

The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Annual Report 2004

1. Nurturing a new generation of ministers – 183 seminary students

Forty new students have enrolled in the Seminary for the academic year 2004-05. Among our new students, six are enrolled in the Master of Theology program; sixteen, in the Master of Divinity program; fourteen, in Pastoral Studies (B.A. program); two, in the Master of Pastoral Counseling program; and two non-classified students. Sixty percent of the new students come from Baptist churches. These students have all been vigorously screened. The enrolment task force paid particular attention to their written testimonies, commitment and spiritual character. They were admitted by unanimous decision. Currently, the Seminary has a total of 183 students, who are called and led by God to pursue theological studies. We are committed to nurturing and equipping them to become God's usable vessels to win souls for Him.

The new school year has ushered in new developments in the Seminary's academic affairs. These include rendering support to professors in their research, and strengthening the academic training of students. We have also revised the B.A. program in Pastoral Studies, and stressed spiritual discipline and character building for our students. It is our belief that in addition to a solid foundation in theological and biblical knowledge, students should receive rigorous spiritual training and undergo character formation. With this in mind, this year's chapel has taken the theme of life and character building, so that teachers and students can further explore and reflect on this issue. The Chaplain has also helped students form various small growth groups to enable them to deal positively with problems they face in their spiritual life.



Besides, students are expected to practice what they learn. They are to acquire invaluable on-site experience in their fieldwork. It is an opportunity for them to serve and grow. Beginning in their second semester in their seminary studies, students are required to do practicum. They first start serving in their own church before being assigned to other churches or Christian organizations in order to broaden their ministry experience. This year during the first semester we have arranged fifty-four venues for all students. There will be eighty venues for them in the second semester. We wish to thank these churches and Christian organizations for their willingness to offer our students fieldwork opportunities and for joining us in a cooperative effort to nurture a new generation of ministers.

2. Graduates Entering their Ministries

There are 29 graduates for the year 2003-04. One is from the Master of Theology program; twelve, from the Master of Divinity program; three, from the Master of Religious Education program; eight, from the B.A program in Pastoral Studies; two, from the Master of Pastoral Counseling program; one, with a Ministry Diploma (Pastoral Counseling); one, with an Advanced Diploma in Religious Education, and one, from the B.A. program in Religious Studies. They all have gone through the grueling 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, classmates and supporting 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. A life of serving God involves a life-long pursuit of learning and acquisition of experience, as well as constant reflection on faith. May our graduates be able to support one another when they face trials in future. We also pray to God that He endows the Seminary with wisdom and strength so that our graduates will continue to benefit from the support and encouragement of their alma mater.

3. The Lay Theological Education Department

The Lay Theological Education Department is currently offering seventeen Certificate, Diploma, B.A and Master's programs. Some of them emphasize theological training; others prepare students for their future ministries. The programs last from one to five or eight years. We thank God for preparing a group of lay Christians from many churches to enroll in the programs. Most of them have a day job. It is not easy for them to spare time and energy to receive training, given the current economic situation and the general demand for long working hours. We are encouraged by a slight increase in the number of students this year, reaching an average of 2,400 each quarter.

To meet the changing demand of society, we review and update our programs regularly so that students can practice what they learn. We have also hosted new activities and lectures to cater to the different needs of the church and students.

The Joint Programs Graduation Ceremony for the 273 graduates from the non-degree programs was held on July 18. The graduation ceremony for the nineteen graduates from the degree program



of Christian Studies will be held on December 5. We trust that they all will make excellent use of what they have learned to serve 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 six years of steady growth, the Distance Education Program has had until now an enrolment of over 500 students, who come from Hong Kong and the rest of the world. One hundred and thirty-five 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 196, 78, and 71 respectively. Besides, nine students enrolled in the Advanced Diploma Program in Christian Studies; and twenty-nine, in the Certificate Program in Bible Studies. Both of the programs were introduced over the last two years. Currently, there are 332 students from Hong Kong with another 63 coming from other parts of the world.

The New Testament online program in both complicated and simplified Chinese has been fully launched this year. It offers a total of ten courses, with twelve students now enrolled in the program. The "Spiritual Light Project," specially designed for visually impaired Christians, has started its second phase of program in January this year. Five students have enrolled in the Certificate Program in New Testament Studies. Besides, the Theological Studies Program for Chinese Christians, jointly organized with the Carey Theological College in

Vancouver, will be introduced in the middle of next year. Every year there will be a two-week intensive theological program taught by our professors.

The Theological Education Program for Filipino Leaders (TEFL), inaugurated in January 2003, has to date over one hundred enrolled students. They come from English or Tagalo speaking Baptist churches in Hong Kong. The program has all the classes conducted in Sunday afternoons. We hope that after they return to the Philippines they will become a new force in local evangelism and church growth.



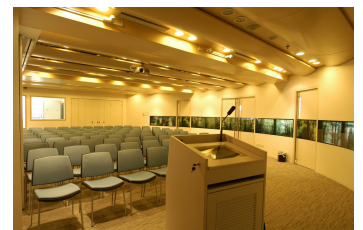
Forty-one new graduates celebrated with their families and friends at the Fourth DEP Graduation Ceremony held at the Seminary Chapel, Sai O, on October 10.

5. The Applied Theological Education Center

The Applied Theological Education Center began its operation two years ago. 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 way convenient for them. We hope that our courses are able to help them cope with the changes of the time and new challenges of their ministries. Thirty courses and workshops have so far been conducted, including the following series and topics: Workshop on Dynamic Preaching at the Pulpit, the Church's Creative Ministry Series; Worship Renewal Series, Pastoral Care Series, Creative Learning Series, and Pastoral Leadership Series. Among the most well-received are the Workshop on Dynamic Preaching at the Pulpit, and Pastoral Care Series. The enrolment since early 2004 has been around 930 students. The positive responses and enthusiastic sharing in class of participating pastors and ministers again confirms the need for offering pastoral continuing education to our ministerial workers.

The Edna Wong Christian Workshop and Arts Education Center aims to instill in lay Christians a renewed understanding of worship based on the wisdom of the Bible, and the teaching of theology and church history. Moreover, by receiving a diversified and integrative training in fine arts, students can broaden the vision and scope of their ministry. The wide range of art courses available at the Center can



help students apply artistic skills to church worship and their ministries. In 2003-04, “Music and Worship,” “Introduction to Church Music,” “Another Form of Theological Expression: Movie Appreciation and Analysis,” “Worship Team,” “Curriculum for Choir Training” are courses with a strong theoretical basis but, through integrative programs and workshops, they can be proven very practical. There are also daytime and evening courses on vocal, electronic and keyboard music, as well as dance, plays, movies and regional opera classes.

6. Library

We thank God for having a team of diligent library co-workers. With a slightly reduced manpower, the library is still able to achieve its goal of adding to the collection on average 400 new titles every month. Besides, there has been an average of 1,800 copies of books being checked out every month. In all, since we moved to Sai O in 1999, we have recorded a climb in the book-borrowing rate in four out of the last five years.



The library has a wealth of resources with the current collection in excess of 76,000 holdings, including a total of 61,000 titles in Chinese and English, 290 periodicals, and over 4,600 combined volumes/editions of miscellaneous journals. In addition, there are two online full-text catalogs, making it easy for students to access to over 360 electronic periodicals, or over a million articles. The library has collected 4,900 items of audio-visual materials covering a wide range of topics, and over 330 pieces of CD-ROM. On Level 7 and Level 9 of the Applied Theological Education Center in Mongkok, we have catalogued another 3,600 copies of music scores and loose sheets, as well as over 2,100 copies of books. In this academic year, the library has put in place an octopus card-operated copier machine for our students, and upgraded its computer facilities.

We sincerely hope that these resources can benefit students, teachers and pastors alike in their research studies.

7. The Mission Dynamics and Resources Center

In the three Morning Assemblies between March 23 and March 25, the Mission Dynamics and Resources Center held this year’s Mission Week with the theme, “Of One Mind and Walking Together – Partnership in Missions.” The three speakers were Rev. Lam Siu-yuan, Rev. Yung King-wah, and Rev. Lau Siu-hong. They shared with our teachers and students on the tri-party relationship involving “church and mission



board, missionary, and seminary.”

Since last year, we have been working with the Mission Center of the Hong Kong Baptist Convention to conduct with questionnaires a research project on an overview of Hong Kong Baptist Churches’ mainland ministries. Its objective is to provide appropriate support and training for various Baptist churches in future. We are now in the process of screening and analyzing the data. We plan to have the final report published next year.

In December, Rev. Lin Tak-kit will lead a short-term mission team (comprising seminary students, staff and pastors) to the islands of Pulau Riau in Indonesian. We hope that they have the opportunity to know firsthand the needs of the mission field there, and learn the importance of partnership in missions.

Besides, through our biannual newsletter, *The Missional Church*, we are able to share with churches and brothers and sisters news from the mission field. We thank God for enriching us with Christians from all walks of life who share with us in writing their visions, experiences and needs.

7. Publication

We publish our quarterly *Newsletter* in both English and Chinese to share the latest developments of the Seminary with local and overseas churches. Since 1998, we have also published *Hill Road*, a biannual academic journal, to share the latest scholarship with co-workers in theological education, and build a bridge between the academic world and Chinese churches. *Hill Road* discusses important issues in the Bible and problems in theology. It introduces to readers the mode of thought of representative schools, and presents the views of master theologians. Each issue of *Hill Road* has a particular focus. The theme is selected with the needs of the churches in mind. Besides local and overseas seminaries and individual professors and students, our subscribers include churches, ministers and lay Christians. Over the last three years, there has been a steady increase in subscription. This has given us much encouragement and support.

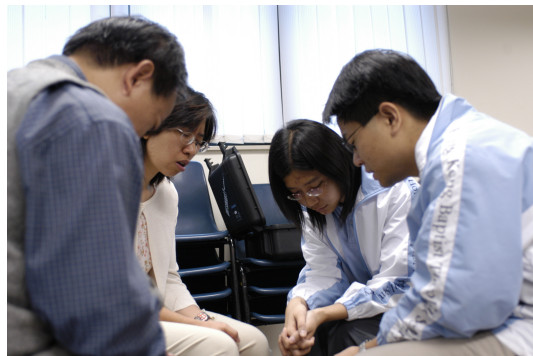


Following the publication in July of *Empowered by the Holy Spirit: A Study in the Ministries of Worship*, the seven volumes in the “Alleluia! Series” have been completed. Its sixth volume, *Encountering the Healing Power of God: A Study in the Sacred Actions of Worship*, has been rolled out of the printing press in February, while volume 5 in the series, *Rediscovering the Christian Feasts – A Study in the Services of the Christian Year*, was published earlier. Both *Humanity and Virtues*, by Dr. Joshua Cho, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Samuel Tang’s *Introduction to Apocrypha* have been published in November.



APPEAL

“Today’s seminary students are ministers of tomorrow.” For a seminary student to be a crack Christian soldier the seminary has to provide quality education. The support and care of churches in prayers 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 fulfil the criteria of relevant development, we pledge not to slash education funds and try our best to look for new sources of income. Our goal is to steadily reduce our budget deficit every year until reaching “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 to 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: _____