



# 香港浸信會神學院



Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Today's Students, Tomorrow's Pastors.  
Today's Seminary, Tomorrow's Churches.

## Newsletter

May 2010



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# Like-Hearted Synergoi *Joshua Cho*

## **From Hospitality to Synergy**

In November 2008, Rev. Timothy Lau, Chairman of the Seminary's Board of Trustees, expressed his intention to present my name as a candidate for the Presidency. From then on, I began to reflect on how I could be the President and how I could lead the Seminary according to God's will. A week before I was interviewed by the Board of Trustees, several strong concepts had emerged. They included *theologia*, hospitality, synergy and crossover, all with the underlying desire that the Seminary would do its best to meet the needs of the church and the world. I integrated these ideas into a prospectus to present to the Board. In the year that followed, I began sharing my views with the seminary community on different occasions, such as the President's Council, the faculty retreat and the morning chapel. I feel strongly that what I shared was the result of God's enlightenment and guidance and firmly believe these principles must be implemented step by step.

Since the beginning of 2009, the Seminary's steps toward renewal and reformation have gained momentum. God has strengthened the biblical studies faculty team, enabling the Seminary to focus more on nurturing students' *theologia*. In the past year, the seminary community has been committed to cultivating the spirit of Jesus Christ and to demonstrating genuine Christian hospitality. It is evident that the spirit of hospitality has begun to thrive as the faculty has united with one mind and heart, as new teachers have added new energy and fresh ideas and as students and staff have begun to catch the spirit of hospitality.

As the new calendar year of 2010 approached, I decided that January was the right time to enter an exciting new stage

— a stage in which we began to practice synergy. In December last year, I began paying visits to each of our teachers, seeking to understand their major and minor research areas and to listen as they shared their visions for the churches and society. As I heard them, I began to see how together we could begin practicing interdisciplinary crossover. I needed to discover what the different subjects at the Seminary share in common to see how they could be merged. I find the notion of crossover important to the growth of the Seminary because its goal is to overcome the segregation of subjects in order to avoid the fragmentation of theological knowledge that often occurs in theological education. As we begin to complement one another, we can serve the churches and address the needs of society more effectively. I feel strongly that if our teachers develop synergy, they will bless students, bless the Seminary and bless the churches as never before.

## **The Importance of Synergy: An Experience Engraved on My Heart**

On January 1, 2010, the New Year's Day, I joined our teachers in a soccer game against the Hong Kong Veteran National Football Team. That day I was extremely happy, thinking that after the game, we would joyfully begin a whole new chapter at the Seminary.

I had played for about 20 minutes on the pitch, finding myself in good form and running with ease. However, I decided to take a break to reserve some energy for the last section of the game and also to give others a chance to play. Resting beside the pitch, I chatted cheerfully and joked with others, never imagining that the old physical problem which had been bothering me for the last five years would suddenly crop up. I began to feel dizzy and even lost consciousness for over ten seconds. In the hospital, the doctor explained to me that I had had an irregular heart beat. As I thought about the incident, it dawned on me how my irregular heart beat illustrated the principle of synergy. Whenever the atrium and the ventricle operate in disharmony, it is hard for the blood to reach the brain, resulting in a state of shock.

I consider this crisis experience to be God's wonderful act of protection. I also consider my physical condition to be a dramatic reminder of the importance of harmony not only in the body but also in the Seminary. On the one hand,

God allowed me to understand the nature of my physical problem, teaching me to cherish my body more and get the proper medical treatment. On the other hand, God allowed my physical crisis to occur just when I was about to begin promoting the practice of synergy within the Seminary community. Before my medical crisis, I never imagined that my body would illustrate the importance of synergy. Now I humbly declare that the importance of synergy has been deeply engraved on my heart.

### **Synergoi: Workers Acting in Concert with God and Men**

Following my personal physical crisis, I felt the need to probe deeply into the practice of synergy, allowing scriptures to enlighten me. I did a close reading of I Corinthians 3:1-9. From the context, we can see that the Corinthians regard themselves as mature (2:6) while Paul considers them to still be babies (3:1). While they regard themselves as wise, Paul warns them they still lack wisdom. He challenges them to consider themselves fools in order to gain true wisdom (3:18). Some consider themselves spiritually mature men, but Paul insists they continue to live according to the flesh and not the spirit because they are jealous, always quarreling among themselves (3:3). One brags, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," (3:4). Obviously they like to boast that they are followers of a certain well-known apostle. As a result of their pride and petty rivalry, each insists on walking alone down his or her limited path missing the joy of walking together in harmony down God's glorious avenue.

Paul handles the problem in two ways. First, he points out that he and Apollos are merely deacons and reminds them that they both have instructed them to believe in Christ Jesus according to the task that God has assigned them (3:5). Paul goes on to remind them that deacons are servants. They are waiters standing by the table, ready to serve the food prepared by the master. Neither Paul nor Apollos chooses the food to be served. It is God Himself who has selected and prepared the food.

Second, Paul uses the metaphor of a farmer's field in which some workers plant the seeds while others water them (3:6-8). Paul is quick to add, "so neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."

(3:7) He points out that the one who plants and the one who waters are "one in the work," working together to ensure that the plants grow to maturity. As fellow laborers for God (*synergoi*), they must work together in harmony under His guidance (3.9a).

These examples from Paul demonstrate the synergy between God and men. *Synergos*, the root word for synergy, means God doing His work through the hard labor of His servants. Paul is saying that the church is a field owned by God alone. The successful cultivation of this field depends on sunshine, rain and nourishment, all rich provisions from God and not from any apostle. Clearly once the church is separated from God, she will become a barren wasteland. However, the church needs gardeners, those who plant and those who water. The gardeners must always act according to the master's instruction if there is to be a good harvest. Since these Christ's co-laborers are "under God," they are accountable solely to God. They must follow God's direction without being swayed by other people's opinions and comments. They must do their best and remain bonded together with God for either triumph or shame as each offers his work faithfully to God (cf. 4:1-5).

### **No Dissecting the Field No Segregation from the World**

The metaphor of the field allows Paul to express his strong convictions and warn the Corinthian Church against destructive conflicts. He projects a picture of harmony that leaves no room for ego among Christians. Paul's description of the Corinthian church can be seen as an accurate portrait of today's churches which develop such a loyalty to certain leaders that they find themselves embroiled in a crisis of "human politics." One result of "human politics" is a personality conflict which leads to idle gossip and a tendency to belittle one another. This prevents ministerial leaders from having a good division of labor and prohibits co-workers from working together in harmony as they cultivate the field. Instead, each establishes a little kingdom, insisting things be done in a certain way. Neither side wants the other side to intrude into his or her territory nor to share what he or she has. As a result, God's field becomes divided into small, individual little patches.

Paul summons churches to remember the ultimate source of their calling and mission and to remember that God's work and men's work must be carefully balanced. On the one hand,

God has dominion over the success or failure of a community, since His acts transcend human capability. On the other hand, God expects churches to respond to His summon and to do their best to live out their calling in the world. Churches must trust God's faithfulness to bring about the ultimate success; meanwhile, they should continue to do their own work at the practical level, faithfully planting and watering without falling into petty rivalry.

In the mean time, we should keep ourselves under God, listening to His instructions and resisting the glittering fairy tale of personal success. Churches must neither blindly follow cultural trends nor pursue their own ideas and ways but always develop their evangelistic ministry according to the ways of God. The result will be that they will not regard success as their ultimate objective, will not equate church ministry with the techniques of church growth, will not exalt human labor above God's call and His work, and will not disallow God to act in their midst.

However, the church must not go too far in the opposite direction. It must never reach an impasse so that it ends up in a corner, and feeling completely powerless. This is a kind of false piety which claims to emphasize God's work in ministry but uses this as an excuse to shirk its own responsibility in the world. The church should never presume that God will plant and water while humans take no responsibility.

Then too we have to beware of a mentality that segregates the church from the world. Churches should not retreat into a kind of spiritual escapism, waiting for the rapture. Neither should they bury their heads in the sand nor build fortresses in the side of a mountain, in an attempt to make themselves impregnable to the world. Instead, churches should constantly seek new ways to be the salt and the light of society; ministers of churches should constantly seek to maintain a balanced, holistic vision.

### **The Synergy of the Faculty Team Can Produce the Driving Force**

With all this in mind, the Seminary must also reflect upon its orientation in theological education and decide what needs to be taught and how it must be taught. The teachers in the Seminary must reaffirm their task of planting and watering as they seek God's guidance.

Besides being engaged in theological teaching, doing research and nurturing students' *theologia*, our teachers should keep abreast of the current social situation, seek to grasp the complexity of social problems, probe to understand the human soul and its spiritual needs and always be aware of the field under cultivation. If theological education does not help students understand and face their society and culture, a seminary will produce ministers who are powerless to meet social challenges and unprepared to help their churches grow in a healthy way. The Seminary needs to pay attention to some of the important domains in today's world, such as the problem of poverty, the ecological crisis, issues in medical ethics, the problems of families, the needs of young people and those of the elderly, the challenges of New Age ethics, and the ideology of post-modernism.

In order to fulfill its mission, the Seminary must abide by God's calling and act according to God's leadership. The synergy among members of the faculty team is of vital importance. The faculty team is HKBTS's engine. The synergy achieved through interdisciplinary teaching and learning can be a driving force as our Seminary seeks to serve the churches with all of our heart and as our Seminary seeks to meet the challenges of the world.

### **Pray That God Will Grant Us a New Heart**

In my hospital days, I prayed that God would grant me a new heart so that my atrium and my ventricle could have synergy, enabling the blood to flow to the brain, organs and other bodily parts. Throughout this experience, my heart was cheered on by God, enabling me to be open to His instructions: to be pure-hearted, relying more on God and harboring no distracting thoughts. Moreover, I felt led to pray that God would guide our teachers and staff, giving them new hearts, empowering them to be effective fellow laborers working harmoniously in God's field. I asked that they be of the same mind as they serve God at the Seminary, complementing one another and becoming *synergoi* with the same mind. Together, we are committed to turning over a new leaf at HKBTS. Thank God for His grace so that as the days gone by, I see that God has prepared a team of *synergoi*, who have the same mind to dedicate ourselves for the Seminary. They are full of energy and God-given power, since they have come to recognize that they are fellow-workers sharing a call by God. This all makes my heart content so that I feel lighthearted and joyful.



From Seminary Choirs over the Years to Church Music Revival Meeting

In Retrospect

# The Choral Singing Ministry of Our Seminary Students over the Past 59 Years

Not every one called by God to be a seminary student is born with a good voice, but deep in their hearts there is usually a hymn of praise closely connected to God's call. What characterizes the HKBTS choir and its church music meetings is its truthful choral singing.

Over the past 59 years, generations of seminary students, generations of God-called servants testify God's faithfulness and grace together through hymns and songs. Their songs have become HKBTS perpetuating testimonies to the Christian communities and the Christian churches.

The 1969 Seminary Choir and Conductor Dr. L. G. McKinney



The 1982 Seminary Choir and Conductor Mrs. Helen Wan



The 1994 Seminary Choir and Conductor Rev. Walter Wan



The 1971 Seminary Choir and Conductor Dr. Yip Wai-hong



## Generations of Seminary Students Generations of the Seminary Choir

HKBTS was founded in 1951. Before the completion of our Pok Oi Village campus, for a few months lessons were conducted in the bell tower of Stirling Road Baptist Church (the predecessor to Kowloon City Baptist Church). An alumnus who is over 80 years old reminisced about the situation at that time: "We were actually living in the bell tower. Sometimes early in the morning, we were led by Pastor Cheung Yau-kwong to sing hymns!" As time went by, the number of church music teachers increased so that in the 50s and 60s, the quality of

our hymn singing and choirs improved and was highly regarded. There was small-group singing in the morning chapel. When Seminary Sunday was held in churches, not only the preacher but also a small choir or a singing group from the Seminary would take part in the program. Students volunteered to form an audio-visual or music evangelistic team under the leadership of the Rev. Victor Frank, and went far and wide to spread the Gospel.

Every student at the Seminary is a member of the Seminary Choir where they are trained in singing technique. They begin to recognize the significance of the singing ministry

as they grow and build up the team spirit. The training received by generations of seminary students not only upgrades their singing technique, but provides the discipline of being God's servants and develops their spiritual lives. This heritage of "all students being choir members" has been successful up till the present although the duration for students participating in the choir practice varies due to curriculum revision.

In the past, our Seminary Choir, one generation after another, not only offered to sing in the Christmas Service and Graduation Ceremony on campus, but the Choir also

in a small church which has no choir or going on a short term mission in a far-away place, this group of singers, called by God to be seminary students, continues to be used by God to touch many souls.

### **Annual Concert Church Music Revival Meeting**

In 1956, five years after the birth of the Seminary, an evening church music service was conducted at Stirling Road Baptist Church. This was the first open church music meeting ever recorded in the seminary history. For more than a decade,

*The 35th Anniversary Thanksgiving Music Celebration in 1986*



*The 45th Anniversary Concert of Thanksgiving and Praise in 1996*



*The 1956 Music Service Evening*



*The 40th Anniversary Concert of Praise in 1991*



*The 50th Anniversary Concert of Praise and Testimonies in 2001*

carried out their singing ministry in church music services and evangelistic meetings in local churches. Church music meetings were sometimes conducted off campus. The choir was invited to sing at the Hong Kong Baptist Convention and the Billy Graham Crusade Rally. They could be found singing Christmas carols in a shopping mall or conducting an evangelistic meeting outside Hong Kong.

Today, in the 21st century, most of the Baptist churches have their own choirs and no longer depend on the singing ministry of the Seminary Choir. However, God continues to use our choir just as He did in earlier days. Whether singing

owing to certain constraints, there were no large-scale open church music meetings. Then, in April 1972, a 30-member choir led by Dr. Yip Wai-hong performed at the City Hall, presenting the message of the passion of Christ before an audience of 1,300. The evening's theme was "The Call of the Cross," and under God's leadership the choir sang extraordinarily well. The performance made headlines in local newspapers and served as a curtain raiser and a sign of God's grace for the Seminary's other open church music meetings to follow.

In 1976, the 25th Anniversary Celebration Concert took place at the City Hall; in 1982, there was the Church Music

Evangelistic Meeting at Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church; in 1986, the 35th Anniversary Thanksgiving Music Celebration was held at the Academic Community Hall.

In 1986, the Church Music Department was set up with Mr. Stanley Cheng as the head. Mr. Cheng made a great effort to promote church music training for students and established music as a minor program. In 1988, he organized the "Hill Singers" and continued to conduct the Seminary Choir. The "Hill Singers" was a group of gifted students devoted to the choir ministry under the leadership of Mrs. Helen Wan. The first anniversary concert of the "Hill Singers" was held in 1989 to share with local churches the music they had learned and to make the churches more aware of the Seminary. That year, the Church Music and Praise Meetings were respectively held at Hong Kong Baptist Church and Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church.

debut performance was held with a 270-member choir formed by choir members from different churches. We were honored to have Dr. Richard Lin as the conductor.

In 2009 and after 20 years, HKBTS's Annual Concert left the stage of the Cultural Center and moved back to the stage of the local church under its new name "Church Music Revival Meeting." The recent meeting was held on April 23 at Kowloon City Baptist Church with the theme "Be Strong and of Courage, Dare to March on the Road Ahead." This marks a clear direction: we hope to send a clear message to our audience that the annual concert is more a service than a music appreciation concert. Not only do we long to offer praise to the Lord, but we also want to present a challenging message, inviting brothers and sisters to join us in serving God full time.

*The 55th Anniversary Musical Worship Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration in 2006*



*Church Music Revival Meeting in 2009*

Following the "Hill Singers" Anniversary Concert and the Church Music and Praise Meeting in 1989, the Seminary decided to establish the Seminary's Annual Concert for the public and it takes the form of a concert of praise and celebration with church music. It would feature the "Hill Singers," the Seminary Choir, and occasionally choirs from local churches would join. Five years ago, the Alumni Choir joined the concerts and last year the Faculty Men's Choir also joined. The venue for our early Annual Concerts was the City Hall and it was later changed to the Cultural Center. During that time, besides the Annual Concert, people were impressed by Mr. Cheng who translated the lyric of Handel's *Messiah* into Chinese and the

Looking back over the past 59 years, we thank God for His continuous leadership in the Seminary's training and ministry in church music and for His provision for the Seminary a group of outstanding music teachers. Although we cannot mention their names one by one, we would like to express our gratitude for their faithfulness in their teaching ministries so that the choral singing of these generations of Seminary students continues to be a perpetuating testimony.

May all the glory and praise be to the true God in the highest through the singing ministry of our Seminary!

# Church Music Revival Meeting 2010

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勇闖前路



Date : April 23 (Friday)

Time : 8 pm (7:30 pm open for admission)

Venue : Kowloon City Baptist Church  
(206 Argyle Street, Kowloon)

Speaker : President Joshua Cho

Presiders : Dr. Andres Tang, Mrs. Helen Wan,  
Mr. Sanson Lau

Testimony : Au Wai-ping

Choirs : Seminary's Choir, Hill Singers,  
Alumni Choir, Faculty Men's Choir

Piano Solo : Dr. Jerry Moye

Accompaniment : Mrs. Chan-Cheung Mei-lan

Enquiry : 2630 1257

Webpage : <http://www.hkbts.edu.hk>

## Free Admission

Join Us in Praise and Worship of the Lord

## Sharing before the Church Music Revival Meeting

Mrs. Helen Wan is the choir conductor of this year's Church Music Revival Meeting. What she shares with you will enable you to understand the essence and services of a music minister.



*Helen Wan*


*(Associate Professor of Church Music)*

## Anticipation

My heart is filled with excitement when I think of the Church Music Revival Meeting on April 23. This is the second time that a group of my colleagues comes together and designs the content for the service. This year's theme is "Be Strong and of Courage, Dare to March on the Road Ahead." As the name reflects, we will proclaim our Lord's faithfulness and sing praises to our Lord who cares, comforts us and keeps His promises. We will look into our weaknesses and pray that God will strengthen us through His almightiness to face the life challenge with courage.

I anticipate that this is an outcome of the cooperation of a community. In fact, it is not easy to mobilize the majority of the Seminary's manpower to prepare for the event. As I feel that we have not yet tried our best, I have to wait for God's provision with fear. I try to remain calm as I go over every procedure, every song and every scripture verse to ensure they are apt for the service. As I have worked with Dr.





Andres Tang, Dr. Desmond Choi and Mr. Sanson Lau, we exchange ideas for reaching a consensus. The selection of the theme, scripture verses and hymns are all group decisions. When anything is lacking, someone always give appropriate suggestions. Through the process I have experienced the joy of serving the Lord with one heart. The joy overcomes the stress of the work. Those who like working on their own should think twice.

Most seminary students have never sung in a choir before. This poses a problem in choosing the appropriate anthems for the event. In principle, I wanted to choose the anthems that are somewhat different in style from the ones that people used to hear in their churches. Yet, I told myself that the anthems must be suitable for the seminary choir to sing. Thus, I tended to choose the relatively modern (but not popular) anthems. Still, the anthems should be challenging, albeit not difficult for the students. And I also thought that the anthems should carry variety of expression, melody, rhythm and harmony. Only then can we encourage and motivate our students to learn the anthems. What is most important is that the lyrics must be in line with the biblical truth and in step with the theme of the meeting. **I anticipate that these anthems can nurture students' lives spiritually. Meanwhile, through frequent practices, they can have the confidence to sing joyful praise, humble prayers, honest admonition and truthful testimony from their hearts.**

I remember that in the previous years, the student would always like to take a picture before the service. They put on their choir robes; the girls applied light make-up, while the men combed their hair properly. And then, they took a picture with their hearty smile. Then, choir members checked one another's uniform, lined up and waited eagerly for the service to begin. I saw their natural smile and the overwhelming joy! Just because of the smiles and joyfulness, my nervous heart would suddenly calm down as I turned my eyes upon Jesus and entrusted myself wholly to Him. **I anticipate that this year's cooperation will be better than that of last year. I also anticipate that this year we**

**will unreservedly entrust everything to God, and allow Him to be our conductor as we submit to His leadership. I anticipate that the Holy Spirit will move freely in our hearts and our voices so that we can give the highest glory to God.**

The only thing I find a bit sad is that some brothers and sisters in the churches misunderstand the objective of this music service: they wrongly assume that a service of choir music is suitable for choir members only. As a result, many churches that do not have choir ministry would not encourage their members to participate in the event. Also, some brothers and sisters act as "gate-keepers," inviting only those they consider suitable (some brothers and sisters like to attend Praise and Worship kind of service only). We want to clarify this wrong concept. Choir members are certainly welcome to attend, but so are those who have never sung in a choir! The meeting on April 23 is neither a concert for music appreciation nor a model performance for singers to emulate; instead, it is intended to be a true worship service which highlights the preacher's sermon, the student's testimony and the proclamation of God's glory and power! **I anticipate that more brothers and sisters will attend this year. I pray that with an open heart, a prayerful heart and a heart questing to grow, the word of our God will dwell deeply in our hearts. Last but not least, "we may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom 12:2).**

The following are more sharing from a number of brothers and sisters, including an alumnus, the monitress of the Alumni Choir, a choir member, the piano accompanist, the sister giving her testimony in the meeting, a student who responded to the commitment call in the previous meeting and later applied to study in HKBTS, and a member of the Faculty Men's Choir.



**Choy Yin-ping (the monitress of Alumni Choir)**

The HKBTS Alumni Choir was founded over five years ago. The intention was to gather together a group of ministers to practice singing for two hours on the first Monday of every month. The choir would be taught and conducted by Mrs. Helen Wan. In years that follow, we members have not only fallen in love with singing hymns, but we have also been willing to serve God in the choir. It is not at all easy for a group of busy ministers to continue practicing every month. However, we all treasure this opportunity as we can sing together with co-walkers, bond spiritually, discipline our lives through singing, and be moved and taught by God Himself even as we sing together.

Two years ago, an alumna shared her feelings after the HKBTS's Annual Concert. She said that she was touched by the singing of the Alumni Choir! Our choir does not sing very well, but we are a group of God's servants blessed with God's grace in the singing ministry and desiring to sing hymns of different levels. This encourages me to continue serving God in my present position and allows me to appreciate the distinctiveness of the Alumni Choir. I hope more of our alumni join us to discipline ourselves in practice and to praise God together!



**Au Wai-ping (one who shares her testimony that evening)**

I am a first year B.A.P.S. student and I thank God for granting me the opportunity to share my testimony at the Church Music Revival Meeting on April 23. When a teacher invited me to share my testimony, I was both flattered and shocked. I was afraid I could not bear the responsibility, unable to explain clearly the Lord's call and His step-by-step guidance. But as God is willing to manifest His grace and power through such a lowly person as me, I have nothing to fear.

However, whenever I picture myself standing on stage before more than a thousand people, my old fear returns. The only way to conquer my fear is to seek God's help. The Holy Spirit also continues to remind me that the main character is not me but the Lord who is worthy to be praised. When I remember I am just a vessel to be used by God, my fear gradually subsides.

In the evening of the meeting, I will recount how God helped me rebuild my relationship with my husband when he lost his eyesight, how God led me to minister to the elderly and through the ministry and different experiences I came to affirm God's call. I am glad to take part in this meeting, in which the Lord is the main character, and I will do my best without self-conceit. I hope that God can use my testimony to bless the audience with joy and encouragement!



**Koo Wai-hung (a member of the Seminary Choir and the "Hill Singers")**

To be able to serve in the choir ministry is an immense blessing from God. God created beautiful music and allows humans to experience God's magnificence through beautiful music. I thank God for allowing me to take part in this year's Church Music Revival Meeting and also to have the opportunity to be a student leader in some of the practices. As we have practiced for half a year, I do not find it easy to grasp each hymn and always sing on tune and that is why we choir members treasure the singing practice.

Indeed, since we are not a professional choir, what we sing may not be up to professional standards. But I am convinced that each choir member is called by God and learns to be a faithful servant of Christ committed for life with a sense of mission. That is why I firmly believe that the singing of hymns is a way to express our joy and strong sense of God's call. My prayer is that everyone present can experience God's magnificence and may God Himself speak to you and me in this meeting.



### **Wong Siu-leung (an alumnus)**

Thank God for His grace, I had participated in the ministry of the “Hill Singers” as I studied in two programs at HKBTS over the past five years. In the past, I participated in the church music ministry of different churches, and I had prepared and led a number of worship services. Although I am now responsible for the overall pastoral ministry of a church, it is my heart’s desire to promote a life of worship for Christ’s disciples. The Seminary’s Annual Concert is a great opportunity for brothers and sisters in our churches to join HKBTS’s faculty and students to worship God. I have sometimes sung in the choir and at other times I would enjoy being a member of the audience. From my experience and understanding, choral singing is not a musical performance but a moment when brothers and sisters in Christ, ministers, alumni, the Seminary’s faculty, staff and students altogether experience God’s presence!

In previous HKBTS’s annual music meetings, when every time I saw familiar faces, I was reminded of the times when we served, studied and worshipped together. Every time when I heard HKBTS’s students sharing on stage how they experienced God’s presence and how their lives were changed and renewed, my heart would be filled with praise and I thanked God for how He had blessed them. Of course, there were joint choirs of a variety of group combinations, singing hymns on the stage. Despite the fact that they are not professional choirs, they glorify the Lord with their lives as they offer up to God hymns and songs that touch people’s heart. The songs they sing may not be perfect, but I strongly believe that the Lord will accept with delight what they offer. For seminary students, this is a precious learning opportunity.



### **Tam Ka-man (a student called by God in HKBTS’s annual concert)**

On April 4, 2008 HKBTS held its Annual Concert. At that time I had been a Christian for three years, and with no psychological preparation I had accepted a church sister’s invitation to attend the concert. The theme for that year’s concert was “Take My Life.” That evening, God used students’ testimonies and the sermon, together with a number of hymns to touch my heart deeply.

The meditation periods between the music allowed me to experience God’s presence. Before the meeting began, I had boldly prayed to God, asking, “What should I do with my life? Can I be used wholeheartedly by you? If I am willing to offer my life to you, can I be of use to you?” In the meeting, God asked me directly and clearly, “Are you willing to forsake your present comfortable life style? I ask you to come, follow me on a new road!” That evening, I stood up when the preacher made the commitment call.

In the following half year, God verified His call to me time and again through many different experiences, enabled me to deepen my relationship with God. He consolidated my faith by speaking to me personally so that I did not falter despite my weak faith. Last August, trusting God’s promise, I applied to study in HKBTS to get equipped and learn to walk on God’s blessed road.



### **Chan-Cheung Mei-lan (the piano accompanist)**

Abba Father in Heaven,

Today is Wednesday, I can do a pleasant thing!

I am grateful to you for it. I thank you, dear Father, with all my heart for allowing me to go to HKBTS to practice with a group of lovely young seminary students who offer up their music to you. Although at present we are just practicing and not actually singing and piano playing before an audience, I still enjoy such beautiful moments! Abba, thank you that I am blessed to be with the choir and to witness how they are learning and improving in singing. Thank you for allowing me to be of use to help in their midst by being their piano accompanist. How grateful I am for your grace! You are the one I will have to sing praise all my life. I will proclaim your great virtue. Hope that what I do will be pleasing to you.

Your loving child,  
Lan



### **Desmond Choi (a member of the Faculty Men’s Choir)**

I like singing hymns: Singing along with the congregation in the worship service, singing while walking in the corridor outside the faculty

offices, singing softly in personal devotion time with *Century of Praise* (Baptist Hymnal) in my hand, singing along with the YouTube short films about hymns while watching, listening and responding to the lyrics and melodies.

I like singing hymns as they captivate my heart and soul: they express the praise or repentance that I could not express on my own; they both touch the innermost of my heart and the finger tips of God.

In addition, I like to sing in HKBTS's Church Music Revival Meetings together with my fellow seminary teachers.

I am a "student of God," both an alumnus and a faculty member, and even the planning committee member of this year's Revival Meeting. But it is not out of duty that I sing in the meeting. I earnestly anticipate the meeting to come — anticipate that the hymns that touch my heart can also touch the hearts of others. The professors' singing may not be outstanding but at least we have tried our best to practice and sing from our hearts, hoping that our voices can be used by God. May we as professors experience God's great work and see how God Himself works in the hearts of those present (including ourselves) by touching, calling, stimulating, guiding, and granting us faith, hope and love. May we all then be strong and courageous, daring to march on the road ahead in response to His love.

I pray that God will use the Church Music Revival Meeting to His glory and I have no doubt that He will use it for His glory.

## To Know a Bit More:

### What are the subjects in church music offered by HKBTS?

The subjects in church music offered in the academic year 2009-2010 include:

- ♪ Introduction to Church Music
- ♪ Worship Practicum
- ♪ The Worshipping Church
- ♪ Advanced Leading Congregational Singing
- ♪ Choir
- ♪ Hill Singers
- ♪ Private Voice
- ♪ Class Voice
- ♪ Class Piano



## On Achieving Our Greatest Aspirations

Sam Tsang

(Associate Professor of New Testament)

### Introduction

I am writing this as I am packing for my move to Hong Kong. This is a busy time but also a reflective time of my life. It is a reflective time because I am about to move away from a country I love where I resided for the last 36 years and move back to my birthplace. I have been doing a lot of reading on various topics including postmodernism, post-structuralism, pragmatism, and critical realism etc. in preparation for my second biblical interpretation work. At the same time, I cannot help but do such reading in a soul-searching manner at this stage of my spiritual journey. In my reading, I ran across the late Richard Rorty's book *Achieving Our Country*. I feel that this work has its merit in addressing some basic educational issues worth discussing. Since I am the new Associate Professor of New Testament and Preaching, I hope to share my heart with all my readers not only as a researcher and educator but as a minister and Christ-follower.

### Academic Climate of "Specialization"

Rorty was one of the most important American philosophers in recent times. He taught philosophy in the University of Virginia, and later became professor emeritus at Stanford University. He marked a generation of scholars who have mastered not only American but also other philosophical traditions. His landmark *The Consequences of Pragmatism* influences many still in this postmodern generation. His gift was the ability to simplify the complex which set his work apart



from his more complicated continental European counterparts. While I do not agree with his atheistic disposition and radical community-centered educational philosophy, I think he had shed great light on academic work in this essay called “The Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature.” I wish to dialogue with his essay here.

Rorty’s insightful essay comes as an appendix to *Achieving Our Country*. In it, he chronicled the shift in academia that had been coming for a long time. The increasing abandonment of great classical work for the microscopic investigation of modern issues has caused certain other problems. Philosophical studies are merely dealing in dry scientific analysis. In the never-ending search for more precise terminology and the critical stance towards the past (i.e. the dead white male writers), philosophy no longer connects with literature departments or other disciplines. Rorty stated bluntly that those who admired this kind of philosophy often claimed that philosophy professors were not only a lot drier but also a lot smarter nowadays than in the past. Rorty disagreed; he thought they were only a little meaner. My guess is that the reason for this ongoing trend is due to the professional demand of specialization. As an academic whose career was blossoming in the 1960s, Rorty was both challenging the establishment and being challenged by many new thoughts. He in fact grew to abandon his formative philosophical paradigm of analysis in favor of a more pragmatic approach to life’s greater questions. Great thinkers evolve.

Even as early as the 1950s, many study philosophy or any other humanities subject because they fell in love with Plato, Hegel or Whitehead or, dare we say, the apostle Paul. Yet, the process of graduate studies quickly narrows down to writing on this or that aspect of certain Greek grammatical usage or some small part of a great thinker’s thought. We put our whole heart into writing about this “small object” because this painstaking task of trying to be creative is what will get good jobs. Rorty stated further that like the rest of his generation of philosophy PhDs, he knew that his priority was to make a living. Due to economic hardship, we can hardly blame those who make their livelihood a priority, as philosophy departments all over the world are closing their doors. The romantic notion of wanting to be the next Hegel among undergraduate philosophy majors is long gone. Such great aspiration is now replaced by the desire to find a good post upon completion of PhD. Education has not become the goal but a means to a financial end. This academic discussion by Rorty gets at a broader issue which also applies to ministry.

## **Are We Defined by Food Alone?**

What can we say about all this? It is quite ironic that I am writing this while working on my book on modern thoughts. My book by no means deals with classical thinkers. Neither does it deal thoroughly with modern thoughts. It is supplementary to how philosophies may or may not impact biblical studies of New Testament narratives. While preparing my book, reading Rorty while discussing classical and biblical studies seems strange when Rorty does not relate to either directly (or does he?). We academics are specialists. Specialization defines us, as we seek posts that allow us to continue in our hobbies. I think many blame specialization as the culprit in creating small aspirations. As a society, we study so that we can eat. No doubt, within our tough economic times, having money to buy food is important, but is this condition good? “Eating” may be good for ME, but it is not great for the broader community.

Without a doubt, specialization is necessary and even beneficial. Without it, there would be no deep knowledge or significant progress in this or that subject. Without walking the specialized path, the student cannot know how to acquire such knowledge on other given subjects. This doesn’t only apply to philosophy, but also applies to many aspiring ministers I teach whose hobby is to read the latest and greatest book hoping to find the secret to manage the church. After all, the pastor’s week often consists of a series of events that demand his full attention including wedding, prayer meetings, funerals, hospital visits and just general sermon preparation. He can hardly find time to breath, let alone broaden his horizon. So, he needs other specialized pastors to do other tasks to lighten his load which is not always the kind of luxury small churches can afford. The immediate challenges may well demolish any additional aspiration to move things beyond status quo. If this trend to focus on the small things continues among both academics and church ministers, we will create a generation with small aspirations. Rorty’s article seems to indicate that we already have arrived at this gloomy place in our generation. Of course, I am not saying that there are no exceptions, but I am not sure Rorty is wrong in our common observations across two different disciplines (namely, philosophy and biblical studies).

I believe that specialization can be the scapegoat for mediocrity. As a philosopher, Rorty urged his students to aspire not just for that comfortable university post; he called for aspiration to influence in the proportion of Hegel. The “good” of today may be the “mediocre” of yesterday. I think “good” is the enemy to greatness. Good “enough” is definitely not “good” for anybody.

## **That Excellent Broad and Narrow Way**

Through the years, I have watched a few ministers (and a few students) changing from idealistic graduates to ministerial hirelings. I have seen so many in all walks of life moving that direction. I ask myself why. Many reasons contribute to this downfall, one of which is “burnout”. Problem from burnout also stem from other causes, one of which is the lack of supersized aspiration.

Not only are academics pigeonholed into specialization, the church ministry is increasingly becoming specialized. As I stated above, specialization has its own benefit for someone to know something really well. The same goes for both academic work and church ministry. Yet, the down side of specialization can box us into a place of mediocrity. As students, we start pursuing our subjects broadly at undergraduate study and progress to increasingly narrow studies in our graduate school. Both the broad and narrow ways serve their purposes.

The fact is, once we graduate and start working, some tend to stop moving back into the broad way. I think this is a grave mistake no one can afford to make. Education can stop at specialization because of necessity. Academics do it to attain their tenure track. Ministers do it to solve church problems. Education however should not stop at specialization, if we aspire to have great influences. In our world today, only the thinkers can lead competently. In order to live the Christian life to the fullest, I think we need to make time to gain fresh perspectives. I think the truly excellent way is not only to move from the broad education of the undergraduate study to the narrow education of graduate school. The truly excellent way is to move from that specialized narrowness back to the broadness to gain fresh perspectives. With the path cultivated from specialized graduate studies, we can move into the broadness differently than the undergraduate study. We can quickly specialize in many different areas. Education then allows for our supersize aspirations. We do not study so that we can become more knowledgeable. We do not study because we can do better at our jobs. We study because fresh perspectives from education can make us better people. We look outside of ourselves in order to make our inner lives richer.

The greatest Christian thinker, the apostle Paul asked Timothy to bring him his scrolls and his parchments even at the end of his life. Paul was not studying in order to do better at his job. He was in prison! He studied because he knew the importance of a transformed life through Scriptural education. No one can argue the impact of his life on Christendom.

## **Walking the Excellent Path**

How in fact can we practically walk the excellent path above? We need to take four steps in spite of our busy schedules. First, we must determine in our minds that this path is worth taking. Hopefully, the above discussion has done its trick. Second, we must set our minds to look outside of our small confine to study subjects less familiar to us. We must do so systematically, setting aside time for such endeavors. We should also do this with passion. Our specialization may be our passion. So, we can make our specialization our starting point. We can do better by moving slightly out of our area of specialization into something similar but not exactly the same. If I am a Pauline theology specialist, perhaps I can study Paul’s environment and social thoughts as well. This will take time. Perspectives come slowly over time. Insight takes patience and discipline to cultivate. Third, we must create communities of people with great aspirations. If we hang around people of low aspirations and mediocrity, we shall soon become just like them. Communities promote learning. When I was a doctoral student and an occasional preacher in a British church, I often got together with a group of pastors in South Yorkshire to pray and to swap sermon ideas. Many impactful churches have formed reading groups and intellectual symposia even among the pastoral staff in order to discuss and inform one another (e.g. All Souls Langham Place, London). Other smaller church pastors congregate to learn from extension courses by seminaries or public lectures by scholars. A single brain can only learn so much. A pair of eyes can only gain so much perspective. Many brains make learning exciting and great. Fourth, and finally, we must set our minds to pragmatic concerns in both society and our Christian community which demands our involvement. More importantly, we need to hear what the society is informing us. Thus, we come back full circle from setting our minds to doing our study to setting our minds again.

Greatness does not happen by accident. Neither does it happen overnight. Greatness is an intentional process from which one cultivates himself not so much to be a better performer, but to be a better person. Greatness takes planning. First and foremost, it takes a determined mindset.

## **Conclusion**

As I read Rorty’s essay, the only question left to ask of myself is, “What do I aspire to be?” Putting aside our spiritual cliché of being more like Jesus or whatever, I think this question deserves serious considerations. How I answer that question says a lot about who I am, not just as a Christian academic but as a human being.



## Academic Affairs News

### 1. The Second Term of the Academic Year 2009 - 2010 Began

The second term of this academic year began on January 18 and January 19 was the Spiritual Formation Day. President Ho Kit of Chinese Mission Seminary shared a message in the morning chapel. There was time for individual meditation and group sharing in the afternoon so that students could quiet themselves down in the presence of God and look up to God before the school term began. On January 20, President Joshua Cho shared in the morning chapel the direction in which the Seminary is heading. The morning chapel on January 21 was the All Seminary Prayer Meeting in which all the faculty, students and staff were present to offer our prayers for the whole seminary and the seminary community.

### 2. Academic Forum

The first academic forum in the second term was conducted on February 11. The Chief Campaigner of the Roundtable Community, Mr. Fred Lam, was invited to share on the topic "The Phenomenon of the Post-80s Generation."

### 3. The Experiencing Seminary Life Camp

The camp was held from March 3 to 4. Its theme was "Be Strong and of Courage, Dare to March on the Road Ahead." The camp aims to reach those Christians who are considering full time ministry. There were a number of sessions organized to allow participants to know more about HKBTS. These

sessions include having participants sit in class lectures, meet with professors, attend the seminary's morning chapel and the consecration meeting.

### 4. The Mission Week

The Seminary's Mission Week was held from March 9 to 11 with the theme "Paul's Theology and Strategy of Mission." The speakers and topics were: Dr. Clement Shum spoke on "Paul's Mission Strategy in Acts," Dr. Luke Cheung on "Early Judaism's Mission Ministry," and Dr. Sam Tsang on "Paul's Gospel Response to Greco-Roman Culture." The three speakers respectively explained Paul's mission theology from different perspectives: Dr. Shum led us to consider Paul's mission theology from the biblical perspective; Dr. Cheung led us to go through the mission work of early Judaism from a research study of the documents and history of Judaism in the first century; Dr. Tsang led us to examine Paul's evangelistic strategy in response to Greco-Roman culture from the perspective of Greco-Roman culture. A good number of alumni attended the lectures in those three days and a group photo was taken after the final day's lecture in an atmosphere of warmth and joy.

### 5. Academic Awards and Long Service Awards Presentation Ceremony

The annual Awards Presentation Ceremony is the day when we offer up our gratitude to God and a time to express our thanksgiving to donors of the scholarship awards. This year's ceremony will be held on May 27 at 7 pm in the chapel at our Sai O campus.

## From the Chaplain

Brian Lam *Chaplain*

### All Seminary's Staff Meeting

Still unknown to many, All Seminary's Staff Meeting has been meeting regularly for a year.

It was first held on March 23 last year. Currently, the meeting takes place on the first Monday of the month from 9 to 9:30 am. At that time all the staff of the Seminary assembles together at the multi-purpose hall for a time of worship and prayer.

*In Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "The fellowship of Christians, that is Christians being able to live among Christians, should not be taken for granted."

As seen from the outside, a seminary may seem to be like any other organization, a place to study and to work. If this view is right, in a seminary, it would seem natural that we only nurture teacher-to-student relationships and staff-to-staff relationships. These are the two kinds of relationship that lay people think of when they think of a theological school.

But from a deeper spiritual perspective, a seminary is a community of faith. What Bonhoeffer is describing in *Life Together* is a small, undercover seminary under the constant threat of German Nazi regime. It was in these dangerous circumstances that Bonhoeffer led his seminary to live together in community.

From Bonhoeffer, we learn that a seminary is more than a place to study and work. He has provided us a model for building a community within a seminary even in normal times. It is owing to God's grace that we can live together. But how then can man or woman live with others? More importantly how can Christians "live together in unity" (Ps 133:1)? It is only possible when we acknowledge Christ to be in our midst. He is our peace (Eph 2:14).

The All Seminary's Staff Meeting is where all of our staff comes together to worship. Together we sing songs of praise. Then the chaplain brings a short message, and the President shares the latest Seminary news. Finally, we all pray for the needs of the Seminary and those of individual staff members.

In the Seminary each of us has a distinct position of ministry. There are times when we work individually and other times when we work together as a team. Besides doing our work, we seek to build up our spiritual and communal life within the Seminary. The All Seminary's Staff Meeting reminds us to support one another and grow as a community of faith.



## **Admissions and Registration Office**

*Mandy Chung Registrar*

Every spring term an Experiencing Seminary Life Camp is held for those Christians considering entering full time ministry and enrolling in seminary study. The camp provides the opportunity to share with our faculty and students and also a time for meditation as they explore God's will. This year's camp was held from March 3 to 4 with a total of 24 Christian brothers and sisters in attendance.

This year we set up a new arrangement that never attempted before. In one of the classroom sit-in sessions, it was arranged that campers joined our students in a Greek lesson to see what it was like to study a biblical language. In the past, no arrangement was ever made for campers to study Greek or Hebrew for fear that they would have no interest or it would make them scared of studying in the Seminary. Who could have expected the reaction of many campers: "It is not easy to study a biblical language since it requires a good memory. It is obvious that we need to enroll in the seminary quickly while we are young and still have a good memory. As we get older, it will be much harder to study a biblical language." After my initial shock, I gave thank to my Heavenly Father for

such an enthusiastic response! I was reminded that God works in all things for the good of those who love Him. On the one hand, the campers' reaction to the Greek lesson was in such a contrary to my fears about the experiment. On the other hand, the Heavenly Father used this to teach me not to be bound by my own limited way of thinking but to be open-minded and try new things. Since our Heavenly Father knows well what each of us needs, I pray that He will prepare the way for each of our campers, letting them know clearly His will for their lives.

Beginning this year, the Seminary will recruit students for the spring term. This spring we admitted three new students: two Master of Divinity Program students and one unclassified student. According to our curriculum structure, they are all part-time students. Student recruitment for the next academic year (2010-11) has already begun. Those wishing to apply can log on our webpage or call 2768 5130 for enquiries. A written admission examination has been held on the morning of April 24 (Sat). We also welcome applicants to contact our staff so that an individual admission examination can be arranged during regular office hours on week days.

### **Academic Awards and Long Service Awards Presentation Ceremony**

The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary  
requests the honor of your presence  
and  
offers praise and thanksgiving to the Lord  
at the  
Academic Awards  
and  
Long Service Awards Presentation Ceremony  
on May 27, 2010 (Thursday) at 7 pm  
at Seminary Chapel, 1 Nin Ming Road,  
Sai Kung North, Sai O, N.T.

## Lay Theological Education Department

### Not a Common Choice

April is the time each year when four of our programs (**Diploma in Youth Ministry Program, Certificate in Elderly Ministry Program, Certificate in Mission Ministry Program, Certificate in Church Administration and General Affairs Program**) begin. Students come to us from different backgrounds, with different academic qualifications and experiences, and from different kinds of job, to embark upon different courses to develop their spiritual lives. However, there is one thing they all have in common: they are all willing to invest their time, money and energy as they continue their faith journey. They all want to equip themselves for Christian ministry and offer up to God better service. We would like to share part of our students' testimonies and expectation:

"I need to have a more holistic, more systematic training ... hoping that I can become more mature in my faith ... so that together with young people I can face the challenges of life. I hope that through this program I can increase my understanding of youth ministry ... so that together with them I can experience more of God's grace."

"I hope to become more holistically equipped in order to help my church develop a more systematic and better structured youth ministry."

"I know that I cannot remain in the beginning stage of ministry, for I understand that if I do not improve, I will go backward. I must not fall back on my own old way of serving God. I hope to work and walk with God. I also hope to be transformed so that I can fulfill His will."

"... I hope that in this program I can increase my knowledge of the Bible and develop better techniques in interpersonal communication, making proper use of the spiritual gifts God has given me to bless others as I share His love."

*Choi Yim-to Associate Director*

"God calls those who are willing to shoulder burdens and humble themselves to serve Him. I am willing to imitate Christ and commit myself to fulfill my obligation to serve Him. So I first need to equip myself ... to become an ambassador for Christ to work in His field to gather His harvest for Him and to proclaim His good news."

The above testimonies may not seem special, yet they represent the common voices of our applicants. I have served the Lord in HKBTS for a number of years, and despite seeing and listening to innumerable applicants and new students share similar expectations every year, what I come to appreciate is their commitment to serve and to learn. Their wishes and resolutions are what touch my heart and encourage me.

Hong Kong people are always under great stress in their work and financial matters. Most people here get caught up in the hustle and bustle of living, and Christians are no exception. Hong Kong people have many choices as to how to spend their money and use their leisure time. It is no easy matter for Christians who have decided to do further studies in ministry-related subjects. Not only must they meet their financial obligations, but they also must dedicate their hearts and minds to meet the study requirements. Perhaps some of their family members and friends think they are "asking for trouble," and non-Christian family members will certainly find it hard to understand their choice. However, these students are the ones willing to shoulder the burden and to humble themselves to learn. I am convinced that God will be pleased to accept their sincere hearts and their deep commitment.

The school term has begun! Students, the path ahead is not an easy one but I pray that you can hold on to your faith and do your best! May the blessings from the Lord and all that you gain from your studies will far exceed your expectation and prayers!

## Distance Education Program

*Julie Lau DEP Executive Officer (Admin.)*

The spring 2010 Diploma Program began on March 6 with a counseling session for new students. The students are both local and international and have such diverse backgrounds: church workers, born-again Christians from correctional institutions, those who have completed one of our programs and want to further their studies by taking another, and those who have chosen to study in our diploma programs as students of special study. Although they enroll in our program for different reasons, these new students share the same goal: to dedicate themselves to studying God's Word and to equip themselves for the future. From the initial contact when they first came to enroll to later conversations at the counseling session, we feel their passion and recognize their high motivation.

In modern society, many Christians are busy with their day jobs and their family life, together with their church ministry. It is hard for them to spare time for further studies in the classroom setting. Distance education can provide them with an alternative mode of learning. However, it is a challenge for them to discipline themselves to set aside a time to read the textbook and do the required homework. Occasionally, students have had to give up their studies either because of unexpected busyness or changes in family or work. Although this is regrettable, we are sympathetic because we do understand that it is indeed a difficult decision for these students. Despite the difficulties of balancing private life with study, many students who come to our office to take the study material before the school term begins share with us how the DEP study material enriches their knowledge of the

Bible and provides practical help for their church ministry. They also share their experience of being wondrously guided by God as they study and we are encouraged as they share their appreciation. We are grateful to God for working through DEP to train up Christian brothers and sisters. We also pray that He will bless our new students as they adjust to the correspondence mode of learning so that they can experience His grace and deepen their spiritual lives and knowledge.

We are privileged to have a group of writers who have contributed all their strength and energy to prepare the study guides for various subjects in our programs. They give so much time and thought to guide students in their studies and in teaching the subject content in black and white. Students are then able to master the content of the DEP by reading the textbook on their own with the help of tutors and recording materials. In August 2009, Tiger Chan joined us as a team member of DEP and is responsible for the program's academic studies. He is devoted to revising, writing and editing program materials so that students can more easily grasp the concepts and better understand the course material as they study.

Soon after the diploma program for the spring term began, we are already busy recruiting students for the fall term in April. As for those Christian brothers and sisters who want to further their studies by taking theological subjects in a more manageable and flexible mode of study, please call 2768 5105 or log on [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist), to try our sample study on our webpage.

## Student Union

*Tong Hon-sun* Chairperson

This year's theme for the Student Union is "Crossover among Classes. Practice Loving Your Neighbors." This theme is a bit different from the more solid and broader themes of the past two years. When members of the Executive Committee of the Student Union discussed this year's theme, we took into consideration the general situation and our students' needs. We also remembered with grateful hearts the Student Union's leadership over the past years. From our observation, the present learning atmosphere is positive in that students have a keen attitude toward learning and are committed to active classroom participation. Overall, there is an impressive, positive learning atmosphere among our students.

In the Seminary all full time students are divided into seven classes: year one to year three in the Master of Divinity Program and year one to year four in the Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Studies respectively. The Executive Committee considers that each class has strong internal cohesion as can be seen from the active conversation among classmates during lunch time and its frequent class meetings and prayer meetings.

Relative to the degree of cohesiveness within classes, the level of interaction between classes obviously needs improvement. On campus, most students cannot remember all the students' names, not to mention knowing other students in depth. On the other hand, the Committee also feels the need to encourage our students to join activities held by outside organizations, especially activities among local seminaries.

Therefore, after some discussion, the Committee

unanimously concludes that it is time to promote fusion across classes. "Crossover among Classes" means that we begin to highlight students' needs to communicate across classes. In fact, the Student Union's goal is to promote that all our students be one body by creating an atmosphere that knows no class boundaries and where students are bonded together. Each student is encouraged to build up a relationship with not only classmates but also among fellow students from other classes.

Tea gathering on Wednesday has been a weekly event for all faculty and students. To put into practice the slogan "Crossover among Classes," the Committee has made a new arrangement. Formerly each class sits together around the table. At the first tea time this school term, the game "A Big Wind Blows" was played so that each table ended up with students from different classes in order to facilitate teachers chatting at tables with students across class lines. Although the time is limited to only 15 minutes, the symbolic meaning of "crossover" has been clearly acted out. Although this slogan has just been practiced for a few weeks, it has now become a familiar slogan on our students' lips.

What is amazing is that when the Committee discussed this year's theme, we had not talked with President Cho, yet this theme happens to fit perfectly with this year's Seminary focus: "Synergy." We strongly felt that God was leading us throughout the meeting. It is our hope that each of you continues to pray for HKBTS so that teachers and students will advance toward the goals of "Synergy" and "Crossover among Classes."





## Faculty News

- **Dr. Andres Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture) gave a talk on "Formation of Character: The Praxis of the Church" in a seminar with the theme "Living out a Fruit-Yielding Life." The seminar was organized by the Evangelical Book Room of the Fellowship of Evangelical Students on December 14, 2009. Dr. Tang was the respondent to the talk "How Should We Then Live?" organized by Virtue, Wisdom and Culture Company Ltd. on January 28. His essays: "Rethinking of the Theological Hermeneutics of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann: From the Perspective of the Later Heidegger" appeared in *CGST Journal* 48 (January 2010) and "Rethinking of Mahayana

Theology: Focusing on the Mahakaruna and Prajina of Bodhisattva and Christ" was published in *Sino-Christian Theology Reader*, vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Logos and Pneuma Press, 2009).

- **Dr. Desmond Choi**, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Pastoral Theology) was invited to speak on the topic "Spiritual Care for Alzheimer's Disease Patients and Their Families" organized by the Haven of Hope Holistic Care Center on February 10.

## Visitors

- A group of five people, Chairman of Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Guang Zhou, Rev. Fung Ho, together with Vice-chairman, President, Secretary-General and Chief Secretary of Lianghui (the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China and the China Christian Council), visited the Seminary on March 9.

## Lay Theological Education Department

- **The Diploma in Youth Ministry Program, the Certificate in Church Administration and General Affairs Program, the Certificate in Mission Ministry Program and the Certificate in Elderly Ministry Program** have commenced in April.
- **Diploma / Certificate Programs in Women Theological Training**  
April to June quarter

Course Name	Lecturer	Venue	Date / Time
Spiritual Gifts and Ministry	Mrs. Sun-Chan Yuk-ngor	Mong Kok Education Center	April 13 - May 18 (Tue, 6 lessons) 9:30 - 11:30 am
Methods and Technique in Evangelism	Ms. Li So-mui	Mong Kok Education Center	May 25 - June 22 (Tue, 5 lessons) 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
The Many Faces of the Bible	Rev. Au Pak-ping	New Zone of Deepwell Emmanuel Church	April 27 - June 1 (Tue, 6 lessons) 9:30 - 11:30 am
Folk Religions II	Rev. Mak Siu-fai	Mong Kok Education Center	June 29 - July 27 (Tue, 5 lessons) 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
Book Study: The Book of Daniel	Rev. Mak Siu-fai	Applied Theological Education Center	April 20 - June 8 (Tue, 8 lessons) 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
Caring and the Technique of Communication	Ms. Chiu Lai-man	Mong Kok Education Center	April 15 - May 13 (Thu, 5 lessons) 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
The Study of 2 Corinthians	Ms. Yeung Tung-ying	Mong Kok Education Center	May 20 - June 24 (Thu, 6 lessons) 9:30 - 11:30 am
A New Creation: Faith Practice for Christians	Ms. Cheng Suet-ling	Mong Kok Education Center	April 15 - June 17 (Thu, 10 lessons) 9:30 - 11:30 am
Christian Education	Dr. Wong-Mui Yuk-ping	Mong Kok Education Center	April 16 - June 11 (Fri, 8 lessons) 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

• **Diploma / Certificate Program in Lay Theological Education Training Program**  
**April to June quarter**

Course name	Lecturer	Venue	Date / Time
Youth Ministry: Reaching the New Generation	Staff from the Fellowship of Evangelical Students	Mong Kok Education Center	April 12 - May 31 (Mon, 8 lessons) 7:00 - 10:00 pm
Management of Church Administrative Affairs	Dr. David Mui	Mong Kok Education Center	April 12 - May 31 (Mon, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
The Mission of the Church Missions	Mrs. Hung-Wong Wai-ling	Mong Kok Education Center	April 19 - June 7 (Mon, 8 lessons) 7:00 - 10:00 pm
Under the Same Roof: The Family and Youth	Rev. Ng Suk-yin	Mong Kok Education Center	June 14 - Aug 2 (Mon, 8 lessons) 7:00 - 10:00 pm
Apologetics and the Ministry of Missions	Mr. Leung Wing-sum	Mong Kok Education Center	April 13 - June 1 (Tue, 8 lessons) 7:00 - 10:00 pm
Recreation and Sports Ministry for the Elderly	Dr. Cheung Siu-yin Guest Lecturers: Dr. Chan Yi-hang Mr. Tsin Yan-pui	Applied Theological Education Center	April 20 - June 8 (Tue, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
Sex Education and Infants and the Growth of Children	Ms. Atty Ching	Mong Kok Education Center	April 7 - May 26 (Wed, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
Caring and Counseling for the Elderly	Mrs. Fung-Chan Wai-fong	Mong Kok Education Center	April 14 - June 2 (Wed, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
Bodily and Psychological Health and Spiritual Growth	Mr. Yiu Yuk-hing	Mong Kok Education Center	April 15 - June 3 (Thu, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
Caring Ministry for the Elderly	Mr. Cheng Kai-chi	Mong Kok Education Center	April 8 - May 27 (Thu, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
New Testament Survey: Challenges and Response	Mr. Leung Wing-sum	Mong Kok Education Center	April 15 - June 3 (Thu, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm
Games and Infants and the Growth of Children	Mr. Yuen Chi-fai	Applied Theological Education Center	April 15 - June 3 (Thu, 8 lessons) 7:15 - 9:45 pm

**Tuition Locations:** Mong Kok Education Center (10/F, Chung Kiu Commercial Building, 47-51 Shan Tung Street, Mong Kok)  
Applied Theological Education Center (7-9/F., Christian Center, 56 Bute Street, Mong Kok)

## Program Recruitment Preview

### Master in Christian Studies (Major in Christian Communication) Evening Program

The program enables lay Christians with university level of education to integrate Christian faith with communication theories so that they can engage in theological reflection on present conditions and the social situation and be able to communicate the Christian message more effectively in these days. The deadline for application is in mid-August. Curriculum information update will be available at the beginning of June on the Seminary's webpage.

### Recruitment into Bachelor / Diploma / Certificate of Christian Studies Program

The program provides bachelor level theological training to help consolidate students' foundation in the Christian faith and to nurture their spiritual formation. Students can choose their major parameter (biblical studies, music ministry, caring and counseling ministry) befitting their own interest so that they can make better use of their spiritual gifts in the church or in their professions.

The deadline for application to study in the 2010-2011 school year will be the end of July. Curriculum information update will be available at the beginning of June on the Seminary's webpage.

For enquiries or application: call 2711 2552 or log on our webpage: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted) to download an application form.

# Distance Education Program

The new diploma programs will begin in March 2010 while the certificate programs can begin at any time

Name of Program	Program Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Diploma in Biblical Studies Program	Through an in-depth study of a specific book of the Bible, students are trained to do systematic hermeneutics and Bible study.	Secondary school leavers with their church pastor's recommendation	March and September	March semester :
Diploma in Christian Studies Program	Designed for equipping students for ministry, the program helps students strengthen their foundation in the Christian faith, doctrine and theology.			Hong Kong: February 10
Higher Diploma in Biblical Studies / Christian Studies Programs	Further studies for students completing the diploma program			Overseas: January 10
				September semester :
				Hong Kong: August 10
				Overseas: July 10
Certificate in N.T. / O.T. Studies Programs	Introductory programs in Biblical studies, leading students to study a Bible book systematically	All are welcome	Register at any time. Concessions in fees are available. Students can begin at any time.	

**Students of Special Study:** Students can choose part of the subjects offered in the correspondence courses according to their own personal interest. For details, please log on the "Distance Education" webpage.

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

For enquiries call 2768 5105 or log on the distance education program webpage [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist).

## Special Topical Lecture

- Topic : **Interpretation Gone off Track and How to Avoid It**
- Speaker : Dr. Sam Tsang (Associate Professor of New Testament)
- Content : The most important instruction in our Christian life comes from the Bible. But Christians often make interpretive mistakes when reading the Bible. This lecture shows some of the common interpretive mistakes and familiar verses from Luke's stories are used as examples.
- Date : June 26 (Sat) 2:30 - 4:00 pm
- Venue : Applied Theological Education Center (8/F, Christian Center, 56 Bute Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon)
- Registration : Free admission. For reservation, please call 2768 5105 or email [deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk).

# Pastoral Continuing Education Center

## Courses and talks offered from April to August

Course / Talk	Lecturer	Date	Time
How to Minister to Youth of the Y-generation?	Dr. Leung Wing-tai	April 19 (Mon) April 26 (Mon)	2:00 - 5:00 pm 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Modern Interpretation of the Bible and Its Application in Preaching	Dr. Philip Chia	May 3, 10 (Mon)	2:00 - 5:00 pm
Understanding the 16 Personality Traits and the Management of Conflicts in Ministry	Rev. Sam Lai	May 10 (Mon) May 17 (Mon)	9:30 am - 12:30 pm 9:30 am - 5:00 pm
Introduction to Bereavement Counseling	Dr. Wallace Chan	May 24 (Mon)	9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Crisis Intervention in Pastoral Counseling	Rev. Chan Yat-wah	June 14, 21, 28 (Mon)	2:30 - 5:30 pm
Spiritual Leadership and Faithful Ministry	Dr. Anthony Chan	July 19, 26, Aug 2, 9 (Mon)	2:00 - 5:00 pm
Co-organized with Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center			
Winning Business with e-Marketing: Making Good Use of the Computer for Ministers	Mr. Matthew Kwan	Demonstration Lectures: April 12 or 26 (Mon) Lessons: May 10, 17, 24 (Mon)	2:30 - 4:30 pm 2:00 - 5:00 pm

A course pamphlet was published in February 2010. Readers can log on our webpage: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce).

For application or enquiries, 2768 5179 by phone, 2630 1391 by fax or [pce@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:pce@hkbts.edu.hk) by email. Application forms can be downloaded from the Seminary's webpage.

- Alumni Association members and graduates of HKBTS, ministers and seminary students of Baptist churches (including students in our ministerial training program and students taking degree programs in our Lay Theological Education Department, full time students in the 14-member seminaries of the Hong Kong Theological Education Association) can have tuition fee concessions. For details, please refer to the application form in the program pamphlet.

## Publication News

*Hill Road* (Issue 25) will be published in June with "New Perspective on Paul" as its theme. There are six articles: "Recent Jewish Perspectives on Paul" (Wong Fook Kong), "Reflections on the Three-Stage Development of New Perspective Paul" (Sam Tsang), "Covenantal Nomism and New Testament Soteriology" (Alexander Mak), "The Problem of Christocentrism according to Paul's Language about God: A New Perspective" (Tet-lim Yee), "N. T. Wright's New Perspective on Paul Brings New Understanding on Paul" (Calvin Sao) and "New Perspective on Paul: Its Status in Pauline Studies and Implications to Chinese Christians" (Lo Lung-kwong). Besides, there are two miscellaneous articles, "A Reflective Analysis of the Phenomenon of Exegesis in the Chinese Church: Taking the Book of Romans as an Example" (Chin Ken Pa), and "The Economic Ethical Practice of Bread-Breaking: John Howard Yoder's Perspective" (Andres Tang). There are also several book reviews in this issue.



## Alumni News

- **Alumna Wong Ng-chi** (class of 1967) went to be with the Lord on January 24. May the Lord's comfort, peace and grace be with her family.
- **Committee Members of the HKBTS's Alumni Association Retreat** was held on April 26.
- **The Annual General Assembly of the HKBTS's Alumni Association** was held at 10 am on May 24 in the Seminary's Applied Theological Education Center (9/F, Christian Center, 56 Bute Street, Mong Kok).



# Student Recruitment 2010-11

**Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Studies**

**Master of Divinity**

**Master of Religious Education**

**Master of Pastoral Counseling**

**Master of Christian Studies**

**Advanced Diploma  
in Religious Education**

**Master of Theology**

## Date of Application for Admission

Hong Kong : January 4 - June 18

Overseas : January 4 - April 30

## Date of Admission Examination

April 24 (or by special arrangement  
within the Seminary's office hours)

## Enquiry

Telephone: 2768 5130

Email: admissions@hkbts.edu.hk

Webpage: www.hkbts.edu.hk



## R e p l y

I will support The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary by

praying for the Seminary's theological education ministry

contributing \$\_\_\_\_\_ for

Education Fund  Others:\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
( Mr / Ms / Rev / Dr / Mr & Mrs)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Methods:

**Crossed cheque** payable to  
"Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary"

**Cash** either deliver to the Seminary or direct pay-in to our  
Hang Seng Bank Account No. "242-026144-003"

**Credit card:**  VISA  MASTERCARD

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Card No.: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] - [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] - [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: HK\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Credit card charges are denominated in HK\$)

**Monthly Autopay** by Bank Account or Credit Card —  
autopay form will be forwarded to you

- Please send cheque or bank deposit slip with this reply to the Seminary at 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong.
- Receipt will be issued and donation is tax-deductible.
- Your name and donation amount will appear in the Seminary's *Newsletter*. If you do not wish them to appear in the *Newsletter*, please tick the right box.
- Your personal data will only be used for issuing receipt and Seminary's administration purposes.
- For donation inquiry: Tel : (852) 2768 5113 or (852) 2715 9511  
Fax: (852) 2768 5102

*Thank you for your support !*

# Financial Report

## General Fund, 1 - 28 February 2010

	HK\$
Income	2,146,947.37
Expenditure	<u>2,235,266.26</u>
Deficit	<u><u>(88,318.89)</u></u>

### DONORS REPORT FOR FEB 2010

#### Education Fund (Church)

九龍城浸信會	165,000.00
上環浸信會	1,500.00
大埔浸信會	10,000.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	1,000.00
牛頭角潮語浸信會	1,000.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	1,000.00
佐敦浸信會	1,000.00
沙田浸信會	7,000.00
赤柱浸信會	3,000.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00
香港仔浸信會	51,947.10
香港浸信教會	100,000.00
香港聖尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00
荃灣浸信會	40,000.00
基磐浸信會	1,000.00
愛群道浸信會	5,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,000.00
廣源邨禧年浸信會	10,000.00
興華浸信會	4,000.00
觀塘浸信會	2,297.00
基督教四方福音會彩坪堂	2,000.00
基督教宣道會華基堂	500.00
HK\$	<u>414,944.10</u>

#### Education Fund (Donor/Organization)

Chin Pang Investments Ltd	20,000.00
Fung Shing Land Investment Co. Ltd.	2,000.00
Mr. & Mrs. John Dockerill	10,000.00
Ms. Chan Pak Yan, Grace	800.00
Robert Tung	3,836.40
王潔芳	1,000.00
白智信伉儷	500.00
何譚惠如	1,000.00
吳炳榮伉儷	5,000.00
吳國傑伉儷	500.00
呂志華	1,000.00
李子杉伉儷	2,000.00
李重生	1,000.00
李瑞安	500.00
周佩珊	1,000.00
洪鷹輪	300.00
胡文恩伉儷	500.00
徐沛然	1,000.00
徐詩雅	300.00
符國瑤伉儷	2,000.00
許鋒威	400.00
陳玉玲	500.00

陳偉權	500.00
陳楊紹彝	2,000.00
陳麗英	500.00
彭蔡靜雯	2,500.00
馮德華	300.00
黃英	500.00
黃啓民 / 李聞韶	45,000.00
黃華娟	100.00
葉玉梅	150.00
葉煥章	300.00
劉永生	300.00
劉建紅	600.00
鄭非兒	300.00
鄧志昆伉儷	1,200.00
鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00
盧慕潔	20,000.00
龐振華伉儷	2,500.00
龐凌玉珍	1,000.00
羅佩珊	100.00
關德華伉儷	140.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
校友(#06021)	2,000.00
無名氏	18,000.00
無名氏	12,000.00
無名氏	5,000.00
無名氏	3,000.00
無名氏	3,000.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	400.00
無名氏	300.00
HK\$	<u>183,226.40</u>

#### Scholarship and Bursaries

愛子伉儷	300.00
HK\$	<u>300.00</u>

#### Lay Theological Education Program

蔡艷桃	1,000.00
蕭桂娥	1,800.00
杜桂鵬	1,500.00
HK\$	<u>4,300.00</u>

#### Distance Education Program

鄒小寶	700.00
何鏡煒伉儷	13,000.00
HK\$	<u>13,700.00</u>

#### Local Filipino Program

張智理伉儷	6,000.00
陳麗英	200.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	200.00
HK\$	<u>6,400.00</u>

#### Theological Education for the Hearing Impaired

溫祥、黎琮珍	200.00
HK\$	<u>200.00</u>

#### President Council

陸彩萍	20,000.00
HK\$	<u>20,000.00</u>

#### Book Fund

姚子楓	3,000.00
HK\$	<u>3,000.00</u>

#### Annual Concert

王紹良	700.00
朱活平伉儷	2,000.00
李明珠	1,000.00
招顯光伉儷	2,000.00
洪鷹輪	300.00
胡定邦	500.00
徐沛然	2,000.00
馬錦泉伉儷	800.00
高貴琪	500.00
梁溢長	2,000.00
黃昌義伉儷	2,000.00
黃啓民 / 李聞韶	5,000.00
楊楚城	2,000.00
劉雪梨	200.00
盧錦華	300.00
主所愛的兒女	1,000.00
無名氏	2,000.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	200.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	1,000.00
HK\$	<u>26,500.00</u>

# Precious Moments



## ◀ December 21, 2009 Christmas Worship

There were more people than usual attending this year's Christmas Worship. That day, many of our alumni set aside the time to return to their alma mater for a reunion and to worship together and remember the birth of Christ the Savior with the whole seminary community.

After the service, there was a time for games, and the whole campus was filled with an atmosphere of fun and gaiety, with shouts, cheering, hand-clapping and celebration. ▶



## ◀ January 19, 2010 Spiritual Formation Day

We were grateful to President Ho Kit from Chinese Mission Seminary for sharing the message in the morning chapel entitled "Our Father Who Art in Heaven: From the Theology of Prayer to the Spirituality of Prayer."

**January 21 All Seminary Prayer Meeting** ▶  
May our Lord pleasingly accept the prayers offered up to Him by all the Seminary's faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of the second semester.



## ◀ February 11 Academic Forum

We thank the Chief Campaigner of the Roundtable Community, Mr. Fred Lam, for sharing the "The Phenomenon of Post-80s Generation." It is our hope that this will help students become more aware of what is happening in our society as they will serve God and men in the church and society in the future.

**February 23 Our Students Visited the Street Sleepers** ▶

A few days after the Lunar New Year, over ten students, divided into two groups followed the staff and volunteers of the Christian Concern for the Homeless Association to visit the street sleepers in Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po districts. While caring for the street sleepers and helping them know more about Christ our Lord, our students brought meal boxes and cooked turnip cakes and New Year cakes to celebrate the Lunar New Year with them.



**▲ February 24 New Year's Feast**

Teachers, students and staff altogether enjoyed the love feast during lunch time and greeted one another "Happy New Year!"

**March 9 -11 Mission Week ▲ Lectures**

This year's theme for the Mission Week was "Paul's Theology and Strategy of Mission." The speakers for the three days were Dr. Luke Cheung from the China Graduate School of Theology, and Dr. Clement Shum and Dr. Sam Tsang from HKBTS. The picture was taken when Dr. Luke Cheung was speaking on the topic "Early Judaism's Mission Ministry."

▶ We thank all those alumni, ministers and coworkers in mission organizations for coming to these lectures. On the last day of the week we had a group photo after the lecture.

