializing in the study of sub-culture and pop culture of Hong Kong. About six years ago, at the age of 56, he decided to retire early. Edward Leung is a specialist in geriatrics, who once served as the president of the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology. He retired from the Hospital Authority about seven years ago. Based on their respective life experiences (early retirement and medical specialties), the two authors jointly wrote a column in a newspaper to share their needs in body, mind, society, and spirit before and after retirement. Their articles were later compiled into two books: *Entering Early Autumn of Life* and *Preparing for Getting Old Gracefully*.

In addition, R. Paul Stevens's *Aging Matters: Finding Your Calling for the Rest of Your Life* is also worth reading. Although retirement is a product of modern social systems, Numbers 8:23-26 in the Bible also mentions the length of service the Levites were subject to in their time. I need to study this passage carefully as well.

It seems that I still have many issues to consider and explore before retirement.

Lay Theological Education Department

Carter Pang Director

Are Churches More Inclined to “Do Death” than to “Talk Death,” and More Inclined to “Talk Death” than to “Think Death”?

In our daily lives, we inevitably encounter death and even face it firsthand. Epidemics, illnesses, wars, various natural disasters, and sudden or accidental incidents that occur in our personal lives all lead us to think about death approaching, sometimes even causing us to experience anxiety about death and prompting us to question the meaning of life. In the face of such phenomena, perhaps it is worth asking: how do churches today—or do they at all—help brothers and sisters understand death from the perspective of faith?

In fact, churches are no strangers to “death.” Churches generally do not shy away from “doing death” (as in performing actions related to death), such as caring for terminally ill members of the congregation and arranging funeral services. All of those involved, directly and indirectly, as families and friends are cared for or comforted, may hear pastors “talk death” (talk about death). Aside from these times, most believers probably only have occasional opportunities during Lent or Good Friday to hear messages related to death. This raises the question: how many people in churches are genuinely willing to openly “talk death” and even “think death” (think about death)? The authors of the book *Speaking of Dying: Recovering the Church’s Voice in the Face of Death* ask, “...we wondered if it was common for the church to be ambiguous and to avoid talking about dying...” This is perhaps worthy of further consideration.

It is true that many people do not find it pleasant or desirable to talk or think about death. However, if we are willing to face death on the basis of faith, we will certainly cherish, understand, and celebrate the lives that God has given us more. In recent years, thankfully, I have met some brothers and sisters in churches who have increasingly felt a

burden for promoting life and death education within their churches, and have tried to begin ministries. The seminary wants to respond to the needs of churches and provides pastors and believers who are willing to explore death, understand life, and have the desire to promote life and death education in the church, school, or community with appropriate basic training that is systematic and comprehensive in accordance with the Christian faith. Accordingly, our department will offer a program called “Certificate in Life and Death Education from Christian Perspective” commencing in October this year, details of which will be announced later. Please stay tuned.

In addition, the department will also be holding a seminar on Christian life and death education, entitled “Understanding Death, I Live,” at the Ngau Tau Kok Baptist Church on the afternoon of May 28 (Sunday). The seminar will explore the issue of life and death education from theological, church, and community perspectives. As for the details, please refer to the Campus News section in the latest issue of the *Newsletter*. All are welcome.

Revamped Bachelor’s Degree Program

In addition to launching the new certificate program, we are also actively preparing for the revamp of our Bachelor’s Degree program, which will begin in the next academic year. In late March, we organized a briefing session to introduce the revamped program concerning “Bachelor of Arts/Higher Diploma/Diploma in Christian Studies” to our current students and alumni. Among other items, we reviewed the program structure, content features, and credit exemption policy. Enrollment for the new program is expected to start in May. All Christians who have completed secondary education or are aged over 25 and wish to pursue equipping themselves with knowledge, spiritual growth, practical faith, and dedicated service are welcome to enroll in the program. Stay tuned for further updates on our website.

Distance Education Program

Charis Chan Associate Director

Curriculum Reform, a New Stage

The Distance Education Program (DEP) Reform started last year, with certificate programs being converted to trimester programs, and some of the course materials have also been updated. We are about to enter the second stage of curriculum development. The credit system will be adopted for the diploma programs, and some credits will be exempted for diploma graduates enrolling in the upcoming "Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies" program. We hope this will encourage students to further their education. Meanwhile, we are revamping our online system to facilitate student enrollment and learning. During the development process, we need to have detailed discussions and planning, so that things will go on in a well-coordinated

and effective manner. Please pray that everything will run smoothly.

Thanks to the Lord's leading, Ms. April Lam and Ms. Li Miu-yu have become DEP's tutors, responsible for teaching the diploma courses "Introduction to Theological Studies" and "New Testament Survey III" respectively. May the Lord bless them.

The 2023 spring term diploma programs started on March 1. The Student Orientation and tutorials of various subjects were launched respectively. The summer term certificate programs will start in May and are now open for enrollment. All applications or inquiries are welcome.

Please support us through prayer and offerings so that more people will be blessed.

Student Union

Lau Tsz-hong Chairperson

Walking Together, Building a Home

The Executive Committee of the Student Union (SU) was inaugurated in January. This year, its members are mainly second-year students and the teacher advisors are the same as last year. Our committee members are Lau Tsz-hong (Chairperson), Kong Wing-yiu (Vice-chairperson), Wilson Leung (Head of Secretary Department), Lo Shan-fung (Treasurer), Li Jong-wa (Head of Spiritual Devotion Department), Au Yeung Pik-lai (Head of Mission Department), and Lau Wai-yan (Head of Daily Living Department). We have the following teachers as our advisors: Prof. Wong Fook-kong (Student Union), Prof. Andres Tang (Secretary Department), Chaplain Rev. Brian Lam (Spiritual Devotion), Ms. Grace Chan (Spiritual Devotion), Dr. Eric Kwong (Mission), and Dr. Bernard Leung (Daily Living).

The theme of the SU this year is "Walking Together, Building a Home." As we are in transition from the pandemic to a post-pandemic era, the SU realizes that both internationally and locally, many communities (including the seminary) have fallen into a new situation in which it is not possible to return to the way things have been; instead, what we, and even the whole world, should do is to embrace new beginnings. There has been a growing

distance between members of the student community in recent years, not only in terms of social distance but also in emotional relationships. In view of this, the SU hopes to overcome this problem of "distance" by walking together. We aspire to walk together with our fellow students and the seminary and to serve as a bridge between them. We attempt to begin "walking together" and aim for reaching the goal of "building a home." As it is impossible to return to the way things were, we should not look back in determining the direction of building the future. Instead, we should discern, reflect and feel in the current time and space so that we may build a disciple community that is in line with God's will. To achieve this goal, we need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to surmount the hurdles formed by reality, subjectivity, and wounds.

In line with the above theme, our various departments are actively preparing different activities to serve the students, one of which is the resumption of the Wednesday morning tea break, during which teachers and students can enjoy snacks together after the chapel service once a month. The classes take turns serving each other by preparing the food. We hope to build a spiritual home by working hand in hand with teachers and students. May God have mercy on us, keep us and guide us.

Publication News



The seminary's biannual academic journal, *Hill Road* (issue 51) will be published in June with the theme **“Living Out the Faith in Hope.”**

There will be five thematic articles: “A Hope in Total Darkness: A Hidden Messianic Hope in the Book of Samuel” (Tony Sher), “How Metaphors Related to Plants Evoke Hope

in the Book of the Twelve” (Marcus Tso), “Giving Back Our Deserved Honor—Taking Philippians 2:5-11 and 4:4-9 as Examples” (Michelle Chan), “Hope in Hebrews” (Luke Cheung), and “Contemplatives in Action with the Hope” (Pan Yi-jung). In addition, there will be discussion articles and book reviews.

Hill Road is available at the seminary, its town centres, and Christian bookstores. For inquiries, please call the Publication Office at 2768 5168.

Visitors

- Dr. Ho Sin-pan, Professor of the New Testament of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, visited the seminary and had a discussion with President Cho on January 31. Dr. Ho is presently the visiting scholar at our seminary in the spring term of the 2022-23 school year.
- Rev. Li Kwok-hung, the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong, visited the seminary and had a discussion with President Cho on February 7.

Alumni News

- Alumna **Lee Tak-yee** (class of 2006) was ordained as a pastor by the Celebrate Life Baptist Church on February 26, 2023.
- Alumnus **Lam Sik-cheung** (class of 2014) was ordained as a pastor by the Christ's Evangelical Centre (Church of Love) on March 5, 2023.
- Alumni **Hou Sheng-jie** (class of 2020) and **Li Xin** (class of 2020) were ordained as pastors at the Qiaotou Street Christ's Church, Yingze District, of the Taiyuan City Christian Church on March 12, 2023.

Lay Theological Education Department

Student Recruitment 2023-24

Master of Arts/Postgraduate Diploma/ Postgraduate Certificate Programs in Christian Studies

- These master-level degree, part-time evening programs enable students to lay a solid foundation in biblical hermeneutics and systematic theology.
- Students may select courses according to their interests and needs.
- Some credits acquired in these programs can be exempted when being admitted to the Master of Divinity or the Master of Christian Studies degree programs in the seminary's Main Programs.
- Students of Master of Arts in Christian Studies may choose “Biblical Studies” or “Communication” as their major or they may choose not to pursue any specific major. Students of Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate Programs are not required to complete any major-specific courses.

Application Date for Admissions: From early May

Class Start Date: Early October

Bachelor of Arts/Higher Diploma/Diploma Programs in Christian Studies

- These bachelor-level degree programs provide students with theological training, enabling them to lay a solid foundation of faith and develop a good spiritual life.
- Our real-time classes enable instructors and students to interact in real time. Students may choose to attend classes in the Mong Kok classrooms or via video conference.
- Students of Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies may choose “Biblical Studies,” “Christian Thought” or “Practical Theology” as their major or they may choose not to pursue any specific major. Students of Higher Diploma/Diploma Programs are not required to complete any major-specific courses.

Application Date for Admissions: From early May

Class Start Date: Early October

All the programs above are conducted in Cantonese.

For Inquiries/Registration Tel: 2711 2552 Email: ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk Website: www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted

Organized by: Lay Theological Education Department

Co-organized by: Ngau Tau Kok Baptist Church

“Understanding Death, I Live”

Christian Life and Death Education Seminar

Guest Host:

Rev. William Lam

Chief Chaplain, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital

Guest Speakers and Topics:

Dr. Andres Tang

*Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture),
Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary*

When My Loved One Died...

Rev. Agnes Yuen

Pastor-in-charge, Evangelical Free Church of China Mong Fook Church

Life and Death Education in Churches

Mr. Pasu Ng

*Founder of Keep It Simple, a social enterprise in Hong Kong
Founding President of Hong Kong Life and Death Studies Association*

Life and Death Education in Community

Date:

May 28, 2023 (Sunday)

Time:

3:00-5:15 pm

Venue:

Ngau Tau Kok Baptist Church
(Tak Bo Garden, 3, Ngau Tau Kok Road, Kowloon)

Free Admission

Please scan the QR code for registration. An enrollment confirmation message will be sent to the applicants via WhatsApp within a week prior to the seminar.

For Inquires

Tel: 2711 2552

Email: ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk

Register Now



Distance Education Program

Exploring Truth . Reflecting upon Faith . Equipping for Ministry

Admissions Open: Certificate Programs (Summer 2023) and Diploma Programs (Fall 2023)

Program	Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Diploma in Biblical Studies Program	Focusing on the context and interpretation of the Bible.	Secondary school graduates with their pastor's recommendations.	March and September	Spring semester : Hong Kong: February 10 Overseas: January 10 Fall semester : Hong Kong: August 10 Overseas: July 10
Diploma in Christian Studies Program	Focusing on Christian faith and doctrine.			
Higher Diploma in Biblical Studies/Christian Studies Programs	Further studies for diploma graduates.	Diploma graduates with their pastor's recommendations.		
Certificate in N.T./O.T. Studies Programs	Introductory programs in biblical studies, guiding students to study the Bible systematically.	All are welcome	January, May, and September	Spring trimester: January 20 Summer trimester: May 20 Fall trimester: September 20

Elective students: Students can choose their interested courses in the programs.

All the programs can be taken online or by mail. Trial online programs: <http://elearning.hkbts.edu.hk>

For Inquiries Tel: 2768 5105 Email: deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk Website: www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist

Pastoral Continuing Education Centre

Courses and talks offered from May to June 2023

Course/Talk	Lecturer	Date	Time
Do You Know I Am Waiting for You?	Dr. Dannis Au	8/5	2:00-5:00 pm
How to Design Festival Worships	Dr. Hung Chi-kuen	15/5, 22/5	9:30 am-12:30 pm
Nouwen's Path to Healing: Becoming a Weak and Wounded Healer	Dr. Andy Chiu	15/5	2:00-5:00 pm
God's Creation and Providence: Genesis 1-11	Dr. Craig Ho	22/5, 29/5	2:00-5:00 pm
Walking with SEN Children on the Path of Evangelism	Ms. Rainy Chan	12/6	2:00-5:00 pm
How to Evangelize Folk Religionists	Dr. Jason Yeung	19/6	2:00-5:00 pm
Stand by Me: How to Shepherd and Accompany Church Members with Terminal Cancer	Ms. Chan Lai-sim	26/6	9:30 am-12:30 pm
The Mystery of Suffering	Dr. Jason Yeung	26/6	2:00-5:00 pm

Fee concessions

- (1) *Early Bird Reduction:* those who pay the full fee of the enrolled course a week before the course begins may enjoy a reduction of HK\$20 (for a 3-hour course) or HK\$30 (for a 6-to-9 hour course).
- (2) A 10% discount for graduates from HKBTS degree programs, pastors of member churches of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong, and current part-time students of HKBTS.
- (3) A 20% discount for valid cardholders of HKBTS Alumni Association members.
- (4) A 50% discount for full-time seminary students from the 16 member seminaries of the Hong Kong Theological Education Association.

Venue

8/F, Christian Centre, 56 Bute Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon

Registration

Application forms can be downloaded from the seminary website, or you may enroll online at www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce/apply1.html

Inquiries

Tel: 2768 5179
Email: pce@hkbts.edu.hk

* One cannot enjoy both the Early Bird Reduction and fee discounts.

Campus Extension News

New Academic Building: Opened for Full Operation

After all of its floors were fully furnished in early 2023, the new academic building as an essential part of the “Faith, Hope, and Love Project” opened for full operation in March. The new building enhances the seminary’s teaching and research capabilities with increased space for student learning activities. Ultimately, the building provides a holistic education environment and serves to implement the blueprint for the internationalization of the seminary’s teaching and research work. The new academic building includes a grand conference hall on the third floor, a graduate study centre with graduate student carrels and a student learning common on the second floor; the Distance Education Office and the Publication Office on the first

floor, and a recreation centre for teachers and students on the ground floor.

Following the completion of the seminary’s physical expansion, activities for advancing the seminary’s teaching and research are being launched. In March of this year, we held our first Bible Conference at the grand conference hall of the new building, a platform for academic exchanges, bringing together Chinese Bible scholars from local and overseas to showcase their research results. The seminary will continue to hold similar academic conferences to promote Chinese biblical and theological scholarships.

We sincerely ask you to continue to support us through contributing to the HK\$17 million for the seminary’s theological education and research development. Please give and pray according to God’s inspiration in you.

December 9, 2022

The Distance Education Office and Publication Office were relocated to the first floor of the new academic building. President Cho led colleagues from the Academic Affairs Department and the two Offices in a small-scale thanksgiving prayer meeting.



December 12, 2022

The academic board meeting was held for the first time at the grand conference hall on the third floor.

February 1, 2023

The group study rooms on the second floor were opened for students to study or discuss their assignments.



February 20, 2023

Classes were held for Th.M. students on the first floor:



March 1, 2023

The Graduate Student Carrels on the second floor were opened for use by graduate students.



March 13, 2023

The 2023 Bible Conference was held at the grand conference hall on the third floor, bringing together Chinese Bible scholars from all over Asia to learn from one another.

DONORS REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

Education Fund (Church / Organization)					
九龍國際浸信會	14,097.00	吳國傑伉儷	1,000.00	Distance Education Program	
上水浸信會	30,000.00	李國雄伉儷	1,000.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
上環浸信會	10,000.00	李新蘭	200.00	鄭鵬程	300.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	林俊鴻	5,000.00	無名氏	444.00
屯門浸信教會	700.00	殷振強伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	100.00
以馬內利浸信會	5,400.00	曹啟明伉儷	400.00	無名氏	100.00
石澳浸信會福音堂	7,000.00	梁明財伉儷	500.00	HK\$	<u>1,344.00</u>
阡陌社區浸信會	5,000.00	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,500.00		
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	許煥英	700.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
旺角浸信會	635.00	許鋒威	1,000.00	陳國權	1,000.00
香港（西區）潮語浸信會	5,000.00	陳玉蘭	3,000.00	無名氏	50.00
香港仔浸信會	7,388.58	陳偉倫	200.00	HK\$	<u>1,050.00</u>
香港西區浸信會	2,351.10	陳麗英	700.00		
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	陸澤浩伉儷	2,000.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,000.00	曾慶忠	500.00	申融融	300.00
海怡浸信教會	12,000.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00	許煥英	300.00
粉嶺浸信會	50,000.00	黃念施	200.00	楊美玲	300.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	黃華娟	100.00	賈澳	4,000.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	黃雅忠	11,000.00	鄒小寶	3,000.00
第一城浸信會	8,000.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	500.00	HK\$	<u>7,900.00</u>
富亨浸信會	776.00	葉煥章	300.00		
愛群道浸信會	17,500.00	賈澳	4,500.00	Campus Extension Project	
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00	Chan Hei Shun Joyce	10,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,500.00	劉建紅	100.00	申融融	300.00
廣源村禧年浸信會	15,000.00	蔡淑儀	1,000.00	周慧蓮	500.00
錫安浸信會	14,547.01	蔡慧英	200.00	梁志仁伉儷	500.00
觀塘浸信會	1,856.00	鄧活靈伉儷	300.00	賈澳	4,000.00
香港華人基督教聯會	90,000.00	羅佩珊	100.00	鄧輝祥	500.00
浸信宣道會明道堂	500.00	羅凱慈	4,000.00	鄭泡腳	1,000.00
學基浸信會	9,000.00	關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	鄭振華伉儷	600.00
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	無名氏	10,000.00	無名氏	10,000.00
馬利亞、馬大團契	2,000.00	無名氏	5,000.00	無名氏	7,000.00
啟關基金	500.00	無名氏	4,000.00	無名氏	2,000.00
	HK\$	無名氏	2,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
	<u>463,250.69</u>	無名氏	2,000.00	HK\$	<u>37,400.00</u>
Chinese Baptist Church		無名氏	1,500.00		
of Greater Boston	US\$	無名氏	1,000.00	Ming Yee Theological Bursary Fund	
	<u>735.00</u>	無名氏	1,000.00	北角浸信會	HK\$ <u>1,000,000.00</u>
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		無名氏	500.00		
Ng Chung Wai	2,000.00	無名氏	500.00	Graduate School Program	
方志強	200.00	無名氏	500.00	北角浸信會	HK\$ <u>500,000.00</u>
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	400.00		
王群	800.00	無名氏	400.00	Faculty Support	
申融融	400.00	無名氏	200.00	茶果嶺浸信會	16,200.00
朱活平伉儷	300.00		HK\$	Lai Ka Yui	20,000.00
何仲儀	1,000.00		<u>84,400.00</u>	HK\$	<u>36,200.00</u>
吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	Dr. & Mrs. William J. Lacy	US\$ <u>1,000.00</u>		

DONORS REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2023

Education Fund (Church / Organization)			Distance Education Program		
九龍城浸信會	280,000.00	周錦菁	100.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
九龍國際浸信會	23,416.00	洪錦漢	100.00	鄭鵬程	300.00
上環浸信會	8,000.00	洪鷹輪	300.00	無名氏	500.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	徐慧儀	1,000.00	無名氏	444.00
屯門浸信教會	700.00	殷振強伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	100.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	10,000.00	袁鳳蘭	1,000.00	HK\$	<u>1,744.00</u>
牛頭角浸信會	20,000.00	張啟明伉儷	1,000.00		
以馬內利浸信會	5,400.00	曹啟明伉儷	400.00		
尖沙嘴浸信會	80,000.00	梁明財伉儷	500.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
竹園浸信會	8,000.00	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,500.00	蕭桂娥	1,000.00
阡陌社區浸信會	5,000.00	許煥英	700.00	無名氏	1,000.00
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	許鋒威	1,000.00	HK\$	<u>2,000.00</u>
赤柱浸信會	3,000.00	陳偉倫	200.00		
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	陳偉權	800.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
香港仔浸信會	5,477.19	陳麗英	700.00	申融融	300.00
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	曾慶忠	500.00	許煥英	300.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,000.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00	楊美玲	300.00
恩典浸信會	1,000.00	黃永康	5,000.00	鄒小寶	1,500.00
荃灣浸信會	75,000.00	黃華娟	100.00	無名氏	30.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	黃雅忠	20,000.00	HK\$	<u>2,430.00</u>
彩坪浸信會	50,000.00	楊謝金玉	10,000.00		
彩明浸信會	2,400.00	溫恩智伉儷	20,000.00	Campus Extension Project	
深荃浸信會	500.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	650.00	頌主福音粵曲合唱團	1,000.00
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	葉煥章	300.00	申融融	300.00
廣林浸信會	5,594.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00	吳國傑伉儷	38,000.00
觀塘浸信會	1,659.00	劉建紅	100.00	李德祥	5,000.00
鑽石山浸信會	2,000.00	蔡慧英	200.00	周慧蓮	500.00
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	鄧幸榴	500.00	周錦菁	100.00
啟聞基金	500.00	鄧炳光伉儷	3,000.00	黃永康	5,000.00
HK\$	<u>742,646.19</u>	羅佩珊	100.00	鄧輝祥	500.00
		關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	鄭振華伉儷	600.00
		無名氏	4,042.90	無名氏	7,000.00
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		無名氏	4,000.00	無名氏	2,000.00
方志強	200.00	無名氏	3,302.90	無名氏	1,000.00
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	1,000.00	無名氏	30.00
王群	800.00	無名氏	500.00	HK\$	<u>61,030.00</u>
申融融	400.00	無名氏	500.00		
朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	500.00	Faculty Support	
何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	400.00	茶果嶺浸信會	HK\$ <u>22,501.00</u>
何惠娟	2,000.00	無名氏	400.00		
吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	350.00	Spiritual Revival Concert	
吳國傑伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	200.00	黃楚榕	HK\$ <u>500.00</u>
李國雄伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	150.00		
李新蘭	200.00	無名氏	40.00		
李德祥	7,000.00	無名氏	20.00		
		HK\$	<u>109,755.80</u>		

Precious Moments

January 17, 2023

Spiritual Formation Day

The second day of the spring semester in the 2021-22 school year was Spiritual Formation Day, led by the chaplain Rev. Brian Lam. During the morning, our teachers and students walked mindfully in groups. In the afternoon, they read a spiritual article and shared with one another what they learned from it.



Our teachers and students walking mindfully on a path



Students sharing with one another what they learned in the morning walk



Students praying in groups

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January 19, 2023

All Seminary Prayer Meeting

Rev. Brian Lam led our teachers, students, and staff to pray using the prayers of Stanley Hauerwas, reminding us to live in "the only true time" and ask God to "free us from self-fascination." Finally, we prayed for each other in groups.



Reply Slip

I/We would like to support the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary by

- praying for the Seminary's theological education ministry
- contributing \$ _____ to the
- Educational Fund Campus Extension Project Other: _____

Name: _____ (Mr. / Ms. / Rev. / Dr. / Mr. & Mrs. / Alumnus / Alumna)

Church Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Contact Phone No.: _____ E-mail: _____

- I/We do not wish to receive a hard copy of the Seminary's Newsletter
- I/We do not wish to receive any information from the Seminary by email

Donation Methods

- Crossed Cheque** payable to "Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary"
- Direct Transfer:** our Hang Seng Bank Ltd. (024) account no. : 787-471721-883
- Fast Payment System Identifier (FPS ID):** 166215137
- Monthly Autopay:** an autopay authorization form will be sent to you (You may terminate this monthly donation at any time)
- Credit Card:** VISA Master Card
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Cardholder's Name: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

Card No.: [] [] [] [] - [] [] [] [] - [] [] [] [] - [] [] [] [] Expiry Date: _____ / _____ (MM/YY)

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- Official receipt will be issued and donation is tax-deductible in Hong Kong.
- Your personal data will only be used for issuing a receipt and the Seminary's administrative purposes.
- Please tick the appropriate box
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Address: 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong Website: <http://www.hkbits.edu.hk>

Thank you for your support!



香港浸信會神學院
Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Student Recruitment for 2023-24



Run the Way of Your Commandments

Application Date for Admissions

Hong Kong : January 3-June 2
Overseas : January 3-April 28

Admission Test Date

By individual arrangement
during the seminary's office hours.