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Newsletter

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Delight in the Torah



Joshua Cho

From Ethics to Ethics

From September 12 to 16 this year, I was teaching in the Doctor of Theology program at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, leading a seminar on Christian Ethics. I guided my students through the study of major texts on ethics, including philosophical ethics, contextual ethics by Paul Lehmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and virtue ethics by Stanley Hauerwas, among others. The students were exceptionally talented and diligent, which delighted me greatly. They attended classes for eight hours a day without complaint and devoted themselves to preparation, reading texts, and engaging in discussions.

Sitting in the classroom at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, I couldn't help but recall many similar memories and reflect on the marvelous guidance I've received from God through my own teaching. In 1999, I was teaching at a university in the United States. In May of that year, I accepted invitations from some theological seminaries and Christian organizations in Hong Kong to deliver lectures. One of my lecture topics was "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ethic of Responsibility." Subsequently, I accepted some invitations and focused on these opportunities for

academic exchange and research with universities on the Mainland. During that period, I met some university professors, and now, twenty-four years later, I found myself meeting them again in Nanjing, witnessing each other's growth, filled with warmth and gratitude.

In 2000, I returned to my alma mater, the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary (HKBTS), to teach mainly in my major field of study, systematic theology. However, due to the urgent needs of the seminary, I took on the teaching of Christian ethics to meet the immediate needs. Although I had studied Christian ethics during my doctoral program and had passed the comprehensive examination in ethics, ethics was not my primary area of expertise after all. So I taught it with some trepidation. Nonetheless, this exposed me to writings on virtue ethics, which proved to be very enriching. In 2001, unexpectedly, I was appointed as Academic Dean, taking on administrative work, which I had never considered pursuing. Previously, I had been a pastor and scholar with limited management experience, and handling administrative work was challenging. Still, ***the insights from ethics became a valuable resource for my leadership and administrative responsibilities.***



It was really amazing that, after twenty-three years, on the morning of September 14 in a classroom in Nanjing, I found myself reading writings by Bonhoeffer, Hauerwas, and others with my students, further deepening my previous research on the ethics of responsibility. At that moment, memories from over twenty years ago came to mind, and I felt an immense sense of gratitude. I thanked God for His guidance throughout this journey!

Practical Theology with Theological Wisdom

In addition to thanking God for His marvelous grace, I would also like to express my gratitude to the two Vice Presidents of HKBTS. They willingly share the responsibilities with me, taking charge of internal leadership at the seminary. This allows me to focus more on external connections, fundraising, pondering the direction of theological education, and engaging in teaching and research work at our seminary, churches, and other theological seminaries and universities on the Mainland, fostering appropriate practical theology for churches.

Actually, these arrangements are related to the completion of the new academic building. I envision various academic conferences, large and small scale alike, being held in the new academic building in the future. There, we will pray, discuss, reflect, debate, and exchange ideas, receiving more wisdom from God to create a practical theology imbued with *theologia*.

The Righteous like Trees by Streams of Water?

During these days, Psalm 1 frequently comes to my mind. I have also preached on Psalm 1 in various churches and theological seminaries. Verse 1:3 is particularly memorable: "He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."¹ The psalmist describes

the life of a tree, and speaks of the righteous being like a tree planted by streams of water, receiving the nourishment needed for growth, with leaves that never wither, and bearing abundant fruit. Everything they do prospers.

Perhaps some may question the psalmist's words because the reality is that conflicts abound, wars continue, and there is an abundance of falsehoods and false witnesses all around. Faith communities are also facing disintegration. In society, we see upright individuals stumbling and falling, dehumanized and demonized by others who unfairly criticize them. The faithful seem like trees about to topple, seemingly unstable. Meanwhile, those who disregard God's teachings prosper. In this light, the world described in Psalm 1, where the righteous prosper and the wicked perish, doesn't seem to align with our world.

Blessed are the Righteous: Delight in the Torah

However, when we carefully contemplate Psalm 1, we realize that the main purpose of the text is not to categorize people as righteous or unrighteous to allot them either rewards or punishments. Instead, it teaches us how to live. The psalm emphasizes the importance of obeying the law of the LORD: "Blessed is the man ... his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (1:1-2). The word "law" (translated from the Hebrew word *Torah*) can refer to the entire Bible or the interpretation and teachings of the Bible. **The teachings of the Bible are about God's will, instructing us on how to maintain right and proper relationships with the Creator and fellow creatures.** The righteous person meditates (*hagad*) on God's law day and night, muttering, and mulling over and over in order to seek, ponder, and understand God's guidance for their lives. Ultimately, God's law is etched into the heart of the righteous, and such a person is "blessed."

"Blessed" (Hebrew *ashrei*) refers to the joyful spiritual condition, a deeper joy in life, of those who root their lives in God's life, and the pleasure and satisfaction derived from that. This state is not occasional but originates from those who are right with God. It is not influenced by successes or failures, nor is it determined by external circumstances. It is not about living comfortably due to favorable external conditions, achieving worldly success, or sensory pleasures in one's daily life.

Blessed are the Righteous: Not Walking with Sinners

In terms of the negative, the righteous person “walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.” “The wicked,” “sinners” and “scoffers” are essentially synonymous, but the last term, “scoffers,” specifically refers to those who not only reject God’s law but also mock those who follow it.

“The wicked” (Hebrew *reshaim*) refers to those who have been declared “guilty” in a court of law, those who have violated the law and have been pronounced “guilty.” “Sinners” (Hebrew *hattaim*) emphasizes the wrongdoing of those inclined to sin. These people not only commit evil deeds but also live lives dominated by sin. “Scoffers” (Hebrew *lesim*) describes those who mock and ridicule righteous living. They belittle those who pursue righteousness, rejecting guidance and correction from others (Prv 9:7-8; 13:1; 15:12). They disdain others, inciting anger and conflict, and forming alliances to mock those who walk the path of righteousness (Prv 22:10; 29:8). They scoff at those who adhere to God’s teachings, finding amusement in mockery (Prv 1:22). These individuals introduce chaos, injustice, greed, and slander into the faith communities.

The Path of the Righteous vs. The Path of the Wicked

In contrast, the blessed, righteous person walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. They maintain both politeness and sincerity while upholding righteous relationship principles to love God and others. They are like trees firmly rooted in God’s law, standing strong in the storms of life and thriving.

The psalm promises that the wind will blow away the evil. The evil will be blown away like chaff by God’s wind. “Being blown away by the wind” means the wicked will face judgment. Yes, those immersed in the Torah are ultimately protected from the poison of evil. Those who delight in learning the Torah don’t just have their hearts occupied by it; their entire being is nourished and shaped by it, allowing them to stand firm in their life’s journey.

Rooted in the Torah: A Lifelong Choice

During these days, the image of a tree’s life span has been deeply imprinted on my mind. I earnestly desire

that both myself and those who follow God are like trees filled with stories of God, firmly rooted in God’s Torah. This means that ***we must rely on the Holy Spirit and consciously make a choice—a choice to be rooted in the Torah. It requires us to make this conscious choice time and time again.*** It’s not a one-time choice, nor is it a one-time transformation; it’s a million choices and transformations. As C. S. Lewis said:

... every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other.²

In simpler terms, rooting our life in the Torah is a lifelong choice and a journey of character building. The Torah shapes a person’s life, nurturing the growth of various virtues. ***Character is the continuous orientation of life, a result of choosing to be rooted in the Word of God, and being transformed in the Holy Spirit.*** The Holy Spirit is the wind, not only blowing away evil but also dwelling within us, enabling us to bear the fruit of life. The fruit of the Spirit is beautiful in this world. The Spirit purifies, renews, and forgives us, making our faith stronger and more mature, bearing the fruit of life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

May the Spirit of God dwell within us, enabling us to bear abundant fruit. Each of us is like a tree planted by the streams of water, living in the Spirit’s wind. Amen.

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1. All scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.
 2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 87.

Rich Theological Journeys

Brothers and sisters entered the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary (HKBTS) to equip themselves for better service to God. What hardships and joys have they experienced during their studies at the seminary? What difficulties

and blessings have they encountered? What thoughts and reflections do they have? In this issue of the *Newsletter*, we have invited some graduates of the Main Program to share their rich theological journeys with us.

The Abundant Life of a Seminary Student

Tse Tin-chi (M.Div.)

Having been a part-time student for four years and a full-time student for two years, I spent six fulfilling years at the seminary in total. During the social event in 2019-20 and the pandemic, which lasted more than three years, the seminary, like the rest of society, faced numerous challenges and difficulties. However, similar to the tumultuous history of churches as a faith community, the seminary, despite experiencing hardships, has faithfully witnessed the countless blessings of God.

Building One Another in Love

One of the reasons I chose to study at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary (HKBTS) is that the teachers there are full of love for the students. They are not only academically knowledgeable and of impeccable character, but also willing to spend time with students despite their busy schedules. They have breakfast, discuss assignments, play ball games, take walks with them, and even invite them into their homes. This bond of friendship embodies what Samuel Wells calls “being with,” as the basic state of human existence that allows people to be themselves and simply interact with one another. This also embodies Andrew Root’s idea that relationships are an end in itself. During the pandemic, I witnessed how students and teachers in the dormitories spent their lives together. Constrained by quarantine measures and restricted by social distancing guidelines, they were still able to listen to and encourage one another. Even though graduation was approaching, I could still frequently keep in touch with a few teachers. What a blessing it has been!

During my study at the seminary in these six years, I had the opportunity to get to know students from various academic years. Some have already earned their degrees, while others are still pursuing their studies. God calls on individuals with diverse backgrounds to be His workers, and the learning atmosphere at HKBTS promotes growth and maturity. The training of a worker who pleases God and has no need to be ashamed involves the disciplining of both one’s body and mind, as Paul stated in 2 Timothy 2:15, which serves as the seminary motto. I am extremely pleased to have had the chance to get to know many seminary classmates. There are those who are knowledgeable, gifted in serving, joyful in spirit, and others who are particularly concerned about the challenges of our time. **None of them is “all-powerful,” and everyone has different needs, but we complement one another and are willing to build this community together.**

Finding God in Nature

Another unforgettable aspect of HKBTS was its environment. Despite the rapid development of the district in recent years, with many construction projects taking place around the campus, the tranquility and intellectual



Tin-chi with his wife and two daughters

ambiance of the seminary library remained undisturbed. Additionally, the beautiful seaside area near the campus provided me with a peaceful space where I could pray and feel near to God, engaging in sincere wrestling with Him or humbly seeking His guidance, often accompanied by tears and words of gratitude. Although transportation to the seminary is now more convenient, every time I return, it feels like embarking on a spiritual retreat, and I am filled with anticipation. Especially during the 10-minute or so walk from Wu Kai Sha Station to the campus, I often encounter cows, migratory birds, and even snakes. On one occasion, I saw a huge ant nest hanging from a tree. **All of these encounters remind me that I must learn about not only the God described in books and by scholars but also the One who is the Creator of everything I observe in nature.**

God Appoints a Time for Everything

The six years I spent as a seminary student were also a journey for me to heal my wounds. I believe that no one can live a wholesome life in today's world without some visible or hidden scars, big or small. God allowed me to have two years of full-time study, to leave the church I was serving and my mother church, and to serve as an intern at two other churches that love God and people. My internship equipped me to embark on the path that God had prepared for me. All I can say is that everything has been amazing. During my graduation sermon, I referred to the words of "the Preacher" in Ecclesiastes 3: "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (3:11a ESV). I profoundly

understand that the phrase "a time," mentioned repeatedly in the verses, refers to moments when the Lord's beautiful intentions are revealed, whether they pertain to sorrow, death, loss, or hatred. Ultimately, it teaches us to be humble and fear God, and to enjoy the fruits of labor in the present.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my classmates who graduated with me this year. Their companionship over these past two years is like the companionship the disciples enjoyed with Christ on the road to Emmaus. Of course, I must also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the three remarkable ladies in my family—my wife and two precious daughters. They have been the driving force and constant inspiration in my service to God and in the writing of my dissertation.

After six years of studying at the seminary, I can say that I have made modest progress in my theological knowledge. However, the most important thing is that, **through my years of study at the seminary, God has confirmed the calling He made on me six years ago: The Lord set His love on us and chose us** (Dt 7:7).

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A Road of Mission, A Path of Theology, and A Way of Life

Samuel Yip (M.Div.)

A Road of Mission

The year when I entered the seminary, I was simultaneously moved and began to have a heart for missionary work. After receiving confirmation from God, I teared up and raised my hand in response to the call during a mission gathering. My tears were not due to sadness but because I saw the urgent need within the mission field. On the one hand, I became increasingly certain that God wanted to send me to the road of mission. On the other hand, I was studying theology full-time. These two aspects were not mutually exclusive but complementary. **From that time on, the "road of mission" and the "path of theology" intertwined in my "way of life."** Despite my advancing years

and the challenges I faced getting started, I found this to be a journey of grace with no regrets.

A Path of Theology

After completing a four-year Bachelor of Theology program, I continued with two more years in the Master of Divinity program, which I have just completed. It is now time to reflect on these six



years of full-time study at the seminary. During the first four years in the Bachelor of Theology program, I witnessed a classmate facing family problems while also juggling his studies and internships. I could only silently sigh and entrust him to the Lord. When I continued with the Master of Divinity program, I saw a classmate discovering health issues while struggling to balance her studies and internships. During those times, there were exams in the afternoons, but we still came together at noon to pray for her instead of pursuing our own studies. This is one of the moments from my Master of Divinity studies that remains vivid in my memory.

As for the President and the professors, I would like to express my deep gratitude to them. I thank them for tirelessly and wholeheartedly teaching us, for their in-depth teachings, and for broadening our horizons. In Old Testament study and hermeneutics, I particularly gained a deeper understanding. In New Testament study and the learning of biblical languages, I am thankful for having the chance to be taught by two esteemed professors before their departure. Studying systematic theology and reading works by leading Chinese theologians expanded my understanding that theology is a process of "faith seeking understanding." The study of Church history also became the beginning of my research interests. The study of practical theology prompted me to reflect on theology from other perspectives. In the missiology programs, I saw

Theology is a journey of reflection that spans vertically between God and humans and horizontally among people ...

of the Kingdom of God. ***The valuable learning from these classes, if counted one by one, would indeed be countless.***

Theology is a journey of reflection that spans vertically between God and humans and horizontally among people, where one sees their own inadequacies, weaknesses, and limitations.

some scholars formulating the missionary concept by building on traditional Chinese culture and integrating Western missionary thought, and some by adopting the idea

A Way of Life

Before the pandemic, I was grateful to have participated in a six-week Mongolia mission trip organized by the Hong Kong Baptist Mission. I also had the privilege of becoming the head of the Mission Department in the Student Union. The sharing of teacher advisors, cooperation with classmates, and the process of putting what we had learned into practice allowed me to deepen my understanding of the roles of pastors and missionaries.

Immediately after graduation, I had the opportunity to participate in a three-month mission trip to Japan. At the time of writing, it was the time for short-term missions, and coincidentally, it was also when Japan began to release Fukushima's nuclear wastewater to the sea. Some people may simultaneously love and hate Japan. Those who love it are either fond of its local culture or love doing gospel work there. Those who harbor resentment might feel a bit like the prophet Jonah when faced with the city of Nineveh. Thankfully, during the missionary trip, I had the opportunity to meet more than ten missionaries and pastors, beginning to understand their work and the joys and sorrows of each. Among others, I met a Japanese pastor who had studied and pastored overseas. We worshiped in his home and prayed for Japan, and he also prayed for Hong Kong. In this way, we interceded for each other.

Looking back on my "way of life," which is intertwined with the "road of mission" and "path of theology," I can only be thankful!

Regarding the "road of mission," it's all by God's grace. Only by relying on this almighty God can we face tomorrow and embark on this journey.

Regarding the "path of theology," six years of full-time study at the seminary is a lifelong, beneficial journey of biblical and theological exploration.

Regarding the "way of life," thank God for His grace! I look forward to continuing to look up to the triune God, who is the beginning and end, in my new theological journey and my way of life. ***Let us rely on His grace and run forward on the road ahead with faith, hope, and love!***

In these past two years of full-time theological education, I have received an abundance of grace, and I would like to share some of the insights I have gained.

Grace: Knowing God and Salvation History

How can I experience God if I do not know Him? How can I speak of a God I have not experienced? If I do not know God, how can I live a life in Christ, even if I belong to Him and have become a minister? Therefore, during this period of study, **every time I delved deeper and gained a more comprehensive understanding of the mystery of the triune God, the joy and satisfaction I received could not be fully expressed in words.** It was a feeling that penetrated deep into my heart and was manifested in my life.

This Master of Divinity program has been God's grace to me. I was particularly thankful for being taught by Prof. Andres Tang on Colin E. Gunton's *The Christian Faith*, which allowed me to grasp a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the salvation history confessed by Christians regarding the

triune God. As I discovered God's intention in creating the world and understood how sin hinders the fulfillment of God's intentions, I gained a deeper understanding of why God calls us to become a holy community distinct from the world. Learning theology should not remain at the level of intellectual excitement; it

Learning theology should not remain at the level of intellectual excitement; it should lead to the transformation of life and a deeper whole-person connection with God.

should lead to the transformation of life and a deeper whole-person connection with God.

Grace: No Longer Alone, Entering the Community

Over the years, during the early stages of my studies, I tended to live, attend classes, and learn on my own. I found dealing with people to be quite bothersome, as there were too many self-centered opinions and it was challenging to serve others. Due to various negative experiences with communities, I chose to learn and serve on my own. However, I knew in my heart that this was not a healthy state for a servant of God who is called to be part of a community. Despite this, I was still reluctant to change.

Upon returning to the seminary, I naturally encountered a group of classmates who were called by God, each with their own reasons ("because God ...") for entering theological education. These innocent classmates made me reflect on my past and consider the experiences that had made me less pure-

hearted. I hoped to move beyond my isolated state and return to the Christian community so that I might overcome the failures and weaknesses of my past.

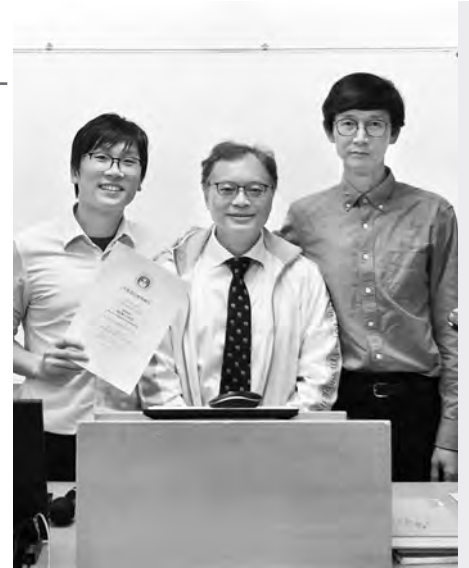
I am grateful for God's grace, which allowed me to encounter this community and motivated me to

join it. In fact, this community was not a different one; it was the same community as before. However, through the transformation of the Holy Spirit, I no longer participated with a disposition of contempt. **Every life I encountered at the seminary has contributed to this transformation, and I cannot help but give all the glory to the triune God.**

Grace: Seeing and Being Seen

The seminary is not a place without problems. As the saying goes, "Where there are people, there will be issues," and when people gather, there will naturally be interpersonal issues. But amidst a sea of relational issues, what do we see? Thanks to God's grace, the various people and experiences I encountered over these two years have allowed me to gain a deep understanding of what we call "issues." It is not always easy to determine who is right and who is wrong, but we can choose our focus: whether to focus on people or focus on issues. As for me, I have learned from Jesus to focus on people. **"Every person should be seen, and no one should be ignored for the sake of resolving issues. This is the orientation that the Christian community should choose."** This is a summary of my learning in the past two years at the seminary.

Now, sharing the grace of God as a chaplain in a hospital, I see people's needs and various needs in interpersonal issues all the time. God has allowed me to go through these two years of learning in which I have gained a more comprehensive understanding of salvation history. I have also discovered the meaning of community. May all these experiences help me see what God sees here and now—people whom He redeemed at a great price.



Wilson with Vice-president (Research) Wong Fook-kong and classmate Samuel Yip

A Spiritual Retreat Journey

Peter Koo (Th.M.)

I thank God for allowing me to continue my studies at my alma mater after completing the Master of Divinity program. After a turbulent journey of nine years, I have finally completed this entire phase of learning, which has helped me to further understand the infinite God I believe in and has equipped me to lead and shepherd fellow believers to know Him more.

A Turbulent Journey

It is by no means exaggerating to describe this journey as “turbulent.” Looking back to 2013, I faced a bottleneck in my ministry and went through a very challenging period in my service. I was in a spiritual low, but thanks to God, I had the opportunity to have a detailed conversation with President Joshua Cho, who gave me invaluable pastoral care. After carefully understanding my situation, President Cho did not analyze the difficulties I was facing or offer solutions to those problems. Instead, he directly recognized the spiritual issues and needs in

... to withdraw from the turbulence and enter a peaceful, closer relationship with God, allowing me to face the turbulent situations spiritually.

turbulence and enter a peaceful, closer relationship with God, allowing me to face the turbulent situations spiritually.

An Opportunity for a Spiritual Retreat

I believe that this was indeed a divine appointment. In 2014, I returned to the campus, enrolling in two courses during the first semester. One of the courses was “Biblical Archaeology,” which opened my eyes to an entirely new area of knowledge. The other course, which I found to be a time of “retreat” God arranged specifically for me, was “Jewish Literature Study in the Second Temple Period.” Among others, I studied the *Books of the Maccabees*. In September 2014, the “Occupy Central” movement officially broke out in Hong Kong. Coincidentally, I was studying the *Books of the Maccabees* at that time, which helped me to develop a deeper theological reflection on the events. Furthermore, **by returning to seminary, my learning became a chance for “retreat.” This allowed me to minister to my fellow**

believers during the turbulent times with a more spiritual perspective.

I believe that without returning to seminary for a “retreat” during that period, it would have been challenging for me to support my brothers and sisters with a stable spirituality given my turbulent inner life at that time.

Navigating Storms with the Lord

Another turbulent period came when I completed all my coursework and began preparing for my graduation thesis. God called me into a new ministry field. However, as I needed to adapt to the new environment, I could not but leave aside the writing of my graduation thesis. As I began adapting to my role and service in this new field, social events erupted in 2019. **Thankfully, the continuous years of study and “retreat” life at the seminary from 2014 to 2018 had, I believe, brought healing and strength to my spirituality. This enabled me to have a better discerning power in the Holy Spirit to navigate the turbulent situation and support my church in relatively calm waters during the “social divide.”** But then came three years of the pandemic, which brought drastic changes to churches, society, and even the seminary. Completing my graduation thesis seemed incomprehensibly difficult. However, God arranged for the renovation of the seminary’s curriculum and provided me with a way to complete my studies smoothly under the new system. This marked the end of my “retreat” days amidst the turbulence.

Today, I have graduated, but I believe this is just the beginning of the next phase. God allowed me to undergo a spiritual retreat amidst these nine years of turbulence. I firmly believe He has been uplifting me, enabling me to continue my work on the path of service. **In times of turbulence, He showed me that He is the Lord who calmed the stormy seas, sitting with me in the same boat, and guiding me through the waves.** Thank you, Lord!



Rev. Koo with Vice-president (Research)
Wong Fook-kong

Applying What I've Learned and Deepening My Ministry

William Lai (Th.M.)



Rev. Lai with his wife and two sons

The Challenges and Joys on the Learning Journey

Fellow students who have pursued further education while in ministry roles understand that doing these two things at the same time is far from easy. Balancing ministry service and theological studies is quite different from the commitment I made to studying the Master of Divinity program. Back then, even though the number of subjects and coursework was greater, my entire being revolved around being a student, allowing me to focus entirely on my studies. However, during the Master of Theology program, I was heavily involved in church affairs from Tuesday to Sunday. As for Monday, on which I could potentially rest, I had to go to the Sai O Campus for classes early in the morning. Additionally, I had to rush to complete my thesis by the end of the semester. This journey was really a test of my spirit and endurance.

I never considered myself adept at academic research, but the depth and academic rigor of the Master of Theology program were formidable. I still remember studying the first course, "Biblical Theology," in which we delved into how various scholars defined biblical theology and the different schools of thought on the subject. The differences among the various schools do not exist in absolute right or wrong. They simply originate from different perspectives. This kind of academic discussion was much deeper than anything I had encountered before, and it was eye-opening for me. Another memorable experience was during a semester when I took "Advanced Hebrew." We were required to memorize nearly two hundred Hebrew words, with a vocabulary quiz every week. I remember one Sunday evening while helping my elementary school-aged son study English vocabulary, I was simultaneously memorizing Hebrew words. My son wondered

why his dad, at his age, needed to memorize new words. These moments left a lasting impression on me.

Steadfastness through Prayer

Throughout the six-year journey as a student, there were times when I considered giving up. In 2019, the unstable political situation and social unrest in Hong Kong affected churches and their members. As a pastor, I had also questioned whether continuing my theological studies would actually benefit my ministry. Could the Hebrew words I memorized bless my fellow believers? Would my knowledge of biblical theology give them more confidence in God during these challenging times? But I prayed and sought God's guidance. God's calling was that I had to do my best to get myself prepared so that I might be used by the Lord anytime in this dark age and shine and speak for Him. My role was not only to teach my fellow believers biblical knowledge but to nurture them into workers for God. It was this calling that made me persevere and complete the remaining courses.

God's calling was that I had to do my best to get myself prepared ... not only to teach my fellow believers biblical knowledge but to nurture them into workers for God.

Applying Knowledge in Church Ministry

In the years that followed, God gradually taught me how to apply the knowledge gained from the theological courses to my church ministry. After completing a course each semester, I would organize training courses in my church on the same topics, enabling fellow believers to learn together. This, on the one hand, not only allowed me to apply what I had learned and transform the academic content into something my fellow believers could understand and digest but also gave me an opportunity to explore topics in greater depth, learning how to simplify complex concepts. On the other hand, it exposed church members to subjects they rarely encountered. For example, during one season, I offered a course on extracanonical literature, helping fellow believers understand the origins of the Bible and the differences between canon, apocrypha, and pseudepigrapha, broadening their horizons. Recently, I have taught a course on spiritual formation. Over two hundred church

members attended it. In the first lesson, I spent the entire time explaining Deuteronomy 6:4-5 from the perspectives of theology, history, and the original text, emphasizing how we should love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. The church members were deeply engaged and impressed. Little did they know that the entire content of that lesson was derived from my studies in the last course, "Deuteronomy." ***I'm grateful to the Lord for allowing me to gradually integrate my academic studies into my pastoral work and teaching within my church.***

Reflecting on my six years of academic pursuit, although it was not easy, I see grace everywhere! I'm thankful for my wife's care and support, which enabled me to complete this formidable mission. Many thanks to my colleagues, and brothers and sisters in my church for their care and prayers! And, of course, heartfelt gratitude to the teachers for their dedicated teaching and the classmates for walking with me! ***May we never forget the Lord's call to each of us. Regardless of the challenges we face, may we remain faithful servants of the Lord, wholeheartedly serving throughout our lives.***

The Best Reward for Life's Impermanence

Connie Cheung (Th.M.)



Connie with her husband and daughter

I still recall my praying to God in late 2014 when I faced the unfolding events in society, asking Him how I could shepherd His flock. My heart carried a particular burden for college students and young individuals who are just starting their careers, as both groups were profoundly affected by circumstances. In response, ***God stirred within me, prompting me to delve deeper into the study of His Word, and utilize His gracious teachings and promises to walk alongside my fellow brothers and sisters in their times of suffering.*** Thus, with concepts like "suffering," "God's Word," and "shepherding" in mind, I enrolled in the Master of Theology program at the seminary.

Grace amidst Life's Impermanence

From 2015 to 2023, over eight eventful years, I witnessed my daughter's transition from kindergarten to primary school and encountered my own health challenges that led to hospitalization and surgery. Simultaneously, a former deacon of

my church, whom I am close to, experienced the tragic loss of a family member in a traffic accident while on vacation. In addition, we also had to face the 2019 social events, followed by a once-in-a-century pandemic that lasted for three years. These are experiences that are difficult for anyone to go through. However, what made things even more challenging in early April this year was when my mother-in-law suddenly died from an acute disease while vacationing with us in Seoul. The sorrow and helplessness of the sudden loss of a loved one are indescribable.

Besides needing to settle our emotions, we had to manage the complex procedures and arrangements for the funeral. Just two weeks after returning to Hong Kong, my father-in-law was hospitalized for emergency surgery due to acute appendicitis, nearly missing the opportunity to attend my mother-in-law's memorial service. My husband had to endure the pain of losing his mother and at the same time worry about his father's health. All I could do was to accompany him and offer prayers. I also had to cope with the final semester of my studies at the seminary and an overwhelming workload at my church. Looking back, I have no idea how I managed to get through those tumultuous times. Many nights, I felt so helpless and weak that I didn't even know how to pray. But the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart gently: "Rest assured, I am still by your side, and My grace is sufficient for you," and "Do not worry, for I will take care of everything."

In the days that followed, the difficulties did not instantly disappear, but I witnessed the gracious hand of God at work. We were able to overcome the obstacles and transport my mother-in-law's body back to Hong Kong. My father-in-law was granted permission to leave for three hours to attend my mother-in-law's funeral. Meanwhile, I fulfilled my preaching and teaching responsibilities at my church without encountering any obstacles.

Through it all, I deeply realized that even when I did not know how to pray, a multitude of intercessions enveloped my family, providing us with steadfast support.

Living Well with Our Allotted “Portion”

Reflecting on the autumn of 2022, when I was studying Ecclesiastes at the seminary, I realized that our heavenly Father had already reminded me that there is a time for everything—a time to be born and a time to die. Many aspects of life, including birth and death, lie beyond our control (Eccl 3:1-8). The research topic I chose for my final course assignment was “Justice in Ecclesiastes.” *Though the justice of God may not always be readily apparent in this impermanent world, He reigns with His own timing and authority* (9:11, 12:14). Ecclesiastes emphasizes that each person has his or her allotted “portion” (2:10; 3:22; 5:18; 9:6, 9 ASV; sometimes translated as “reward” in the ESV), and we cannot determine the measure of our “portion.” Nevertheless, we must learn to live well with our “portion,” cherishing the blessings that come with it (9:7, 9). We must also embrace the impermanence and adversities within it (9:11-12) while remaining grateful for God’s provision, cultivating a reverent fear of Him and remembering all that He has done (3:14, 12:1, 13).

This life lesson is far from easy to grasp. However, our heavenly Father personally shepherded me through His Word amidst suffering, allowing me to experience His grace within my own “portion” and to understand life’s limitations and His provision. In addition to God’s abiding presence, I am immensely grateful for the companionship of two classmates from the Master of Divinity program during my final semester. They supported, encouraged, and fervently prayed for me during my most challenging moments, empowering me to persevere and complete my final assignments. God paved my path with all kinds of abundant grace!

As we, the graduating class, continue our ministry and traverse the journey of life, my sincere hope is that we not only recognize the difficulties and challenges but also encounter God’s unwavering provision and care within our allocated “portion.”

... Our Heavenly Father personally shepherded me through His Word amidst suffering, allowing me to experience His grace within my own “portion” and to understand life’s limitations and His provision.

Pastoring as an Interpreter and Preacher

Wong Mui-ling (Th.M.)

Listening for the Calling and Continual Equipping

On a particular day fifteen years ago, within the vast campus of HKBTS, I donned the graduation gown for my Master of Divinity program with a heart full of gratitude, silently saying, “Here I am! Send me.” This was my aspiration when I received the initial calling. Fifteen years later, on the same campus, I once again put on the graduation gown, this time for the Master of Theology program, and my heart continued to say silently, “Here I am. Send me.” My aspiration for my calling remained unchanged.

After graduating from the Master of Divinity program, I embarked on my ministry journey with trepidation. Facing the challenges of real-world pastoral care and dealing with living, breathing individuals, I encountered a series of daunting tasks. Whether it was preaching, teaching, or administration work, I discovered my limitations and deficiencies. Consequently, I decided to further my studies to better equip myself. I chose to pursue the Master of Theology program, majoring in biblical studies, encompassing an in-depth study of both the Old



Rev. Wong and President Joshua Cho

Testament and the New Testament. I hoped that this would provide me with better preparation for further enhancing my pastoral ministry.

Reading the Bible Thoroughly

Though it was not easy balancing full-time pastoral ministry with family responsibilities and my rigorous academic workload, the grace of the Lord was sufficient. Through the dedicated guidance of our teachers who are deeply knowledgeable in biblical studies, my horizons in the study of the Old and New Testaments were broadened. Their teaching ignited my passion for studying the Bible more deeply, and I resolved to “read through” the entire Bible. **“Reading through the Bible” means transforming**

... our teachers who are deeply knowledgeable in biblical studies Their teaching ignited my passion for studying the Bible more deeply, and I resolved to “read through” the entire Bible.

the originally flat words and texts into a three-dimensional world, making the world within the text come alive. This transition from a two-dimensional world to a three-dimensional one is, in essence, a hermeneutic process. Furthermore, biblical interpretation

and preaching are closely intertwined, and a pastor serves as both a biblical interpreter and a preacher.

As a biblical interpreter, one must first grasp the immediate context, culture, background, genre, structure, larger contexts, main ideas, and more of the text to truly understand (or come closer to) the intended meaning

of the text. This is the first successful step in transforming the flat text into a three-dimensional world. Owing to the inseparable continuity between the worlds of the Old Testament and the New Testament, biblical interpreters must grasp the characteristics of both worlds, which will enable them to construct a broader hermeneutic framework, further bringing the text to life. This step can be described as the essence of “reading through” the Bible.

Whole-person Preaching

As a preacher, one’s responsibility is to proclaim the three-dimensional world of the text to the congregation. Thus, preachers must contemplate the question: What is the relationship between the ancient text and the modern congregation? Answering this question requires bridging the chasm of time and space, applying the text from yesteryears to the current generation. The application spans both individual and faith community dimensions. **The mode of preaching is not limited to the pulpit; it includes both the words and actions outside the pulpit.** This involves the preachers’ personal response to the text and their practice of faith, which is also a reflection of their teachings by words and by deeds, essentially, a testimony of their lives.

I thank the Lord for equipping me further through the Master of Theology program, molding my ministry life, and allowing me to integrate and deepen my learning in both hermeneutics and preaching. This enables me to fulfill my aspiration for my initial calling: “Here I am! Send me.”

What to Study? Why Study?

Alben Wong (Th.M.)

Rethinking the Meaning of Learning

As graduation is fast approaching, my mind is brimming with gratitude. Time is limited, yet God’s grace transcends the constraints of time. The entire period throughout which I pursued my Master of Divinity program and my Master of Theology program has been filled with abundant grace, allowing someone like me, who tends to be lazy, ample time to enjoy again the pleasures of learning. **Under the patient guidance of the faculty members, I have once again understood the significance of “what to study” and “why study” for those who serve God.** The question of why we should study serves as a cautionary reminder to individuals like me, who are already engaged in



pastoral work, not to become lost in the burdensome workload of being a pastor. Learning possesses intrinsic value, hence my sharing is focused on the edification of the seminary. I believe this also serves as pastors' own critique of themselves. While perfection remains elusive, the teachings I have received here have awakened me to the realization that I must not passively succumb to the current trends of the times.

Chinese philosopher Deng Xiao-mang issues a warning in his article "What is the Purpose of Learning?" He said that contemporary education has faltered due to the prevalence of utilitarians. From parents to society to students themselves, all are driven by the pursuit of "success." Educational institutions have become "breeding grounds for 'refined egoists.'" This is purportedly considered "beneficial" for students, enabling them to get ahead of others. Deng Xiao-mang further argues that in the past, when contemplating the desired outcomes of education for future generations, a distinction between individuals of decency and vulgarity still existed. However, the current state of education has lost its purpose. It has primarily devolved into vocational training, with students pursuing education solely for the sake of "muddling through to get a diploma." The crisis at hand is that "people's distinctiveness is eroded through education, resulting in sophisticated individuals." This is a far cry from engaging with knowledge in passionate debates; instead, it becomes a mere parroting of information. I agree with his observation that in the current atmosphere, after years of rigorous education, we have ultimately been shaped into preprogrammed answering machines. Learning has lost its fun; without interest in learning, we are left with no choice but to merely "muddle through to get a diploma." When it reaches the point of "muddling through to get a diploma," one is as good as dead.

Breaking Free from Utilitarian Learning

I thank the Lord that the seminary teachers make the effort to dismantle the mindset of "muddling through to get a diploma," discouraging studying solely for employment or career advancement. Echoing the principles of education at the seminary, I would like to

paraphrase Chinese educator Lufei Kui's article written in 1923, "Why Do We Study?" Lufei presented five reasons for studying: character development, acquiring knowledge, developing skills, vocational pursuits, and personal cultivation. Additionally, Lufei pointed out three purposes regarding what studying is for and not for, all refuting the utilitarian approach to studying: studying for the sake of studying without practical application; studying solely for future application without immediate relevance; and studying not for monetary gains. These perspectives align with the tireless dedication of the seminary teachers throughout the years.

In tumultuous times, reading more and engaging with good books becomes even more crucial. This was the motto I embraced during my time at HKBTS, and it remains an integral part of my being that cannot be taken away. I would like to conclude with the words of Tang Chun-I in "The Importance of Reading": "Although books came later in human culture, they serve as a mirror reflecting the entirety of human culture. It is through this mirror that we can understand the general nature of human culture and transition from the natural world to the world of humanities. ... Reading involves placing our small mirror in front of the vast mirror of books, allowing our small mirror to reflect the knowledge and truths illuminated by countless wise and intelligent minds throughout history."

Years of learning at the seminary have taught me not to be deceived by utilitarianism and not to "muddle through" my days simply to "get a diploma." HKBTS has made me understand that the purpose of learning is to understand the Lord under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and, in turn, expand the depth of our thinking.

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Introducing Our New Teachers



Dr. Qu with his wife and three daughters

Dr. Curie Qu
*Assistant Professor of
Christian Thought*

Dr. Curie Qu, who joined our faculty last spring term, currently serves as Assistant Professor of Christian Thought. He is originally from Tianjin and now resides in Hong Kong with his wife. They have

three daughters who attend local kindergartens and primary schools.

Dr. Qu accepted Christ when he graduated from China University of Political Science and Law and subsequently pursued an academic career in Christian theology. He obtained two M.Phil. degrees from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Hong Kong Baptist University respectively, and a Ph.D. degree from Brunel University (London) in 2011. From 2006 to 2011, he served at the North London Alliance Church, during which time he became a trainee pastor. In 2012, he began working as a lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University. Later, in 2018, he taught Western religious studies and philosophy at United International College in Zhuhai. He returned to Hong Kong in 2019 after the birth of his third daughter. Then he taught at various universities and seminaries, including as a part-time teacher for HKBTS's Lay Theological Education Program, teaching subjects such as systematic theology and Christian ethics.

Dr. Qu's research interests include contemporary theology, Barthian theology, apologetics, eschatology, time and eternity, Christian ethics, and Chinese culture. Currently, he primarily teaches systematic theology, Christian ethics, and apologetics. He has jointly taught the courses of Apologetics and Christian Ethics with Vice President (Academic Affairs) Nathan Ng and President Joshua Cho, respectively. He expresses that he has received invaluable help from both of them. He also feels the love and care of the entire faculty and student body in this house of God.

Dr. Qu encourages students to "rejoice in the Lord always, singing to Him no matter what the circumstances are!" At an early age, he was educated in a strict atheist environment where the light of God did not seem to shine, but a saying from the Lord Jesus fundamentally changed the course of his life. He hopes that students can wholeheartedly devote themselves to learning and cherish these few years at the seminary, as it may be the last opportunity in their lives for them to fully immerse themselves in God's Word. He hopes that they can fully receive the grace given by God, taking the heart of the Lord Jesus as their own and always abounding in the work of the Lord, so that one day they can bless others with the true light of His grace.

Dr. Law Kit-ying
*Assistant Professor
(Worship and Church Music)*



Dr. Law Kit-ying joined our faculty this academic year as Assistant Professor (Worship and Church Music). She holds an M.Div. degree and went on to earn an S.T.M. degree at the Yale Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music, as well as a Ph.D. degree at the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, specializing in liturgical studies.

Dr. Law comes from a Christian family and grew up in church. She started learning the piano at a young age and participated in a children's choir organized by a church school, along with her younger brother. Every summer, she had the opportunity to tour with the group and perform in different places, using musicals and sacred music to share the grace and joy bestowed by the Lord with overseas Chinese communities. It was during a music camp in high school when Dr. Law clearly felt her calling. She pursued studies in vocal music and organ in the Department of Music, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. During her undergraduate years, she held positions such as chairperson of the Chung Chi Choir, leader of the Christian Fellowship in the Music Department, and organist at the Chung Chi College Chapel. These experiences solidified her conviction that her calling was to serve churches through sacred music. Consequently, she pursued full-time theological studies while further enhancing her training in sacred music, delving deeper into choral conducting and organ playing. In 2006, she was awarded a scholarship to further her studies in the United States, where she studied with conductor Prof. Joel Navarro, and dedicated herself to training individuals serving in various capacities during church worship.

Dr. Law's research interests include contemporary liturgy and its cultural and pastoral significance, congregational singing and worship renewal, ethnodoxology and its practical theology, lament psalms, and the pathos of the triune God. In the current academic year, she will be teaching courses such as "Leading Congregational Singing" and "Biblical Foundation of Worship." Additionally, she is responsible for leading and organizing the HKBTS choir, chapel services for certain Christian feasts, and the Spiritual Revival Concert. Apart from her teaching responsibilities, Dr. Law has in recent years served as the convener and conductor of the Sacred Singers and as a consultant to the Christian Choir at the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Dr. Law has joined the faculty of the HKBTS Division of Practical Theology with the hope of inspiring aspiring pastors and other Christians from diverse church traditions to courageously explore and actively pursue worship renewal in the present era. She also aims to infuse music with the gospel, creating opportunities for people to encounter Christ and experience spiritual renewal and transformation in their lives.

The Divine Mandate of Spiritual Parents **Paul as Our Role Model**

Bernard Leung

Associate Professor of New Testament



The Church as a Big Family

In the early church, believers regarded each other as family, addressing one another as brothers and sisters. This familial imagery carried a deeper significance, representing the unique relationship between parents and children—a unique relationship between

a minority of high-standing church founders and the church members they led to God and pastored. This was a significant relationship, which was akin to the gracious bond between children and their physical parents who gave them life and care. Parents are considered “patron” to their children, and children are expected to obey their fathers’ authority and instructions and show respect to their parents.

Paul and the Corinthians: “Father” and “Children”

In the context of this tradition, *Paul referred to the Corinthians as “children”* (1 Cor 4:14) *and himself as their “father,” “in Christ Jesus through the gospel”* (1 Cor 4:15; cf. 4:17; 1 Thes 2:8, 11; Phlm 10).¹ When Paul said he had “begotten” the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:14 ASV; “became your father” ESV), he was referring to his role in founding the church during his first visit to the city of Corinth (AD 50-52). When he wrote 1 Corinthians, recalling the incident, he had departed from Corinth for two to three years (around AD 54-55). Later, questions arose concerning Paul’s apostolic authority, causing tension in his relationship with the Corinthians. During this period, Paul made a second visit to Corinth, which resulted in a painful encounter (2 Cor 2:1-2). Subsequently, Paul wrote

a “tearful letter” (2 Cor 2:3-4) in an attempt to mend his relationship with the Corinthians.

If we assume that 2 Corinthians is one single letter from the beginning, rather than composed of different fragments of letters, then this lost “tearful letter” should have a positive impact. From 2 Corinthians 1–7, we can see that Paul felt relieved and comforted due to the Corinthians’ turning back in response. Unfortunately, this sense of relief was short-lived, as Paul received bad news before sending 2 Corinthians 1–9:² some Corinthians were comparing him unfavorably to other visiting teachers, criticizing his oratory skills (2 Cor 10:10; 11:6), and his rejection of their financial support (11:7). He was less acceptable than the teachers known as “super-apostles.” Paul was also accused of only pretending not to accept financial support from the churches while supposedly pocketing the offerings intended for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 12:16).

In the face of these accusations, Paul immediately continued to write 2 Corinthians 10–13, using more intense and forceful language than in chapters 1–9. Paul first defended his seemingly weak performance (10:1-18) and then employed irony in a Fool’s Discourse to counter the queries from the “super-apostles” (11:1–12:13). Finally, he announced his plan to make a third visit to Corinth and responded emotionally to the accusations of deceit (12:14–13:4). In 2 Corinthians 12:14-15, Paul again used the language of “parents” and “children” (see 2 Cor 6:13) to describe the special relationship between himself and the Corinthians:

Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

Parents and Children: Not Patrons and Clients

In these two short verses, Paul used four money-related verbs: “to be a burden” (*katanarkaō*), “to store up” (*thēsaurizō*; “to save up” ESV), “to spend” (*dapanaō*), and “to exhaust” (*ekdapanaō*; “be spent” ESV). When Paul announced his plan to visit the Corinthians for the third time, he declared in advance that he “will not be a burden [to you]” (v. 14). This resonated with the previous section (11:1–12:13) where he had used the same verb twice to describe how he had never requested nor accepted gifts from the Corinthians (see 11:9; 12:13). The verb “to be a burden” was commonly used in the context of patron-client relationships, where clients, after receiving favors, were obligated to demonstrate loyalty and support to their gracious patron, upon whom they often depended for their livelihood. **Paul neither requested nor accepted financial support from the Corinthians, choosing instead to work with his own hands and be self-sufficient.** This not only went against the common practice accepted in the early church (1 Cor 9:4-14) but also contradicted Paul’s own teaching (Gal 6:6) and practice (2 Cor 11:8-9; Phil 4:15-18). Furthermore, it might have been seen by the Corinthians as a rejection of their friendship and interpreted as an insult, possibly even displaying hostility. This also provided a pretext for both internal and external opponents to question Paul’s apostolic authority and integrity.

Paul explained his deviation from the customary practice of accepting financial support from the churches in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. He presented the gospel free of charge (1 Cor 9:18) because it was part of his calling and thus a “necessity” for him (1 Cor 9:16). He believed that by doing so, he had made himself a servant to all and could then “win more of them” (1 Cor 9:19). Paul might have also considered the practical situation: accepting monetary support from the Corinthians (actually it was the money from the relatively well-off ones among them) could exacerbate factionalism within the churches and turn him into a client of those who loved boasting (i.e. a burden to them), losing his freedom to preach the gospel truth. Paul refused to be a burden to the Corinthians just to avoid this possibility, ensuring their relationship would not be distorted into the patron-client dependency typical of societal and cultural norms.

Unconditional Giving

Paul’s practice of “not becoming a burden to others” was, however, questioned as a deceptive tactic to trap the believers (2 Cor 12:16). Besides presenting factual arguments (12:17-18), Paul also used the common practice of parents “saving” for their children to illustrate his unconditional giving to the Corinthians (12:14c): “For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.” **Paul emphasized that he was the Corinthians’ “spiritual father,” not a client. He was not a burden to the church, requiring them to provide for his livelihood. Instead, just like a father, he provided for their daily needs and labored tirelessly for them physically and emotionally.** When Paul used the imagery of parents and children, there are three aspects worth noting.

Firstly, the image of a father who is wholly concerned for the well-being of his children and has no selfish motives is an emotional relationship that Paul had already expressed earlier when he said, “For I seek not what is yours but you” (12:14b). Paul distinguished between “what is yours” (or “your possession”; Greek *ta humōn*) and “you” (*humas*). This contrast echoed his statement in the following verse, where he described how he “spent” for his “spiritual children.” In 2 Corinthians 12:15, Paul said, “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.” In the first part of the sentence, “spend” does not have an explicit object, but the context implies one, “I will most gladly spend [what is mine (*to mou*)] ... for your lives.” “Be spent” in the second part of the sentence is in the passive voice, which can be expressed in an active voice, “and I spent (myself) for your souls.”¹³ **In other words, for Paul, what he desired was not “your possessions” but “you.” Correspondingly, what he was willing to expend was “his own possessions” and even “himself.”**

Secondly, when Paul explained why he gave selflessly to the believers, he could have used a Christological argument, just as in the cases in his other letters. For example, in Philippians 2:6-8, Paul encouraged the Philippians not to be selfish and to have an attitude of humility toward others instead, pointing to Christ who did not insist on equality with God but emptied Himself, and showing Christ as the model for selfless giving. Also, in 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to renew their enthusiasm for the collection to the churches in Jerusalem: “[our Lord Jesus Christ] was rich, yet for your

sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” However, **in 2 Corinthians 12, Paul did not employ such advanced theological concepts but instead chose to use commonly accepted ethical principles.** Although there were many other aspects to the ethical principles concerning parents and children at the time (such as the supreme authority of fathers and the absolute obedience of children, or the obligation of children to care for their parents when they had needs like old age or illness), Paul specifically emphasized the aspect of parents providing unconditionally for their children in terms of finances and material possessions. This viewpoint aligned with the prevailing Hellenistic and Jewish culture of that time.⁴

Lastly, it is noteworthy that **when Paul used the imagery of “parents” and “children” in his letters to the Corinthians, it often had a polemical rhetorical purpose.** In 1 Corinthians 4:15b, he said he had fathered the Corinthians through the gospel in Christ Jesus. In the first half of the verse, he said, “For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers.” “Guides” referred to household slaves or hired attendants at that time. While fathers were not physically present, they would lead the children to the schoolhouse and back home and were assigned the duty of overseeing their conduct in general. Although the Corinthians were influenced by many popular teachers or leaders during Paul’s absence, Paul emphasized that he was their sole father, and thus, they should imitate this unique father, rather than others (4:16).

In 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 and 7:2-4, Paul urged the Corinthians to open their hearts to him with the same sincerity. He pointed out an imbalance in their attitudes: “You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections” (6:12). Perhaps Paul found this expression too harsh and immediately used gentler words, emphasizing that he was speaking to them from the bottom of his heart as a father who had suffered for his children (6:4-10). He said, “In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also” (6:13).

In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul introduced a new element into the imagery of parents and children: the idea of a father betrothing his daughter to a husband—Christ (11:2; cf. Hos 2:19-20). The Corinthians easily accepted another Jesus and received another Spirit from external teachers (11:4). Paul did not compare this behavior to

children betraying their parents but viewed it as a wife being unfaithful to her husband. As the spiritual father of the Corinthians, Paul’s love for them was divine, akin to God’s jealous love (*zēlos*) for His people (11:2). Therefore, he was deeply grieved that their thoughts were being led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (11:3).

The Divine Mandate of Spiritual Parents

Paul, as the “spiritual father” of the Corinthians, lived out the divine mandate of parents giving selflessly for their children. He served others without seeking personal gain from them. His desire for his spiritual children was for “themselves.” As for “their possessions,” including the material wealth and honor highly esteemed in society at that time, he was not interested at all. What he sought was “them,” their well-being, and their love and fellowship in Christ. Even in the face of difficulties and challenges, Paul was willing to endure all the dangers and threats, hoping that his sacrifices would contribute to the growth of others.

Paul, as the “spiritual father” of the Corinthians, lived out the divine mandate of parents giving selflessly for their children. ... Today, how do “spiritual fathers” and “spiritual mothers” in the churches measure up to this example?

Today, how do “spiritual fathers” and “spiritual mothers” in the churches measure up to this example? How willing are ministers, pastors, teachers (including myself), and leaders to give for the spiritual lives of their “spiritual children”? Are they ready to give, regardless of how much they receive from the children in return?

1. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.
2. In 2 Cor 8–9, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to renew their commitment to the collection for believers in Jerusalem.
3. This is similar to a saying of the philosopher Seneca of his time, “... good men expend, are expended, and, in fact, voluntarily.” See Seneca, *On Providence* 5.4 in BDAG, s.v. “*δραναίω*” 1.
4. Philo of Alexandria said, “But since, in the natural order of things, sons are the heirs of their fathers and not fathers of their sons” See Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.245.

Academic Affairs News

Opening Convocation for the New School Year

The Opening Convocation Ceremony for 2023-24 was held on August 22. President Joshua Cho preached a message titled "A Tree Planted by Streams of Water That Yields Its Fruit in Its Season." Based on Psalm 1, President Cho reminded us that those who live according to God's law are blessed. The word "law" in this psalm, translated from the Hebrew word *Torah*, means instruction. The Torah instructs us to maintain harmonious and righteous relationships with the Creator and all creation. The psalmist urges us to be like a tree, rooted in the Torah, with our lives deeply grounded in God's life, becoming truly blessed righteous individuals. We are encouraged not to be like the wicked, who have shallow roots and are easily scattered like chaff by the wind. President Cho encouraged us to make choices under the guidance of the Holy Spirit so as to transform and renew our lives.

Opening Convocation Lecture

The lecture was held on August 23. Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan, Assistant Professor of New Testament, presented a lecture titled "Apocalyptic Paul and Insights from Interdisciplinary Approaches."

Faculty Movement

Dr. Eric Kwong, Associate Professor of Practical Theology (World Religions), retired in July. We thank him for his 25 years of faithful service and dedication to the seminary. May God bless him with a new life after retirement.

Dr. Freeman Huen, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Social Ethics), left his post in July. We thank him for his years of faithful service and dedication to the seminary. May God continue to use him and lead him onto a new ministry path.

Dr. Law Kit-ying joined our faculty on September 1 as Assistant Professor (Worship and Church Music). Dr.

Law obtained her M.Div. from Alliance Bible Seminary, her S.T.M. from Yale Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music, and her Ph.D. from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Her research interests include contemporary liturgy and its cultural and pastoral significance, congregational singing and worship renewal, ethnodoxology and its practical theology, lament Psalms, and the pathos of the triune God. May God lead her service at the seminary and help her work with our faculty as a team for the mission of Christian education and research.

Baptist Heritage Week

Baptist Heritage Week was held from October 10 to 12 (10:00-11:00 am) on the Sai O Campus on the theme "A Survey of the Major Baptist Denominations in Hong Kong." It discussed the history, development, and church polity of the three major Baptist denominations in Hong Kong, with particular attention to the impact of recent social changes on their respective churches. The 3-day lecture was delivered by the three speakers, Mr. Chiang Wai-tong, General Secretary of the Hong Kong ABWE Alliance, Rev. Sin Kam-kwong, Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Conservative Baptist Church Association, and Rev. Dr. Lee Kwok-hung, General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong.

Full-Time Ministry Experiential Day Camp

The Full-Time Ministry Experiential Day Camp with the theme "Leap of Faith" was held from October 13 to 14 for Christians who wanted to explore the possibility of practicing ministry full-time. This camp enabled participants to reflect more deeply on God's calling and learn more about the programs of study available at HKBTS.

Joint Graduation Ceremony

The Joint Graduation Ceremony of HKBTS for Main Program, Lay Theological Education Department, and Distance Education Program will be held on November 19 (Sunday) at 3:30 pm at the Kowloon City Baptist Church. Church pastors, deacons, and members are welcome to attend.

Main Program Admissions for Spring 2023-24

The Main Program is now open for applications for admissions in the 2023-24 spring semester. Programs available include Master of Divinity, Master of Divinity (Further Studies), Master of Christian Studies, Master of Theology, and Doctor of Theology. The spring semester begins on January 11, 2024. The deadline for applications is November 30, 2023.

From the Chaplain

Brian Lam Chaplain

Transition: How to Conduct Ourselves in Times of Rapid Changes

The seminary starts every new academic year with the Spiritual Formation Camp. The theme for this year was "Let's Accompany One Another in a Time of Change, and Let's Change When Accompanying One Another." The camp spanned three days and two nights. On the morning of the second day, I led a workshop titled "Identity Change: Starting from 'Transition,'" using "transition" as the theme to explore how we can conduct ourselves in times of rapid changes.

Many years ago, I read an article titled "Getting Them through the Wilderness." The author examined the experience of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt from the perspective of "transition," pointing out that even though the Israelites physically left their previous environment, their mindset remained in the past. During the workshop, I shared the story of the author, William Bridges (1933-2013).

Bridges was a management consultant specializing in assisting employees facing major changes such as organizational acquisitions, mergers, downsizing, and similar events. However, he did not have a background in management. He made a "mid-career change," transitioning from being an American Literature professor at Mills College in California, USA to the field of management consulting. Apart from serving in the military for two years earlier in his life, he primarily worked as a college educator.

In 1974, at the age of 40, Bridges longed for a simpler life and was inspired by the rising popularity of communal living; accordingly, he quit his teaching job at Mills College

and purchased a piece of land north of San Francisco with five like-minded families. The six families lived as neighbors. Initially, he was filled with hope and excitement, thinking they were going to live their dream lives. However, within a month, Bridges encountered various minor and major health issues and family issues, leaving him emotionally drained and his life in disarray. He kept reminding himself that this change was for the better, something he had yearned for, and that he should be happy about it! Yet, he gradually realized that there is a difference between "change" and "transition."

Bridges wrote three books on transition, two targeting individuals and one targeting organizations. In his works, he emphasized the crucial differentiation between "change" and "transition" as two distinct concepts. Although they are often used interchangeably in everyday language, he highlighted their differences. Change is situational, that may occur at the individual or organizational levels. Individual changes include changes in supervisors, job promotions, unemployment, relocations, childbirth, or the loss of a spouse. Organizational changes include acquisitions, mergers, or downsizing. Regardless of whether the changes are positive or negative, they inevitably bring about a sense of loss because, with change, certain things or people from the past cease to exist. If what we lose is something we value or has significant meaning in our lives, even seemingly good changes or, in the eyes of others, minor changes can evoke a sense of loss and even grief.

If "change" is situational, "transition," on the other hand, represents a psychological reorientation process that individuals go through when coming to terms with change. "Transition" is significant because, without it, people cannot transform and renew themselves. It will be like living as the same person with the same mindset and life in a new environment. It is similar to the way of some people who have emigrated to foreign countries for many years; their place of residence may change, but their way of life remains unchanged. They continue to go to Chinese restaurants for meals, use banking services in Hong Kong, do not speak foreign languages, and do not integrate themselves into the local community. It can also be compared to a computer with updated hardware but an outdated operating system. The human mind is far more complex than a computer, and without embracing renewal in a new environment, individuals often feel nostalgic, exaggerate the value of old things, and struggle to let go.

Therefore, in times of rapid changes, it is crucial to renew our lives. It starts with acknowledging an ending and breaking ties with the past. As Paul said, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil 3:7 ESV).

Lay Theological Education Department

Carter Pang Director

New Academic Year, New Academic Structure: Innovations in Bachelor-level Degree Programs

As we stepped into October, embarking on a new academic year for our department, we have implemented a number of curriculum innovations. For instance, in the area of non-degree programs, we have introduced the Life and Death Education from Christian Perspective Certificate Program (see our *Newsletter*, August issue). We have also revised the existing Golden Age Ministry Certificate Program, expanding it into the Family Caregivers and Golden Age Ministry Certificate Program. This is an expansion made in response to the social development of Hong Kong. As of last year, Hong Kong has officially entered a "super-aged society" (as defined by the United Nations, where 21% or more of the population is aged 65 or above), and the needs of seniors and family caregivers are bound to grow with each passing day.

In terms of degree programs, I would like to highlight the Bachelor of Arts/Higher Diploma/Diploma Programs in Christian Studies (hereafter referred to as BACS) that we have newly introduced this academic year. Compared to the previous Bachelor of Christian Studies curriculum, the BACS programs are more ideal in terms of academic structure and mode of teaching. Under the previous academic structure, students needed to complete 144 credits (with each credit representing 10 hours of class time), while BACS students now only need to complete 80 credits (with each credit representing 14-15 hours of class time). As for students holding an associate degree/higher diploma or higher qualification, they only need to complete 72 credits. In addition to this, BACS students have the option to major not only in the existing "Biblical Studies"

but also in the newly established majors of "Christian Thought" or "Practical Theology." Furthermore, BACS programs at our department adopt a real-time mixed learning mode, where students can choose to attend classes in person at our Bute Street Campus or participate in real-time online classes. This mode of learning, as compared to merely watching recorded lectures, provides the advantage of allowing students to communicate with instructors and engage in immediate interactions, facilitating mutual growth in the teaching and learning process.

Throughout the preparation of BACS programs, we have heard various opinions. Some questioned why we would need to renovate the curriculum, especially at a time when more people have bachelor's degrees, and some even asked why we continued to offer such programs. Indeed, there are more pathways for further education today in Hong Kong than in the past. However, we found that there are still many enthusiastic believers, some with years of work experience but only a secondary school education, who are eager to pursue a bachelor's degree in theology to equip themselves.

One believer once inquired about BACS programs and left a message, saying, "I would like to thank the Lay Theological Education Department for considering our needs and revamping the curriculum. I've asked several theological institutions before, but their doors always seemed closed to people like us—those with lower educational qualifications and older in age, as if we had no opportunities for further education. Although a certificate does not represent much, a degree program gives me a goal to strive forward, and this kind of learning leads to progress." Similar to this believer's sharing, we have actually heard such sentiments more than once. This affirms to us that continuing to offer bachelor-level degree programs have their significance and value. Simultaneously, we hope that BACS programs can serve as a "bridge," providing an opportunity for more believers who do not possess undergraduate degrees but have received the calling of the Lord and desire to deepen their theological training to first receive foundational training.

Our degree programs for this academic year are currently open for the second round of admissions (classes starting in February 2024). We welcome applications. If you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact our department.

Distance Education Program

Charis Chan Associate Director

Persevering in Learning, Sharing in Grace

The fall term for both non-degree and degree programs in 2023 began on September 1 and October 1, respectively. Tutorials for non-degree programs were completed within the first three weeks after the start of classes, and the Student Orientation for degree programs was held online on September 8. New students for this term come from both local and international regions, including the UK and Canada. May the Lord bless them and grant them a fruitful learning experience. We have also begun enrollment for the spring term of 2024 for both degree and non-degree programs. Brothers and sisters are welcome for enrollment or inquiries.

Regarding tutors, we welcome five tutors to join our diploma programs team starting this season. They are Mr. Cheung Siu-lun for "Old Testament I"; Mr. Lau Wing-kee for "New Testament II"; Ms. Cheng Ka-lai for "New Testament III"; Ms. Anna Yip for "Apologetics"; and Ms. Choi Wai-ying for "Missiology." Additionally, Mr. Chow Man-kit serves as a teaching assistant for the Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies Degree Programs and Higher Diploma/Diploma in Christian Studies (Degree) Programs, primarily responsible for "The Message of the New Testament." May both teachers and students grow in the grace of the Lord via these programs.

This year, our Joint Graduation Ceremony with the Main Program and the Lay Theological Education Department will be held on November 19 (Sunday) at the Kowloon City Baptist Church. Approximately twenty students will graduate from the Distance Education Program this year, including five students from Special Training Ministries: one from the Onesimus Training Project, a collaborative effort with the Hong Kong Christian Sun Association aimed at serving incarcerated believers in Hong Kong; and one from the Philemon Training Project, co-organized with the Beauty and Grace Foundation, which primarily serves prison inmates, parolees, individuals in rehabilitation, and other marginalized communities. Besides, three students from the Spiritual Light Project,

a collaboration with the Christian Ministry to Visually Impaired Persons, are visually impaired believers who have been diligent in their studies.

We sincerely invite you to pray for us that believers around the world may be edified.

Student Union

Lau Tze-hong Chairperson

Walking Together in Liminality

This past August, the Spiritual Devotion Department of the Student Union (SU) assisted the Chaplain Office in organizing this year's Spiritual Formation Camp. The theme for this year was "Let's Accompany One Another in a Time of Change, and Let's Change When Accompanying One Another." There were three sessions in which the teachers led us to reflect on topics such as companionship, calling, and facing changes. Additionally, students and faculty members contemplated and shared the Word of God, creating an opportunity for students to "recharge" themselves in the truth of God after their full-time internships during the summer break and before the start of classes.

During the camp, our chaplain, Rev. Brian Lam, guided us in thinking about transitioning from the old state to the new amid changes. The concept of "liminality" was particularly emphasized. "Liminality" refers to the ambiguous state between the old and the new. In fact, as seminary students, we are in a liminal state between lay believers and ministers from the time of enrollment until graduation. We gradually let go of certain aspects of our past lives while embracing new things that lie ahead. As a community experiencing this liminality together, we have our unique shared experiences and feelings, and we face unique challenges. Therefore, walking together is crucial as we can be one another's supporters within this community. Indeed, this is the aspiration of the SU for this year, which is to be a bridge among everyone on campus. The achievement of this goal is yet to be proven.

May God continue His work of forging connections and liaising among us in the new academic year, teaching us to be companions to one another.

Publication News



The seminary's biannual academic journal, *Hill Road* (issue 52) will be published in December with the theme **"Poverty and Wealth."** There will be six thematic articles: "Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament (I)" (Nicholas Ho-fai Tai), "Wealth and Poverty: Yahweh's Demand for the Land" (Chan Yew-ming), "The Ancient and Modern Perception of Poverty, Subsistence, and the Economic

Location of the Pauline Communities" (Bernard Chun-ho Leung), "Paul's Reciprocity on the Poor and Rich" (Solomon H. F. Wong), "The Rich and the Poor Need Each Other: Illumination from Shepherd of Hermas" (Joyce Wai-lan Sun), and "Poverty, None of the Church's Business...!?" (Vincent C. P. Lau). In addition, there will be a discussion article 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

- A delegation of seven postgraduate school teachers and Ph.D. students from the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in China, led by Executive Vice President Rev. Chen Yilu, visited the seminary on August 9.

Faculty News

- An article written by **Dr. Andres S. Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture), entitled "Moltmann's Quotation of *Letters and Papers from Prison* in *The Crucified God*" has been included in the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 49 published in May 2023. His other article "The Practice of Integral Mission from Theological Perspective" has been included in the book *To See a Theological World in a Grain of Sand*, edited by Alister Au (Hong Kong: Gratia Christian College, 2023).
- An article written by **Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan**, Assistant Professor of New Testament, entitled "The Macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel and the Formation of a Community of Disciples," has been included in the journal *Sino-Christian Studies* 35 published in June 2023. He also spoke on the topic "Apocalyptic Paul: The Dialogue between Cognitive Linguistics and Semiotics" at the seminar "New Testament Salon: A Dialogue between Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan and Dr. Menghun Goh" organized by Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press in Taipei on October 2.

Alumni News

- Alumnus **Ng Kwok-keung** (class of 2006) was ordained as a pastor by the Ngau Tau Kok Baptist Church on July 16.
- Alumnus **Lau Siu-wing** (class of 2013 & 2016) was ordained as a pastor by the Kwong Yuen Estate Hay Nien Baptist Church on September 10.

Lay Theological Education Department

Degree Programs in Christian Studies

October 2023-September 2024 (auditing is welcome)

Subject	Lecturer	Date/Time	Instruction Mode
Christian Theology I	Dr. Cheng Suet-ling Ph.D.	11/10/23-10/1/24 Wed 7:00-10:00 pm (14 lessons)	In Person/Video Conferences
Christian Theology II		16/2-24/5/24 Fri 7:00-10:00 pm (29/3/24 class suspended; 14 lessons)	
New Testament Background	Dr. Bernard Leung Associate Professor of New Testament, HKBTSS	20/2-21/5/24 Tue 7:00-10:00 pm (14 lessons)	In Person/Video Conferences
Systematic Theology I	Dr. Sam Ip Visiting Assistant Professor (Christian Thought), HKBTSS	15/2-23/5/24 Thur 7:00-10:00 pm (4/4/24 class suspended; 14 lessons)	Video Conferences
Systematic Theology II		20/6-19/9/24 Thur 7:00-10:00 pm (14 lessons)	

Degree Programs Admissions Open for 2023-24 (2nd Intake)

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.
- Offers a flexible course selection and learning mode. Students may attend real-time classes in person or online.
- Students of M.A.C.S. may choose "Biblical Studies" or "Communication" as their major or they may choose not to pursue any specific major.
- Some credits acquired in these programs can be transferred when being admitted to the Master of Divinity or the Master of Christian Studies degree programs in the seminary's Main Program.
- Students of the Postgraduate Certificate Program may finish their program in as little as one year.

Application Date for Admissions: From October 2023

Class Start Date: Early February 2024

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.
- Flexible course selection. Our real-time classes enable instructors and students to interact in real time.
- Students of B.A.C.S. may choose "Biblical Studies," "Christian Thought," or "Practical Theology" as their major or they may choose not to pursue any specific major.
- Some credits acquired in these programs can be transferred when being admitted to the master's degree programs in the Lay Theological Education Department or Bachelor of Theology degree programs in the seminary's Main Program.

Application Date for Admissions: From October 2023

Class Start Date: Early February 2024

All the above programs are conducted in Cantonese.

Venue: Applied Theological Education Centre (8/F., Christian Centre, 56 Bute Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon)

For Inquiries/Registration Tel: 2711 2552 Email: itedinfo@hkbits.edu.hk Website: www.hkbits.edu.hk/ited

Pastoral Continuing Education Centre

Courses and talks offered from October to December 2023

Course/Talk	Lecturer	Date	Time
Baptists: Historical Origins and Beliefs [†]	Dr. Alex To	30/10, 6/11	10:00 am-12:00 pm
Countering Vision Shift: Mission of Churches and Leadership Focus in the 21st Century	Rev. John Tran	30/10	2:30-4:30 pm
The Ethics of Preaching	Dr. Ip King-tak	6, 13/11	2:30-4:30 pm
Lectionary and Pastoral Care in Worship: Theme and Procedure	Dr. Law Kit-ying	13/11, 20/11	10:00 am-12:00 pm
Apostle Paul's Perspective on Money	Dr. Bernard Leung	27/11, 4/12	10:00 am-12:00 pm

Fee concessions

- (1) *Early Bird Reduction:* those who pay the full fee for the enrolled course a week before the course begins may enjoy a reduction of HK\$20 (for a 2-hour course) or HK\$30 (for a 4-to-6 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.

Instruction Mode In Person/Video Conferences

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.hkbits.edu.hk/pce/apply2.html

Inquiries Tel: 2768 5179

Email: pce@hkbits.edu.hk

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

[†] Video conference only

Distance Education Program

Exploring Truth . Reflecting upon Faith . Equipping for Ministry

Degree Program	Description	Admissions Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Bachelor of Arts/ Higher Diploma/ Diploma in Christian Studies (Degree Programs)	To provide students with basic practical theological training, equipping them to serve in churches and to witness Christ in society. Some credits earned in these programs can be transferred to the master's degree programs at the seminary.	Secondary school graduates with their pastor's recommendations, and having passed our written test and interview.	February, June, and October	Spring trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> November 20 <i>Overseas:</i> October 20 Summer trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> March 20 <i>Overseas:</i> February 20 Fall trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> July 20 <i>Overseas:</i> June 20

These are all online degree programs.

Non-degree Program	Description	Admissions Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Higher Diploma in Christian Studies (Non-degree Program)	Providing basic theological training including bible study, theology, and practical studies. It enables students to lay a solid foundation of faith, reshape their lives, and live out their calling.	Diploma (non-degree program) graduates with their pastor's recommendations.	March and September	Spring semester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> February 10 <i>Overseas:</i> January 10 Fall semester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> August 10 <i>Overseas:</i> July 10
Diploma in Christian Studies (Non-degree Program)		Secondary school graduates with their pastor's recommendations.		
Certificate in Biblical Studies	Introductory programs in biblical studies, guiding students to study the Bible systematically.	All are welcome	January, May, and September	Spring trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> January 20 <i>Overseas:</i> December 20 Summer trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> May 20 <i>Overseas:</i> April 20 Fall trimester: <i>Hong Kong:</i> September 20 <i>Overseas:</i> August 20

Non-degree 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

Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Centre

Classes offered from October to December 2023

Class	Lecturer	Date/Time
Primary Class Voice	Mr. Sanson Lau Director, Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Centre	17/10-14/11 Tue 7:00-8:30 pm (5 lessons)
Intermediate Class Voice		15/11-13/12 Wed (5 lessons) Class A 7:00-8:30 pm; Class B 8:30-10:00 pm
Integrated Studies for Church Musician		21/11, 28/11 Tue 7:00-9:00 pm (2 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training II (7)	Mrs. Wong Fung Chi-lai	6/10-1/12 Fri 1:30-4:00 pm (8 lessons)
Evening Class: Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training II (7)		9/10-18/12 Mon 7:00-9:30 pm (8 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training III (9)		11/10-6/12 Wed 10:00 am-12:30 pm (8 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training I	Ms. Rachel Kwok	24/10-12/12 Tue (6 lessons) Class B: 12:00-2:00 pm 26/10-14/12 Thur (6 lessons) Class C: 2:00-4:00 pm
Basic Aural and Sight-reading Training II		26/10-14/12 Thur 7:20-8:20 pm (5 lessons)
Flowers for the Church: Theology and Meaning	Rev. So Wai-man	10/10-31/10 Tue 7:30-9:30 pm (3 lessons)
Worship Now and Then: Quiet Time	Dr. Cherry Wong	25/10-13/12 Wed 7:00-8:30 pm (6 lessons)
Musical Conductors Infinite	Mr. Sanson Lau Ms. Rachel Kwok Mr. Mark Hui	30/10-27/11 Mon 7:30-9:30 pm (4 lessons)
Basic Conducting II	Mr. Vicky Shin	27/10-8/12 Fri 7:30-10:00 pm (6 lessons)

Inquiries/Registration Tel: 2789 2200 Email: worship-arts@hkbtn.edu.hk Website: www.hkbtn.edu.hk/waec

In Loving Remembrance of Rev. George Raymond Wilson Jr.

The seminary's fourth president, Rev. George Raymond Wilson Jr., passed away to be with the Lord on the morning of September 20, 2023 (US time) at the age of 95. Rev. Wilson was awarded a doctorate in religious education in 1957 and accepted the commission of being a missionary to Hong Kong that year. Since 1981, he served as the fourth president of the seminary for 13 years and was a Professor in Religious Education. Rev. Wilson was an outstanding educator and well-respected by his students. He taught students according to their aptitude and nurtured generations after generations of ministers and missionaries. His students, following his example, have left their footprints throughout the world. Moreover, Rev. Wilson actively engaged in the contextualization of Chinese theological education and the renovation of the theological curriculum, having fostered numerous theological educators for Chinese churches.



Rev. Wilson was humble, competent, and energetic. Devoted his whole life to God, Rev. Wilson served in Hong Kong for over 60 years. Let us remember this faithful servant-leader. May God comfort Rev. Wilson's family and may the peace and grace of God be with them always.

DONORS REPORT FOR JUNE 2023

Education Fund (Church / Organization)		申融融	400.00	無名氏	200.00
九龍國際浸信會	30,304.00	朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	200.00
上水浸信會	15,000.00	何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	200.00
大埔主恩浸信會	1,750.00	吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	40.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	吳國傑伉儷	1,000.00	HK\$	<u>106,540.00</u>
元朗浸信會	60,000.00	李國雄伉儷	1,000.00		
屯門浸信教會	700.00	李新蘭	200.00	Distance Education Program	
以馬內利浸信會	5,400.00	洪錦漢	100.00	鄭鵬程	300.00
生命頌浸信會	2,000.00	洪鷹輪	200.00	無名氏	444.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	10,000.00	倪承恩	14,700.00	無名氏	100.00
阡陌社區浸信會	5,000.00	殷振強伉儷	1,000.00	HK\$	<u>844.00</u>
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	袁秀琼	20,000.00		
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	曹啟明伉儷	400.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
香港仔浸信會	6,559.30	梁明財伉儷	500.00	申融融	300.00
香港西區浸信會	2,342.80	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,500.00	許煥英	300.00
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	許煥英	700.00	楊美玲	300.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,000.00	許鋒威	1,000.00	鄒小寶	1,700.00
恩典浸信會	11,000.00	陳偉倫	200.00	無名氏	30.00
朗福浸信會	400.00	陳麗英	700.00	HK\$	<u>2,630.00</u>
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	曾慶忠	500.00		
深荃浸信會	500.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00	Campus Extension Project	
第一城浸信會	8,000.00	馮衛倫、黃月珠	16,000.00	廖志勤伉儷	3,000.00
新生命浸信會	4,000.00	黃少娟	500.00	鄧輝祥	500.00
新希望浸信會	1,500.00	黃念施	200.00	申融融	300.00
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	黃華娟	100.00	無名氏	7,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	7,000.00	黃雅志	10,000.00	無名氏	2,000.00
觀塘浸信會	5,438.00	楊建成	1,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
鑽石山浸信會	2,000.00	楊謝金玉	8,000.00	無名氏	30.00
中華傳道會活石堂	1,000.00	葉煥章	300.00	HK\$	<u>13,800.00</u>
浸信宣道會啟業堂	20,668.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00		
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	劉建紅	100.00	Faculty Support	
香港神學教育協會	1,000.00	蔡慧英	200.00	茶果嶺浸信會	2,802.00
啟聞基金	500.00	鄧炳光伉儷	3,000.00	Ling Mei Ping	3,000.00
HK\$	<u>357,062.10</u>	羅佩珊	100.00	無名氏	6,000.00
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	HK\$	<u>11,802.00</u>
Ho Ka Keung	3,000.00	無名氏	4,000.00		
Wong Ki Hang	800.00	無名氏	1,000.00	Church Leader in China Training Programme	
方志強	200.00	無名氏	500.00	汪哲凡	US\$ 101,500.00
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	400.00		
王群	800.00	無名氏	400.00		
		無名氏	200.00		

DONORS REPORT FOR JULY 2023

Education Fund (Church / Organization)		林嘉鴻	500.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
九龍城浸信會	280,000.00	殷振強伉儷	1,000.00	岑麗嫻	3,000.00
九龍城潮語浸信會	55,000.00	曹啟明伉儷	400.00	杜桂鵬	3,000.00
九龍國際浸信會	12,005.00	梁明財伉儷	500.00	陳國權	2,000.00
上環浸信會	10,000.00	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,500.00	無名氏	40.00
土瓜灣浸信會	25,000.00	許煥英	800.00	HK\$	<u>8,040.00</u>
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	許鋒威	1,000.00	Distance Education Program	
屯門浸信教會	700.00	郭鳳璣	2,000.00	葉玉梅	200.00
以馬內利浸信會	5,400.00	陳偉倫	200.00	鄭鵬程	300.00
竹園浸信會	8,000.00	陳毓倫	500.00	無名氏	444.00
阡陌社區浸信會	5,000.00	曾慶志	500.00	無名氏	100.00
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00	HK\$	<u>1,044.00</u>
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	黃念施	200.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
香港仔浸信會	12,738.30	黃華娟	100.00	申融融	300.00
香港西區浸信會	3,071.00	黃雅志	10,000.00	許煥英	200.00
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	楊建成	1,000.00	楊美玲	300.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,000.00	葉煥章	300.00	鄒小寶	1,700.00
朗福浸信會	200.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00	無名氏	110,000.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	劉建紅	100.00	無名氏	30.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	蔡慧英	200.00	HK\$	<u>112,530.00</u>
博愛潮語浸信會	6,529.00	黎國偉	60.00	Campus Extension Project	
愛群道浸信會	17,500.00	羅佩珊	100.00	Liangs' Ltd.	20,000.00
筲箕灣浸信會	10,000.00	羅凱慈	2,000.00	禧年行基金有限公司	30,000.00
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	羅懿舒	1,000.00	申融融	300.00
嘉盛浸信會	2,000.00	譚美娟	5,000.00	鄧輝祥	500.00
廣林浸信會	4,457.00	關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	無名氏	210,000.00
樂滿浸信會	4,000.00	無名氏	20,000.00	無名氏	7,000.00
耀東浸信會	3,000.00	無名氏	4,000.00	無名氏	1,500.00
觀塘浸信會	1,522.00	無名氏	3,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	無名氏	1,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
基督福音堂(主愛堂)	12,500.00	無名氏	1,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
啟聞基金	500.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	30.00
HK\$	<u>634,622.30</u>	無名氏	400.00	HK\$	<u>271,330.00</u>
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		無名氏	400.00	無名氏	1,000.00
方志強	200.00	無名氏	200.00	王洪國侯	1,000.00
王永珍	1,000.00	無名氏	40.00	無名氏	10,000.00
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	0.20	US\$	<u>11,000.00</u>
申融融	400.00	HK\$	<u>74,500.20</u>	Church Leader in China Training Programme	
朱活平伉儷	300.00	Faculty Support		汪哲凡	US\$ <u>164,550.00</u>
何仲儀	1,000.00	茶果嶺浸信會	2,700.00		
吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	Tam Po Kei	10,000.00		
吳國傑伉儷	1,000.00	Yeung Wei Yip	2,500.00		
李國雄伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	6,000.00		
李新蘭	200.00	HK\$	<u>21,200.00</u>		

Financial Report

General Fund, 1 June, 2023 - 31 July 2023

	HK\$
Income	4,644,066.49
Expenditure	<u>(5,918,948.21)</u>
Deficit	<u><u>(1,274,881.72)</u></u>



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
- One-off Donation Monthly Donation (You may terminate this monthly donation at any time)

Cardholder's Name: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

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

Amount: HK\$ _____

- I/We do not wish my name to be shown in the Seminary's Newsletter.

- Please send the crossed cheque or bank receipt along with this completed reply slip to the Seminary by post, email, fax or WhatsApp to (852) 8491 4750.
- 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
- Inquiry: Tel: (852) 2715 9511 Fax: (852) 2761 0868 Email: inquiry@hkbtn.edu.hk

Address: 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong Website: <http://www.hkbtn.edu.hk>

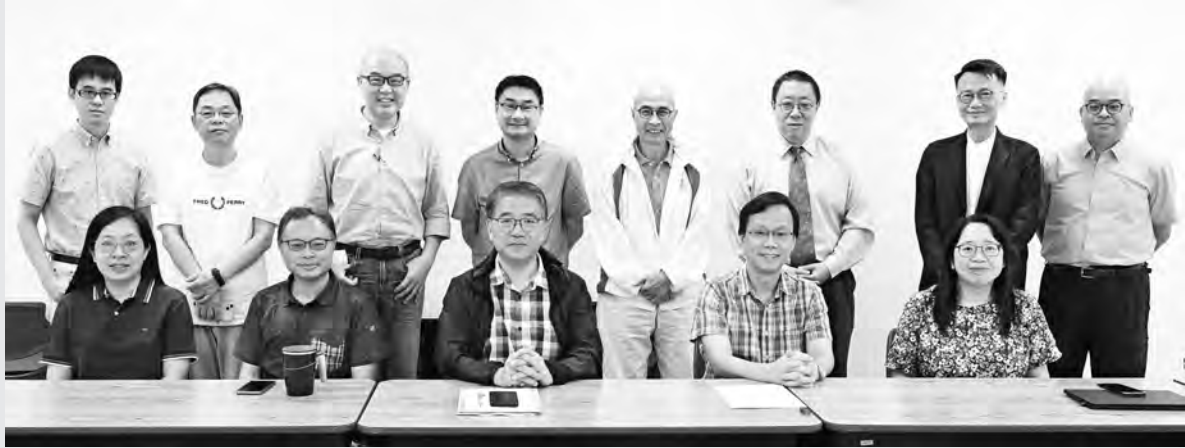
Thank you for your support!

Precious Moments

August 2, 2023

Faculty Retreat

The retreat's theme was "A New Chapter in Theological Education." Our faculty members explored issues about student development, and looked to the future prospects of the seminary and those of the community of faculty and students.



August 15-17

Spiritual Formation Camp

Students and teachers joined the Spiritual Formation Camp before the new school term began. The camp aimed at preparing them spiritually for the coming academic year. The theme for this year was "Let's Accompany One Another in a Time of Change, and Let's Change When Accompanying One Another," so issues like accompanying, calling, and coping with changes were explored at the camp.





August 22

Opening Convocation Ceremony

During the opening convocation ceremony, President Joshua Cho preached a sermon titled “A Tree Planted by Streams of Water That Yields Its Fruit in Its Season.” Based on Psalm 1, President Cho reminded all teachers and students to strike root in the teaching of God and to live and make choices under the guidance of the Holy Spirit so as to transform our lives and bear fruit in our lives.

August 23

Opening Convocation Lecture

The speaker of the opening convocation lecture was Dr. Chang Kai-hsuan, Assistant Professor of New Testament, who spoke on the topic “Apocalyptic Paul and Insights from Interdisciplinary Approaches,” and examined the “New Perspectives on Paul” and the “Apocalyptic Perspective of Paul” from an interdisciplinary perspective. He further suggested a new interdisciplinary approach to Paul, namely a cognitive linguistics approach.





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Tel: **(852) 2715 9511** Fax: **(852) 2761 0868** Email: inquiry@hkbts.edu.hk Web Address: <http://www.hkbts.edu.hk>

 **香港浸信會神學院 Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary**  **hkbts_1951**

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

Student Recruitment for Spring 2023-24

Daytime Programs

- 1 Bachelor of Theology
- 2 Master of Divinity
- 3 Master of Divinity (Further Studies)
- 4 Master of Christian Studies
- 5 Master of Theology
- 6 Doctor of Theology

Deadline for Admissions Application
November 30, 2023

First Day of Spring Term
January 11, 2024

For Inquiries

Tel: 2768 5130

Email: admissions@hkbtn.edu.hk

Website: www.hkbtn.edu.hk



Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Joint Graduation Ceremony 2023

Main Program Lay Theological Education Department Distance Education Program

The Board of Directors and the Faculty of the
Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary
request the honor of your presence
at the Joint Graduation Ceremony
at 3:30 pm on the nineteenth of November (Sunday)
in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three
at the Kowloon City Baptist Church

Inquiries

Tel: 2711 2552 / 2715 9511

Email: ltedinfo@hkbtn.edu.hk