

The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

The 2003 Annual Report

1. Nurturing 175 crack troops for the Kingdom of God

Forty-three new students have enrolled in the Seminary for the academic year 2003-04. Among our new students, three are enrolled in the Master of Theology Program; fourteen, in the Master of Divinity Program; three, in the Master of Religious Education Program; two, in the Master of Pastoral Counseling Program; nineteen, in Pastoral Studies (B.A. program); and two non-classified students. Sixty percent of the new students come from Baptist churches. These students have all been vigorously screened and each bears the mark of God's call.

Currently, the Seminary has a total of 175 students, committed to equipping themselves and equipped to be suitable vessels of God to win the lost. It is our belief that in addition to a solid foundation in theological and biblical knowledge, students should receive spiritual training and undergo character molding. While teaching and engaging students in rigorous academic pursuits, our teachers stress off-class spiritual discipline. To this end, we hold the Spiritual Discipline Camp the day before the academic year begins. During the semester, teachers and students come together every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning at the Seminary Chapel to listen to God's word, to worship and to pray. Students also learn to support one another and to grow in Christ through the Seminary's Spiritual Formation Group, and the morning and evening prayer meetings run by students, or pray together in small groups.



Beginning from the second semester, first year students are required to do fieldwork in churches or Christian organizations to acquire valuable on-site experience. This year we have arranged seventy-three venues for our students. We want to thank these various churches and Christian organizations for their willingness to give our students opportunities to serve and grow. In fieldwork it is hoped that our students will experience the abundant blessings of God and the generous support of fellow Christians.

2. Graduates Entering their Ministries

There were 46 graduates for the year 2002-03. Twenty were from the Master of Divinity Program; eight, from the Master of Pastoral Counseling Program; eleven, from the B.A. program in Pastoral Studies; three, from the Advanced Diploma in Religious Education; one, with a Ministry Diploma (Pastoral Counseling); and three, from the B.A. program in Religious Studies. They have all gone through a gruelling process of academic training and have experienced the abundant grace of God along the way. We are delighted to see these graduates complete their studies and enter ministries befitting their call, bringing with them the prayers and blessings of their teachers, schoolmates and churches.



The Seminary held the solemn yet heart-warming Commissioning Ceremony for our graduates in a morning service in mid May. On this special occasion, the graduates reaffirmed their commitment to God and were commissioned to go into the world to serve on His behalf. Our 52nd Commencement was held at the Tsimshatsui Baptist Church on November 23. Many church leaders and brothers and sisters joined our graduates in celebrating and witnessing God's abundant grace.

3. The Lay Theological Education Department

The Lay Theological Education Department is now offering sixteen programs that cater to the different needs and levels of our brothers and sisters. We thank God for preparing a group of lay Christians from many churches to enrol in the programs. It is not easy for them to spare time and energy to receive training, given the gloomy economic situation and the general demand for longer working hours.

Since 1995, over one thousand Christians have completed their studies with us. Affected by the SARS epidemic, enrolment dropped early this year, but we were still able to maintain an average of 2,156 students each



quarter. Among the most popular and well received have been the Certificate Program in Kindergarten Christian Education, the Certificate Program in Church Clerk Training, the Certificate Program in Christian Recreation and Sports Ministry, the Diploma Program in Youth Mentor Training, the Bachelor Program in Christian Studies, and the Certificate Program in Christian Women's Theological Training.

The Joint Programs Graduation Ceremony for graduates from eleven programs was held at the Kowloon City Baptist Church on July 20. There were altogether 272 graduates this year. We trust that they will make excellent use of what they have learned so that they can render good service to God and be strong witnesses for Him in both the church and their workplace.

4. The Distance Education Program

By the grace of God and after five years of steady growth, the Distance Education Department has had until now an enrolment of



over 500 students, coming from Hong Kong and other parts of the world. Ninety-four of them have since graduated. The number of students who are now enrolling in the Certificate Program in New Testament Studies, Certificate Program in Old Testament Studies and the Diploma Program in Christian Studies has reached 174, 73 and 82 respectively. Besides, five students enrolled in the Advanced Diploma Program in Christian Studies, inaugurated in September 2002; and twenty one, in the Certificate Program in Bible Studies beginning February this year. Currently, 303 students are from Hong Kong while the remaining 52 are from the rest of the world.

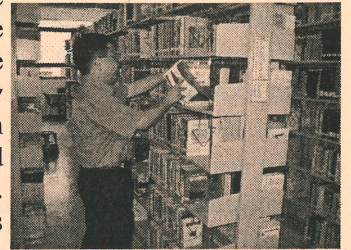
The Third DEP Graduation Ceremony was held at the Seminary Chapel at Sai O on October 19. Eight of the 34 graduates were visually impaired Christians. They were the first batch of students who joined the "Spiritual Light Project,"

and successfully completed the Certificate Program in New Testament Studies. The project is launched in conjunction with the Christian Ministry to Visually Impaired Persons.

Under preparation for a year, the first stage of the "Overseas Extension Program" was introduced in Sydney, Australia, in October. Besides, "Theological Education for Filipino Lay Christian Leaders" started in January this year. It now has 100 registered students with an average of 65 students enrolling in the program every quarter. Moreover, DEP is now phasing in online programs in order to cope with the fast growing trend of learning on the Internet in Mainland China. It aims to eventually extend theological education to Chinese communities all over the world. The online programs use both complicated and simplified Chinese characters, complete with image and voice transmission. This marks a multi-faceted development for distance education.

5. The Library

Under the spectre of the SARS epidemic and for the general well being of the whole seminary, the library was only open for a fraction of its regular hours from end of March through mid May. During this time, there was a marked decline in the



number of library users. We had anticipated a record number of books being checked out this year, as there has been a climb in the books borrowing rate over the past few years. This may not be the case this year. (Copies of books borrowed in 2000 reached 14,881 while it was 17,383 in 2001, an increase of 17%, and 21,833 copies in 2002, an increase of 26%.) What is important in 2003, however, is that, during the SAR epidemic, teachers and students together with our staff were all protected by the Lord and were able to continue serving Him and maintaining their studies.

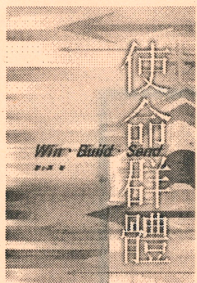
As of October, the HKBTS library has a collection in excess of 70,000 holdings, including some of the books and music scores placed in the Applied Theological Education Center. For a seminary of our size, this is indeed a wealth of resources. To fully utilize information technology in education, the library has subscribed to two full-text electronic periodicals on the web for use in academic research by professors and students. They can have an easy access to over 360 academic periodicals on the Internet. Readers can log in and look up available articles on the computer. The library has collected over 320 pieces of CD-ROM. Over the past year, we have added a monthly average of about 400 books and audio-visual materials onto our existing collection, bringing the total up to 4,500 new volumes/items for the whole year, a figure roughly equivalent to last year's acquisitions. (This does not include the 3,600 copies of music scores in loose sheets cataloged for the Applied Theological Education Center.)

We are grateful to God for the steady expansion of our library collection. We sincerely hope that these resources are helpful to both students and teachers and can benefit pastors and ministers in their pursuit of continuing education.

6. The Mission Dynamics and Resources Center

Since its establishment in September 2001, the Mission Dynamics and Resources Center has made bold attempts in different directions of mission and has launched ministries in various areas. The Mission Week held in March this year with the theme, "The Sun is Rising – A Reflection on the 'Mainland Missions' by Hong Kong churches." Through sharing the message and holding topical lectures, it aimed to help students and churches understand the Mainland China ministries conducted by Hong Kong Baptist churches and other mission organizations. We are now working with the Mission Center of the Hong Kong Baptist Convention to conduct a research project entitled "An Overview of Mainland Ministries by Hong Kong Baptist Churches." The project's objective is to set the future direction of the Mainland China ministries, formulate a strategy to serve Baptist churches and facilitate the development of Mainland ministries among various Baptist churches.

For the first time ever, the MDRC has organized a seminar on missiology and theology in collaboration with the Alliance Bible Seminary and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, both in Hong Kong. The main theme was "The Inspiration of Missiology on Traditional Theology." Thanks to video conferencing technology, we were able to have a direct dialogue with the speaker, Dr. Enoch Wan, who was beamed on a big screen across thousands of miles. This seminar sets an extraordinary precedent for all future activities of similar nature.



Besides its bi-annual newsletter, *The Missional Church*, the Center in July published *The Missional Community: Win • Build • Send* by Rev. Lau Siu-hong, the first volume in "the Missional Church Series." Other works in the series will be published so as to enable brothers and sisters to have a better understanding of the mission field.

7. The Publication Ministry

HKBTS publishes its quarterly newsletter in both English and Chinese to share the development of theological education with churches on a regular basis. Since 1998, we have also published *Hill Road*, a bi-annual academic journal in an effort to open up an intellectual forum to share the latest trends in scholarship with people involved in theological education and build bridges between the academic world and Chinese churches. Each issue of *Hill Road* has a particular focus. The theme is selected with the needs of churches in mind. For example, some topics discussed in our recent issues: "The Christian Church and Pluralistic Religious Situation," "The Living Word: Preaching in the 21st Century," "Illustrations of Antecedents: Lessons from Church History" and "A Theological Reflection on Pastoral Care" have all been practical and relevant topics for churches. Besides local and overseas seminaries and seminary professors and



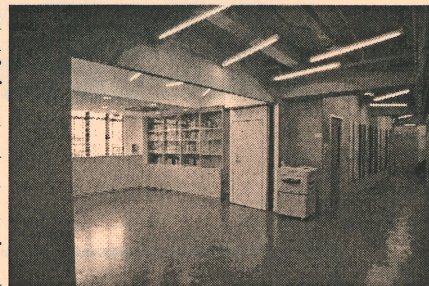
students, our subscribers include churches, ministers and lay Christians. Over the past two academic years, subscription to *Hill Road* has risen by more than thirty percent. This gives us much encouragement and support.

Following the publication in July of *Psalms Among Psalms (volume 8): Songs of Liturgy*, the printing of all the nine volumes in the "Selected Reading of the Psalter Series" have been completed. Moreover, the third and fourth volumes in the "Alleluia! Series" have been translated and published. *The Missional Community: Win • Build • Send* by Rev. Lau Siu-hong was also published. Soon to be published are Dr. Samuel Tang's *The Believers' Church: A Baptist Tradition* and Rev. Lin Tak-kit's *The Soul on Wings: the Dynamic and Renewal of Prayer Life*.

8. The Applied Theological Education Center

The Applied Theological Education Center began its operation in late September last year. Classrooms on Level 7 are mainly used to conduct courses run by the Lay Theological Education Department and the Distance Education Program. The Pastoral Continuing Education Center is located on Level 8 while Level 9 is the Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center.

The Pastoral Continuing Education Center offers short-term practical courses and research workshops to in-service pastors wishing to further their education in a



flexible manner. In view of similar issues faced by pastors in their pastoral ministry, the Center has held several lectures this year with topics ranging from "Financial Crisis and Pastoral Care" to "Self-Destructive Behavior" and "Extra-Marital Affair and Sex in Married Life," etc. In order to help pastors equip themselves and grow, the Center organized a lecture on "Pastoral Ethics" and a Study Camp on "the Expository Preaching of Song of Songs." The "Gospel Net" Evangelism Training was launched to assist churches in handling new personal evangelistic materials. There will be advanced level courses and lectures in the coming year. They are designed to help pastors take up the challenges of their ministry in an ever-changing environment.

Based on the wisdom of the Bible, theology and church history, the Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center aims to instill in lay Christians a renewed understanding of worship. By receiving a diversified and integrative training in fine arts, students can broaden their ministry and experience of service. The Center also offers a wide range of art courses, helping students apply artistic skills to church worship and their ministries. In 2002-03, courses on vocal, electronic and keyboard music, as well as dance and regional drama classes were offered in the daytime and evening. Programs offered include a one-year Certificate Program in Music (major in choral conducting) and an intensive training workshop for hand-bells teachers.

Appeal

"Today's seminary students are ministers of tomorrow." To ensure that seminary students become crack Christian soldiers, the Seminary needs to provide quality education. The support and care of churches in prayer and through donations are also indispensable. We hereby sincerely appeal to all churches that you would share with us the responsibility of supporting theological education by allocating funds in your coming budget for this particular purpose.



To maintain high quality theological education and to meet the needs of relevant development, we pledge not to slash education funds and try our best to look for new income sources. Our goal is to steadily reduce our budget deficit every year until we reach "zero deficit" in 2008-2009.

Please remember the needs of our students. Your offerings and donations are of immense importance to current and future theological education!

Response

Our church hereby pledges support for the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary: -

- ☐ We will pray for the development of the Seminary's theological education
- ☐ We support the Seminary with a donation of HK\$_____.

Church: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail Address: _____