



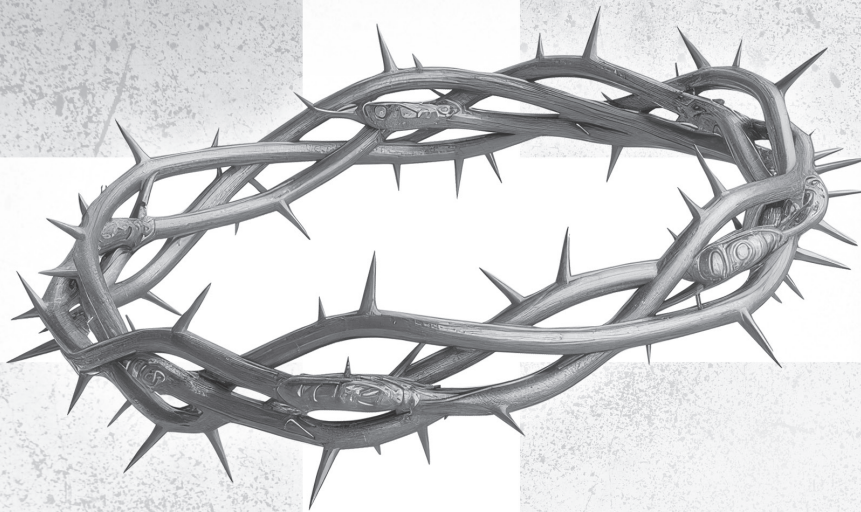
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Newsletter

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# Reflections



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## Walking with Children

Joshua Cho

### What Is Child Theology?

On October 8, 2025, I met with alumnus Chi-wang Chan, who has long embraced God's calling to work within children's ministry. During our conversation, I recalled my former faculty colleague in the United States, Marcia J. Bunge, a leading scholar of child theology, and recommended to him the anthology she edited, *Child Theology: Diverse Methods and Global Perspectives*. The contributors to this volume suggest that "child theology" may be understood, for example, as "theology using the 'lens' of a child or children as a category of analysis," "child-attentive theology," or "theology in solidarity with children." In their reflections, they deliberately draw on their own childhood experiences while carefully observing and relating to children in real life, integrating these insights into their theological thinking.

The contributors invited by Bunge are largely key participants in the global **Child Theology Movement**. She observes that although contemporary theology has explored many doctrinal areas with considerable depth, it still lacks a doctrine of children that is grounded in solid historical and biblical foundations and framed within a holistic perspective. This gap helps explain why many

churches struggle to establish robust programs of religious education and children's ministries. It was precisely to address this need that the Child Theology Movement emerged in 2002 and gradually took shape. The theologians involved have **focused particularly on the holistic well-being and discipleship of children, hoping to encourage churches to reexamine their faith practices and visions of pastoral care in light of the image of "Jesus placing a child in the midst of the disciples" (cf. Mt 18:2).**

In these discussions, scholars have distinguished between "theologies of childhood/theologies of children" and "child theology." The former essentially begins with theology and moves toward children: adults start from existing theological resources and attempt to understand children by synthesizing the Bible, church tradition, life experience, and research findings from the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences to construct a deeper understanding of childhood. In contrast, **"child theology" deliberately reverses this approach—starting from the lived realities of children and then turning to theological reflection, thereby resisting the temptation to bypass real children with abstract theories.** This approach reminds theological educators and pastors to "take children



seriously,” to encounter them without preconceptions, and to place children at the centre of their thinking by recalling specific children, childhood stories, and concrete situations. In this way, child theology acknowledges both children’s vulnerability and

their subjectivity and contributions, while urging adults to assume responsibility for children in both theological and pastoral contexts.

### **Child Theology Reading Camp**

These ideas prompted me to consider *how child theology might serve as a resource for local churches in renewing their children’s ministry and faith formation*. Out of this reflection arose the vision of organizing a reading group or camp, inviting pastors and mentors to engage these themes together. In January 2026, I convened the first Child Theology Reading Camp at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary, in partnership with Brotherly Love Swatow Baptist Church, where Chi-wang serves, as our inaugural collaborating congregation. On January 30-31, more than a dozen church representatives interested in children’s education joined me for six hours of study on books and articles related to child theology. Alongside my explanation of key points, the participants actively applied what they had read to the specific contexts of their own churches, working together to discern practical directions for their ministries.

### **Avoiding Pitfalls in Children’s Ministry**

During the camp, we also explored the relationship between child theology and the themes of “mission” and “evangelism,” carefully engaging with relevant articles. The literature highlights several pitfalls in contemporary children’s ministry. One of which is *the tendency to “objectify” and “instrumentalize” children*. For instance, when churches or mission organizations promote their ministries, they often employ images of children—especially vulnerable children—to evoke emotion and sympathy in publicity or fundraising campaigns. They may even unconsciously employ (implicitly or explicitly) coercive tactics, emotional manipulation, unequal power dynamics, and/or misleading representations. As a result, children risk being treated as “resources for ministry strategies” rather than as human beings with dignity and unique subjectivities. In such circumstances, children are reduced to missionary “tools” rather than being genuinely seen as subjects of faith.

During the discussion, one sister shared her reflections on the assigned reading. She observed that in some local churches, children’s worship and gatherings have actually been reduced to mere “childcare” or “babysitting services.” At times, parents even pick up their children before the service concludes, disrupting their worship, prayer, and learning. Admittedly, such actions often arise from practical considerations that are not necessarily unreasonable. Nevertheless, we must remind ourselves: as a church community, do we truly honor each child who attends our gatherings, recognizing them as individuals with their own subjectivity before God and as participants in the same calling? Are we willing, for the sake of their spiritual well-being, to reexamine our worship practices so that they may receive fuller faith formation throughout the entire service?

Furthermore, the literature also points to the opposite extreme: in certain contemporary societies, *children are virtually excluded from the scope of evangelism*. Some Christian parents, influenced by pluralist and liberal perspectives, believe they should not “impose” religious commitments on their children. Consequently, they deliberately treat their children’s faith as a “purely personal choice” and are reluctant to offer concrete guidance. In practice, these parents neither model the Christian faith through their own lives nor create a family environment where children can freely ask questions and explore beliefs. In the end, rather than being nurtured, the children’s developing subjectivity and spiritual lives are weakened, and in some cases even stifled.

### **Children Thrive in Relationships**

Faced with these two extremes, churches and their leaders must ask: how should we respond?

First, we must return to the core of Christology and anthropology and reclaim this truth: Jesus Christ is an example of authentic humanity and the true manifestation of the image of God. *In Him, we see that human nature is essentially relational—true humanity is formed within the relationship of “being with God and living for God,” as well as within the relationship of “being with others and living for others.”* In other words, no one can become truly human while remaining isolated or detached from others. Therefore, any practice in mission or pastoral care that objectifies or instrumentalizes children risks “dehumanizing” them, running directly counter to the anthropology revealed in Christ.

When churches plan their ministries and allocate resources, they must sincerely prioritize the well-being of children rather

than simply beginning from concerns about institutional image, performance metrics, or growth figures. Only then can children be recognized as true subjects of faith, rather than treated as “ancillary resources.” On this basis, the church community can learn to truly see, listen to, welcome, and serve every child. And only through such genuine encounters can churches bear concrete witness to the Lord Jesus Christ—who is with the Father and lives for the Father; yet also with all humanity and lives for all humanity.

### **A Reflection on Our Calling: Bearing Witness to Children**

Second, we need to rethink the calling to “bear witness to children.” Christian witnessing is not merely about verbal persuasion, but rather about pointing others—through both our words and deeds—to God’s Word and works in Christ. **Fundamentally, the Christian calling is to be a witness to Christ.** Admittedly, Christ alone is the true “One who proclaims God’s word” (the Speaker) and the true “One who performs God’s works” (the Doer). Although churches have often appeared weak throughout history and at times have even become obstacles, by the Lord’s grace, Christ still invites and commands churches to participate in bearing witness to Him.

Therefore, the essence of churches’ witness to children must be Jesus Christ Himself—His identity and the salvation that He has accomplished—rather than merely certain moral rules or religious activities. This witness can take many forms: sometimes direct—at other times more subtle; sometimes expressed in words—at other times through silent companionship or concrete actions. In some instances, words take the lead while actions serve as a complement; in others, actions come first, with words providing appropriate clarification and explanation. **In any case, true witness is never reduced to slogans, nor to a flurry of activities lacking Christ’s genuine presence and clear reference to Him.**

In light of this, when churches and Christians share their faith with children, their aim is not to manipulate or intimidate them into raising their hands to decide to follow Jesus, but rather to acknowledge that **churches serve merely as witnesses and companions; it is the Holy Spirit who truly transforms their hearts and guides them to respond to the Gospel.** Those who bear witness must respect children’s developing agency and take into account their characteristics and needs for their growth. The role of churches is to faithfully bear witness to Christ’s words and deeds, trusting that children’s responses take shape through the interplay of the Holy Spirit’s work and their spiritual agency. Churches cannot force them to believe, but they can walk alongside them in God’s grace, accompanying them as they learn

to express their faith in language appropriate to their age and stage of development, and helping them cultivate trust in God in their daily lives.

From this perspective, resisting the tendency to objectify children means that **churches must acknowledge each child’s unique personhood and life circumstances, and interact with them in ways that attend to their developmental needs and modes of being.** Within the church community, the congregants and the children of the Christian parents should be immersed, over time, in a God-centred atmosphere of witness composed of both words and deeds. If children have never truly encountered God through the daily words and deeds of believers in their homes and churches, they miss many opportunities to come to know and explore the Gospel. Today, many children from Christian families are gradually drifting away from—or even forsaking—their faith. One reason for this may be the lack of concrete, credible Christian witness in their homes and churches, leaving them with little opportunity to understand and embrace the Gospel.

### **Revitalizing Spiritual Formation for Children**

In summary, over the past two decades, the global field of child theology has offered significant insights to ecclesiology and missiology. For Chinese churches and Christian leaders, these insights contain valuable resources for dialogue and challenges. **Perhaps child theology can help us reorient children’s faith formation with greater purpose, enabling families and churches, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to unleash more creative pastoral energy, so that children and adults alike may experience their lives more abundantly in Christ.** We will discover that churches do not merely “teach, guide, and empower” children; they also continually learn from them, drawing inspiration and hope from their lives and faith. Within families and churches, we can share stories, nurture faith, pray and worship together, and walk alongside them in this way. On a societal level, out of a genuine love for children, we actively promote their holistic well-being in public life.

I look forward to a future in which more and more churches and leaders in Hong Kong will not only prioritize the operational aspects of children’s ministry, but also place greater emphasis on the spiritual lives of children. May they learn to witness, within their specific contexts, how God’s Word and works in Christ are truly present and renewing the lives of children. We welcome brothers and sisters in churches to contact us so that together we may promote the study of child theology within Hong Kong’s churches and collaborate in organizing growth camps and gatherings in child theology.

# Reflections on Disasters and Suffering

*In an age marked by turmoil and disaster, how should Christians respond?*

*What counsel and consolation does God's Word and theology give us?*

*To explore these questions from diverse perspectives,  
we have invited some of our faculty members to share their reflections.*

## Why Ask Why?

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*Vice-President (Research)*

*Professor of Old Testament*

### Why Does It Happen?

It is not uncommon for people to ask, "Why?" when something bad happens. Actually, in many cases, the immediate causes are known. According to the World Health Organization, as of January 25, 2026, 7,110,188 people have died from COVID-19. <sup>1</sup> Closer to home, the official figure of people who died in the Wang Fuk Court fire is 168. Both disasters impact Hong Kong residents deeply, but their causes are not unknown. The COVID-19 pandemic was caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Quite a number of causes for the fire at Tai Po have been identified, and none of them is mysterious or unfathomable.

So, why do we ask why even when we know the immediate cause of a disaster? I think the reason is that we want to know the deeper meaning of a disaster rather than just the cause. ***In other words, we want to know why God allowed or even caused it to happen.*** In the Bible, God communicates his will through angels, prophets, visions, or dreams. He may also appear to convey his words. So, there was no ambiguity. Nevertheless, these events are beyond human control; this was the case in the Bible and is certainly the case today. Thus, we cannot depend on them to explain why a disaster happens today.

A readily accessible and authoritative source of information is the Bible, which gives us quite a lot of explanations about why disasters happen. They include attacks by evil spirits (e.g., Job), the sinfulness of humanity (e.g., Jgs 19-21), foolish decisions of people involved (Prv 10:14; 14:16), and judgment of God (Dt 28:15-68). Ecclesiastes 9:12 states that a life-threatening disaster (lit. "evil time") may befall anyone suddenly without warning. That is, disaster is a norm in this fallen world and may require no further explanation. More positively, some disasters may be permitted as a means of teaching or training us in righteousness (Dt 8:1-3; 1 Pt 1:6-7). We may also be called to suffer for the



sake of God's Kingdom (Mt 5:10-12). They are all legitimate answers, but the problem is that we may not know which of these is the correct answer in a specific situation. Moreover, we may be mistaken even if we think we know. This was the case with Job's friends. They thought they knew, but they were wrong.

### The Meaning of a Disaster

***I think that in searching for the meaning of a disaster, we should begin with the immediate cause since it may also be the meaning.*** For example, if a person commits a sin, a crime, or something foolish that brings a disaster on himself (and perhaps on others), he should repent of his sin, crime, or foolishness. There is no need to look for a deeper meaning. This step is important to prevent the disaster from happening again. However, ***if the immediate cause is not obvious, forcing an explanation is counterproductive.*** It won't prevent the disaster from recurring. Moreover, it is unjust to blame an innocent person for wrongdoing.

This brings us back to Job's friends. Their theology was not wrong. The notion that God rewards those who keep his words but punishes those who disobey is found in the Bible (e.g., Dt 28; Jgs 3:7-8). It was their application of that theology to Job that was wrong. Wrong application is more difficult to correct than wrong interpretation because it is a subjective decision. Although the Bible offers many explanations for disasters and suffering, it is not easy to decide which of these explanations (if any) is correct in a specific situation. As Hans-Georg Gadamer, quoting Immanuel Kant, says, "There are no rules governing the reasonable use of rules." <sup>2</sup> We don't have another Bible to teach us how to use the Bible. This warns us that ***even when our interpretation is correct, we may still make a mistake in application.*** This is why Bible study is not just concerned about historical information, grammatical analyses, and theological knowledge. We also need

the guidance of the Holy Spirit and discernment to appropriate it correctly in our lives.

### Another Approach

Another approach to disaster was taken by Ruth and Boaz in the Book of Ruth. Unlike Job's friends, Ruth did not try to explain the reason Naomi lost her husband and sons. Instead, she accompanied Naomi back to Bethlehem to take care of her. Similarly, Boaz did not try to explain the tragedy that befell Naomi and Ruth. Instead, he helped them get food and later became their kinsman redeemer. Just because we cannot give an explanation for a disaster does not mean we can do nothing. On the contrary, we can do many practical things to help the victims.

So, should we attempt to find deeper meanings in a disaster? I think that for most people, it means whether there are any spiritual lessons we can learn from it. This is a subjective perception. There is no reason why we cannot learn spiritual lessons from a disaster, even if we are not personally involved; more so, if we are personally involved. At another level, if the question is whether we can discern God's will in the disaster,

we should be wary. Was God punishing this world through COVID-19 because of its wickedness? Or was it the birth pangs heralding the Second Coming of Christ (Mk 13:8)? They are both possible, but we can't be sure. Therefore, we should not teach them as truths. Instead of offering uncertain explanations, we do well to heed the teachings of Deuteronomy 29:29, which says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever; that we may do all the words of this law" (ESV). Similarly, **God's will in allowing or causing a disaster to happen may be hidden from us, but his will for us to help those in need is clearly manifested.**

- 1 "Number of COVID-19 Deaths Reported to WHO" [data online]; available from World Health Organization website (<https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/deaths>); accessed 13 February 2026.
- 2 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science*, trans. Grederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 121.

## Since You Also Are in the Body

**Bernard Leung**

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### Two Responses to Those Who Suffer

When we witness others suffering, we typically have two reactions: First, most people feel sympathy, grieving for their misfortune and thus caring about their well-being; second, some individuals can understand the sufferer's perspective, empathize with their feelings, and resonate with them. When disasters receive extensive media coverage, we naturally experience the first reaction toward the victims. This sympathy drives us to offer care, condolences, or aid (such as donations) to those suffering, hoping to alleviate their pain. However, does what we do truly help them? This is a question well worth exploring. Excessive expressions of condolences may place undue pressure on those suffering. Repeated discussion of the disaster may also cause secondary trauma. In these acts of sympathy, we often assume the role of benefactors, extending aid from a safe distance. Yet, our perspectives and positions may differ significantly from theirs. As media coverage diminishes, our understanding of the victims' needs and conditions gradually fades. Our attention and sympathy wane, and we may even judge their feelings based on our own yardsticks.

The second type of response is less familiar to us, requiring us to put ourselves in their shoes, adopt the perspective of those suffering, and empathize deeply with their plight. Setting aside



our own views and deeply immersing ourselves in the sufferer's perspective and emotional world best affirms their feelings and demonstrates our most genuine humanity and solidarity. However, such deep resonance is quite exhausting for most people—even professionally trained counselors. If boundaries are neglected during the process, it may even plunge one into depression or psychological distress.

### “Remember” and “Since You Also Are in the Body”

Nonetheless, the Epistle of Hebrews urges believers to adopt an attitude akin to the second response toward those persecuted for their faith: "... and [remember] those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body" (13:3b ESV). The verb "remember" is in the present tense in Greek; accordingly, NIV renders it as "Continue to remember ...". The command denotes more than mere mental recollection or a verbal expression of concern, but **a call to take concrete action to provide ongoing assistance to those in tragedy.** This command to continue remembering those who are mistreated is grounded in the recognition that "you also are in the body," indicating that all share in the weakness of bodily existence. This common humanity thus becomes the basis for solidarity with those who suffer.

This solidarity with others is fully revealed in Christ's redemptive work. Hebrews 2:11 states that the Son of God, as the High Priest, and the people who are called His brothers and sisters "all have one source." Since the people "share in flesh and blood," possessing fragile human nature, Christ likewise shared this humanity and "partook of the same things" (2:14), "to be made like his brothers in every respect" (2:17), having "suffered when tempted," "to help those who are being tempted" (2:18), thereby fulfilling the high priest's role of atoning for the people.

The author of Hebrews further describes the High Priest as one who is capable of "[sympathizing] with our weaknesses" (4:15). "To sympathize" (συνπαθήσαι, NIV renders as "to empathize") is not merely an emotional response, but a shared experience of human frailties, having been "in every respect ... tempted as we are" (4:15). Christ, as the High Priest, does not stand aloof in a position of superiority, merely pitying with our plight as those who, in human frailty, fall into temptation and are unable to deliver themselves. Instead, He chose to be "made like

[us] in every respect" (2:17), even to the point of experiencing the same frailties. This means full participation in our human weaknesses as an expression of solidarity with us.

**Whether we can "remember" those who suffer and feel their pain as our own depends on whether we have learned to be like Christ**—laying aside our own status, perspectives, or perceived differences, to acknowledge, embody, and accept that we share the same fragile humanity as those who are suffering. One weakness of human nature is the tendency to flee from pain—our own and that of others. However, to disregard the suffering of others by erecting boundaries through various justifications and severing the bonds that connect us amounts to the implicit claim that one's own humanity is more noble, more divine, and more entitled to protection than that of others. To share in the experience of others and to be joined with those who suffer, one must identify with them in the same way that Christ identifies with us. Only then does our companionship and aid hold meaning.

## The Early Church Fathers' View of Suffering

**Nathan Ng**

*Vice President (Academic Affairs)*

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### The Early Church in Tribulation

From its inception, Christianity faced oppression and tribulation of varying degrees. After the Roman Emperor Nero (37-68 AD) set fire to Rome and put the blame on the Christians, the Church became an outlawed organization under the Roman Empire. At that time, merely having faith in Christ was sufficient grounds for a death sentence. In the early second century, the governor Pliny the Younger (61-113 AD) wrote to Emperor Trajan (53-117 AD) for guidance on how to deal with Christians, saying, "For the moment this is the line I have taken with all persons brought before me on the charge of being Christians. I have asked them in person if they are Christians, and if they admit it, I repeat the question a second and third time, with a warning of the punishment awaiting them. If they persist, I order them to be led away for execution."<sup>1</sup> Trajan responded, affirming that Pliny "had followed the right course of procedure," while cautioning him: "in the case of anyone who denies that he is a Christian ... make it clear that he is not by worshipping our gods."<sup>2</sup>

For over two centuries before Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337 AD) issued the *Edictum Mediolanense* in 313 AD, Christians endured countless brutal persecutions. Some were crucified *en masse*, burned, or torn apart by lions in the arena. Even children were clad in animal skins and devoured by



rabid dogs. Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) incited mobs to attack the Church. During his reign, Christians "endured every kind of disgrace that frenzied mobs habitually inflicted upon their enemies and adversaries."<sup>3</sup> Emperor Decius (201-252 AD) demanded that all citizens must "offer sacrifices, pour libations, and partake of the sacrificial meat" to the Roman gods as proof of their allegiance, threatening torture for those who refused.<sup>4</sup> Emperor Diocletian (245-311 AD) went further, ordering churches to be "leveled to the ground and the Scriptures burned." To subdue Christians who feared no death, he "imprisoned church leaders throughout the empire and employed every means to force them to sacrifice," aiming to shatter the faith of the Christian community.<sup>5</sup>

### Exhortations from the Early Church Fathers

It is evident from the extant writings of the early Church Fathers that the early Church, enduring prolonged brutal persecution and suffering, did not give rise to bitterness, resentment, or despair. On the contrary, believers consistently confronted adversity from a spiritual perspective, placing their trust in Christ and looking forward to future glory. The teachings of these Fathers regarding tribulation and suffering can be summarized in the following three exhortations:

**(1) The Lord is present in tribulation, bringing comfort to suffering saints:** as the presbyter Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-235 AD) stated, persecution and tribulation stem from the Antichrist's assault upon the saints, yet believers may look to "the Lord appearing from heaven."<sup>6</sup> This manifestation enables the saints to turn adversity into victory—either gaining strength to endure suffering or beholding the Lord's face after martyrdom.

**(2) Death is not the end of life, but a beautiful moment of temporary rest:** Tertullian (c. 155-220 AD) explained Matthew 6:6, noting that "your room" symbolizes the grave, where those who depart during the fierce final assault of the Antichrist may rest for a time.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, saints need not fear suffering or death; departing to be with the Lord is something to be longed for.

**(3) The saints who endure to the end in tribulation shall receive the crown of glory:** Irenaeus (c. 125-202 AD), interpreting the great tribulation described in Matthew 24:21, explicitly states, "This is the final trial of the righteous, and those who overcome shall receive the crown of immortality."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, what saints should fear is not tribulation itself, but rather any weakening or falling away in their faith due to persecution, causing them to lose their portion of heavenly blessings.

According to this understanding, saints can face all kinds of persecution and tribulations with joyful hearts, as stated in the Apostolic Father's work *Pastor Hermae*: "Happy are you

who endure the great tribulation that is at hand!"<sup>9</sup> They valued the eternal spiritual life in heaven far more than the fleeting physical life on earth. This principle is what they learned from the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today, the world is filled with suffering. There are afflictions that we endure clearly for the sake of faith, and in such cases, the teachings of the Church Fathers offer believers fitting encouragement. Yet, for some cases of suffering, it is harder to discern the meaning. Internationally, wars claim countless lives and leave countless displaced; locally, human-made disasters tear families apart and lay waste to homes. These sufferings are real and cause deep lamentation. Nevertheless, the early Church Fathers reminded believers: do not fix your eyes solely on this fleeting world; instead, gaze with spiritual vision toward the eternal future, believing that **tribulations are but temporary trials, and Christ is our ever-present help**. Physical suffering, even death, need not be dreaded. By persevering to the end amid tribulations, one will receive the heavenly reward of glory.

1 Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 10.96.

2 Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 10.97.

3 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.1.

4 George Milligan, *Greek Papyri* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), no. 48.

5 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.2.

6 Hippolytus, *Commentariorum in Daniele* 2.7.

7 Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* 4.27.

8 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5.29.1.

9 *Pastor Hermae*, vision 2.2.

## See Suffering as Suffering

Curie Qu

Assistant Professor of Christian Thought

### Three Kinds of Suffering

Whenever a major disaster occurs, faith communities often engage in renewed discussions of theodicy. Under the weight of disaster, such discussions tend to become emotionally charged, making it difficult to maintain a calm and rational spirit. In today's world, information spreads with unprecedented speed. Even the slightest misstep in a believer's words can provoke strong emotions among disaster victims and the public. Therefore, as we reflect on and discuss these issues, we must first pray, asking God to grant us compassionate hearts, wise minds, and cautious tongues.

In God's creation order, three major categories of suffering can be identified: **(1) moral evils:** sins committed by humans through the misuse of their free will, such as murder, theft, and betrayal; **(2) natural disasters:** calamities that cannot be avoided even with the best preventive measures, such as earthquakes,



fires, and traffic accidents; **(3) the sorrows of life:** whether stemming from human or natural causes, misfortune inevitably befalls some people, such as bereavement, physical disabilities, and depression. These three categories of suffering are, of course, not strictly separate but overlap and intertwine.

### Challenges to Christian Faith

Suffering and these evils are a reality that often shakes the very foundations of our faith. Both believers and non-believers may challenge the Christian faith from these three perspectives: **(1) the logical problem:** statement 1, "God is omnipotent and perfectly good," and statement 2, "Evil exists," are logically incompatible; **(2) the evidential problem:** the existence of evil serves as evidence against God's existence—either God does not exist, or God is not omnipotent or perfectly good;

**(3) the existential problem:** setting aside purely rational arguments, we are in fact beset by various forms of suffering, leading us to exclaim, “This is meaningless!” or “This shouldn’t be happening! At least, it shouldn’t be happening to me!”

In response to the challenges from the logic and evidential problems, **G. W. Leibniz** argues that the actual world, despite the existence of suffering, is still “the best of all possible worlds.” As an omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly good being, God created this world with the best intentions. The existence of evil and suffering in this world serves to realize a greater good or a long-term purpose. **G. W. F. Hegel** holds a similar view, arguing that suffering is a necessary condition for the realization of a higher good. Both Leibniz and Hegel adopted a detached, purely rational approach that distanced themselves from the realities of disaster. **While such responses may be valid on rational grounds, for those suffering in real life, “rationalizing” may abstract—or even “nullify”—their concrete experience of suffering.** Those still plagued by disaster may well ask: Is my current hardship merely the “necessary cost” or “necessary means” for God to achieve the greatest good? Am I simply a disposable pawn in God’s grand chess game that He will win in the end?

### Seeing Suffering as Suffering

As an old Chinese saying goes, “the way of heaven is distant, but the way of humans is near.” If responses to the logic and evidential problems seem too abstract (not that they are unimportant, but that they may not fully address the circumstances of sufferers), we might approach the issue from a third perspective: viewing the concrete suffering as lived reality. **From the perspective of those who suffer,** we must first avoid abstracting the problem of suffering as the previous two approaches tend to do—starting with a general concept of suffering and arguing theoretically for its inevitability. Instead, we must face and take real suffering seriously, addressing suffering on its own terms. Second, **we must not force a**

**seemingly “spiritually correct” explanation onto every real suffering.** “God wants you to let go of everything and look to Him alone,” or “In your pain, you will experience God’s grace and care more deeply.” Some suffering may simply be gratuitous. We do not know why it occurs, nor why it afflicts a particular person. If we insist on assuming the role of an all-knowing interpreter who must find a rational explanation for every instance of suffering, we risk repeating the error made by Job’s three friends. In fact, **we can mourn with those who mourn.** We can share with the grieving people the story of Job, or the life stories of the writer Xing Linzi (Liu Xia) and the evangelist and motivational speaker Nick Vujicic. This may help them and bring them comfort. Of course, it may not work because there is always a deep divide between accounts of others’ suffering and the suffering one endures firsthand.

### Endurance and Hope

When Martin Luther lost his beloved thirteen-year-old daughter in his later years, he said, “It’s strange to know that she is surely at peace and that she is well off there, very well off, and yet to grieve so much!” He also quoted Matthew 26:41, lamenting, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Because our flesh is weak, we may question God in the midst of suffering, grow angry with Him, and find ourselves unable to utter words of thanksgiving and praise in prayer. This is only human—we are all inherently weak in this way. But on the other hand, we must also recognize this: **As long as the smoldering wicks have not yet been quenched and the bruised reeds have not been broken, life must go on, and faith must be restored. Even if some wicks have indeed been extinguished, and some reeds have truly been broken, that is not the end—at the end of the road, the Lord who has risen from the dead awaits us there, ready to welcome us into our eternal heavenly home.**

## The Resilience of Life

Chi-yeung Lam

Assistant Professor of Christian Education

### God is beyond Our “Assumptions”

What did Martha and Mary need?

John 11 records the miracle of Lazarus’ resurrection. By the time Jesus and His disciples arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days, and relatives and friends had gathered to offer their condolences. When Martha heard of Jesus’ coming, she hurried out of the village to meet Him. When Mary saw Jesus, she fell at His feet and wept, saying, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” These words echoed Martha’s earlier



statement, expressing sorrow over what seemed to be Jesus’ “delayed arrival.”

Martha and Mary were convinced that Jesus could heal serious illnesses, though their understanding of resurrection was limited. They never imagined that Jesus could raise someone before the last day, even one who had been dead for four days and whose body had already begun to decay. They assumed there was a time limit to His power, believing healing was possible only if He had arrived “early,” and that “now” was

already too late. In this way, their thinking reveals they perceived Jesus' power to be restricted in this way.

However, Martha and Mary were familiar with the stories of resurrection. In the Old Testament, Elijah and Elisha raise the dead; in the New Testament, Jesus raises Jairus' daughter and the widow's son at Nain. As close friends of Jesus, they surely knew that He possessed power over death. However, when suffering struck their own family, in their grief, they fell into a negative mindset, believing that "delayed" meant "impossible" or "irreversible." That is a very human response. Perhaps, in our own struggles, we too assume limits to God: "If only it happened sooner ..." or "If only we had acted back then ..." These thoughts often stem from certain "assumptions" we hold about God.

### **Fellowship and Resilience**

Lazarus was miraculously raised from the dead, but after all, this event is an exception. In everyday life, most people must endure the long years that follow the loss of loved ones and seek ways to continue despite their grief.

The Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST) suggests that when individuals encounter major life events—such as a pandemic or natural disaster—their mindset may undergo a significant shift: they refocus on emotionally meaningful behaviors and tend to deepen ties with close friends and family. While this selective social pattern may appear to narrow one's social circle, it actually enhances the quality and depth of emotional support. This dynamic closely parallels the experience of faith communities. ***A meaningful fellowship life is precisely what nourishes psychological resilience. When we go beyond superficial small talk and build genuine, heart-to-heart connections in church, this support system becomes our refuge in the storm of life.***

### **Prayer and Resilience**

A six-year longitudinal study of patients with chronic illnesses in the United States revealed a positive link between prayer and resilience.\* After controlling for a range of variables, the study found that patients who engaged in daily private prayer had a significantly higher survival rate than those who prayed less frequently. Although the mechanism requires further investigation, researchers suggested that the "sense of hope" derived from prayer may play a key role. When believers consistently entrust matters beyond their control—such as illness—to God in prayer, this repeated affirmation and entrustment foster peace and

consolation. Physiologically, such practices help lower stress hormone levels, thereby reducing negative health impacts. This reminds us that prayer is not only a spiritual discipline but also the foundation of holistic well-being. ***In prayer, we admit our own limits while simultaneously experiencing God's infinite power and presence.***

### **Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing**

In addition to fellowship and prayer, modern psychology has developed practical methods for fostering emotional resilience, such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). If we talked about EMDR twenty years ago, it might be misunderstood, because during the therapy, the therapist moves his or her fingers back and forth in front of the patient's eyes, somewhat like a ritual performed in folk religions. Yet its origins are simple: its founder, Francine Shapiro, was once taking a walk in the park when she accidentally discovered that as her eyes moved rhythmically from side to side, her negative emotions noticeably diminished. She subsequently conducted years of clinical trials, and this therapeutic approach has gradually gained recognition in the medical community. This offers us a practical insight: when you feel stuck in negative emotions—or even overwhelmed by grief, as Martha and Mary were—you might follow Shapiro's example and take a walk in the park, allowing your eyes to move naturally from side to side as you observe the scenery. Such a simple act may help ease your emotions. (Of course, if distress becomes severe, seek professional medical or psychological counseling.)

The term "resilience" has gained significant attention in recent years and topped the list of buzzwords of 2025 in mainland China. This reflects the reality that many people are navigating uncertain external environments, experiencing anxiety and unease that may impact both their personal lives and collective cooperation. Deep down, we long to break free from circumstantial constraints and continue moving forward. Reflecting on the story of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, we find a miracle beyond their imaginations. ***May we cultivate resilience in mind, body, and spirit through fellowship and personal prayer, finding strength in God together.***

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\* Gail Ironson and Salman Shaheen Ahmad, "Frequency of Private Prayer Predicts Survival Over 6 Years in a Nationwide U.S. Sample of Individuals with a Chronic Illness," *Journal of Religion and Health* 63.4 (August 2024): 2910-2923 [article online]; available from Springer Nature Link website (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-023-01870-z>); accessed 1 March 2026.

# *Pneuma* or Spirit? A Question of Translation and Context

Daniel Lam

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## Rethinking *Pneuma* in Paul

When the Apostle Paul wrote πνεῦμα, what did he have in mind? For most modern readers, the answer seems straightforward: human or holy spirit, that is, the Third Person of the Trinity, a divine agent of comfort, conviction, and power. This theological reading is so natural that it feels obvious, and it is almost instinctive to readers and translators. **But recently, this translation has been challenged. This article seeks to discuss what those objections are and explore the possibility of translating πνεῦμα differently.**

The history of modern scholarship shows a persistent tension between theological and historical approaches. In the early 20th century, Hermann Gunkel proposed dichotomies that separated Pauline *pneuma* from its Old Testament and Hellenistic Jewish roots and framed it as “supernatural” versus natural. This move proved to be influential as this framework was adopted by important figures like Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann, whose deeply Lutheran readings further solidified a “spiritualizing” interpretation that prioritized inner, subjective religious experience. In this stream of scholarship, *pneuma* became synonymous with the inner life of faith, often at the expense of its cosmic and corporeal dimensions.

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**These works represent a major shift ... setting aside our post-Cartesian idea of “spirit” as a non-material, private feeling, and recovering the ancient, concrete understanding of *pneuma* as a physical substance.**

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At the end of the 20th century, a significant corrective emerged, with scholars who insisted on a more historically grounded, “physicalist” reading.


**Dale Martin’s** *The Corinthian Body* (1995)

was groundbreaking, showing how Paul’s audience understood bodies and spirits within a holistic ancient cosmology where the physical and spiritual were intertwined. **Troels Engberg-Pedersen** then argued in *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul* (2010) for reading Pauline *pneuma* through a Stoic lens, as the cosmic, intelligent “breath” that constitutes and unifies all matter. These works represent a major shift, taking Paul’s materialism seriously. This means setting aside our post-Cartesian idea of “spirit” as a non-material, private feeling, and recovering the ancient, concrete understanding of *pneuma* as a physical substance. For these scholars, the most helpful key to this recovery is Stoic philosophy, the dominant intellectual framework of Paul’s Greco-Roman world.

## Why a Stoic, Material *Pneuma*?

For the Stoics, *pneuma* is not a ghost or immaterial being. It is the cosmic life-force, an intelligent mixture of air and fire that permeates and structures the universe. It is the tension in a rope, the growth in a plant, the rational mind of a human, and the substance of the stars. This *pneuma* is divine, rational, and utterly material. It constitutes a hierarchy of being, from dense rocks to rarified gods, with no unbridgeable chasm between the physical and the divine.





Engberg-Pedersen argues that Paul's audiences—Jew and Gentile alike—breathed this intellectual air. When Paul spoke of *pneuma*, they would have heard echoes of this cosmic, animating substance. **The automatic translation of *pneuma* as a disembodied “Spirit” is therefore an anachronism, importing a modern mind/body dualism that would have been foreign to Paul.** To read him correctly, Engberg-Pedersen contends, we must take his physical language literally: *pneuma* is a stuff that can be poured, drunk, and infused; it transforms the believer from the inside out via a tangible, physiological reality.

**Viewing *pneuma* through this Stoic, materialist lens dramatically reshapes how we read familiar passages.** Consider first Paul's discussion of the resurrection body in **1 Corinthians 15:44-45**. Here Paul contrasts the “natural body” (σῶμα ψυχικόν) sown in death with the “spiritual body” (σῶμα πνευματικόν) raised in life, culminating in his striking declaration that the risen Christ became a “life-giving *pneuma*.” The conventional reading understands the “spiritual body” as a glorified, immortal body oriented by the Holy Spirit, with Christ either possessing the Spirit or being accompanied by him. But Engberg-Pedersen offers a different perspective by connecting this passage to Paul's earlier mention of heavenly bodies like the sun and moon in 1 Corinthians 15:40-41. He argues that for Paul, a σῶμα πνευματικόν is a body actually made of *pneuma*-stuff, analogous to the Stoic understanding of stars as composed of this refined, divine substance. Thus Christ, as the “last Adam,” has not merely received the Spirit; rather, his resurrected mode of existence is *pneuma* itself. He becomes the source of that life-giving, material substance that will ultimately reconstitute believers. In this reading, resurrection is not merely a restoration of life but a physical transformation into an entirely new, pneumatic order of being.

A second example comes from **Romans 5:5**, where Paul writes that “God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) who has been given to us” (NIV). The conventional reading takes this as a beautiful metaphor for the internal, emotional assurance of God's love provided by the Holy Spirit. But the materialist reading reveals something more literal. Following ancient medical theories known as Pneumatism, *pneuma* was understood as an external substance drawn into the body through breathing, processed by the heart, and then channeled through the arteries to govern thoughts and actions. When Paul speaks of *pneuma* being “poured into our hearts,” he may be describing an actual physiological process: the divine *pneuma* is literally infused into the cardiac centre of the believer, physically altering his/her constitution and enabling him/her to act in accordance with God's love. The change, in this view, is simultaneously cognitive and corporeal—a transformation of the whole person, inside and out.

### **Scholarly Pushback: Two Major Critiques**

While this view is gaining momentum, this materialist thesis has faced criticism from other leading scholars. John Barclay and John Levison pinpoint two major tensions in Engberg-Pedersen's proposal.

**Barclay** argues that Engberg-Pedersen's model, for all its philosophical precision, misses the core of Paul's theology: the radical, disruptive newness of the Christ event. For Paul, the *pneuma* is not a pre-existing cosmic substance simply transferred from heaven to earth. It is an unprecedented, eschatological entity unleashed by Christ's resurrection, a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:17). Regarding 1 Corinthians 15, Barclay disputes the claim that “heavenly bodies” such as the sun, moon, and stars are explicitly called “pneumatic.” Paul's point, he contends, is God's power to give each its own

kind of body, not to outline a Stoic *scala naturae* or hierarchy of being. The “life-giving *pneuma*” in verse 45 is the power of resurrection itself, not a higher-grade cosmic material. To reduce it to Stoic physics, Barclay warns, is to turn the resurrection into a mere “reordering of already-existing cosmic elements.”

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**As such, to transliterate *pneuma* is precisely a tool to suspend our theological assumptions long enough to hear Paul on his own terms.**

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However, it is important to avoid imposing modern, dualist categories of “spiritual vs. material” onto Paul altogether. As such, to transliterate *pneuma* is precisely a tool to suspend our theological assumptions long enough to hear Paul on his own terms. Using this tool, we can see that Paul describes the new life in Christ using the best available language of his day for a transformative power, namely, the language of a divine, life-altering substance. This does not require us to claim that Paul was a Stoic or that the *pneuma* is “just” medical *pneuma*. It simply asserts that this was the conceptual tool Paul employed to articulate the very ineffable newness that Barclay wants to protect. The “newness” resides in the salvific action of God in Christ; the mechanism of description, however, is the contemporary materialist framework of the first-century world.

**Levison**, for his part, agrees that *pneuma* has a concrete dimension but charges Engberg-Pedersen with a selective and sometimes strained use of Stoicism, while neglecting the richer parallels in Paul’s Jewish heritage. He raises two specific concerns. First, the Stoic models Engberg-Pedersen employs, such as the cosmic conflagration (ἔκπυρωσις) or a passing comment from Cicero on divination, do not convincingly explain the ongoing, transformative

work of *pneuma* in believers. Meanwhile, actual Stoic accounts of inspiration, such as those describing the oracle at Delphi, portray *pneuma* as a terrestrial vapor or breeze, not as a substance flowing through preached words. Second, and more centrally, Levison points to the dearth of engagement with Jewish texts where *pneuma* is also depicted as both concrete and cognitive. He cites the “spirit” placed upon the elders to govern (Nm 11:25), the “excellent spirit” of wisdom in Daniel (Dn 5:12), and the spirit that besieges Elihu, forcing out wise speech (Jb 32:18-20). The Dead Sea Scrolls, too, present a community transformed and granted knowledge by the spirit. For Levison, this Jewish matrix provides a more direct and likely foreground for Paul’s thinking than an abstracted Stoic physics.

Setting aside Levison’s misguided dichotomy of Judaism and the Greco-Roman world (see Hengel’s *Judaism and Hellenism*, which has become a scholarly consensus; one cannot separate Judaism from its surrounding culture), there is a way to honor Levison’s concerns while retaining materialist insight. Medicine, after all, was a shared cultural vernacular across the Hellenistic world, including Judea. A Hellenistic Jew like Paul could easily integrate the Jewish concept of *ruach* (understood as God’s powerful, life-giving breath) with contemporary medical understandings of *pneuma* as an animating bodily substance. To argue for a “medical” *pneuma*, then, is not to choose “Greek” over “Jewish.” Rather, it is to identify the common intellectual currency through which Jewish theological concepts could be understood in physical terms. This provides a more satisfying answer to Levison’s critique: **the physicality of *pneuma* in Paul needs not come exclusively from Stoic philosophy. It could just as plausibly emerge from the synthesis of Jewish theology and the widespread biomedical concepts that permeated the ancient Mediterranean world**, not dissimilar from what Philo did in his work.

### Synthesis: What Is at Stake?

Here we must acknowledge that *pneuma* may indeed carry Stoic connotations. Engberg-Pedersen correctly observes that for Paul's first-century audience, the word *pneuma* would have evoked a material, cosmic, life-giving substance. Yet we must also attend to the limits of Engberg-Pedersen's argument. The *pneuma* in Paul's letters is not merely Stoic cosmic matter. Certain passages attribute unmistakably personal actions to *pneuma*: it "intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom 8:26 NABS); it "apportions to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor 12:11 ESV); it can be "grieved" (Eph 4:30). These are not things that a mere material "substance" can do; they imply a person with emotions, will, and relational capacity. To reduce *pneuma* entirely to Stoic matter is to miss this crucial personal dimension in Paul's theology.

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**He [Engberg-Pedersen] rightly alerts us to the material dimension of *pneuma*, but ... fails to fully account for the personhood Paul attributes to *pneuma* and the radical newness introduced by the Christ event.**

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Thus, Engberg-Pedersen's thesis requires correction, not wholesale acceptance. He rightly alerts us to the material dimension of *pneuma*, but his model overemphasizes Stoic continuity and fails to fully account for the personhood Paul attributes to *pneuma* and the radical newness introduced by the Christ event. For careful readers, the path to the richest understanding may lie precisely in holding this tension: recognizing the concrete, material connotations of *pneuma* in its ancient context while also acknowledging its personal role in Paul's letters.

### Taking the Debate Seriously

An important clarification is necessary here: we need not fully accept Engberg-Pedersen's thesis, nor must we claim that Paul was a Stoic, in order to benefit from this discussion (in fact, Engberg-Pedersen never made such a claim). As Christians, if we care about God's word, in

this case what Paul actually said, we must remain open to the possibility that our understanding of *pneuma* may be incomplete and need correction or enrichment. Engberg-Pedersen's argument may not be entirely correct, but he has raised a question worth taking seriously: **Have our modern cultural assumptions caused us to miss certain dimensions of what Paul originally intended to communicate?**

Transliterating *pneuma* is precisely the tool that helps us take this question seriously. It does not force us to accept any particular conclusion, but rather creates a space where we can pause and ask: "What did Paul mean when he used the word *pneuma* here?" This questioning is an act of greater faithfulness to Scripture. It acknowledges that God's revelation may be richer and deeper than we have yet understood, and it allows the biblical text to challenge us rather than merely confirming what we already think we know.

It is worth noting that this practice of transliterating *pneuma* is particularly compelling in the case of Paul's letters. This is because we can identify with reasonable specificity both Paul's audience (communities of Jews and Gentiles in the first-century Greco-Roman world) and his historical context (a period when Stoicism and medical theories were prevalent). In this particular historical setting, Paul's listeners would have understood *pneuma* in ways far closer to the word's rich cultural connotations than modern readers do. **Therefore, at least in the case of Paul's letters, using the transliteration *pneuma* rather than translating it as "Spirit" can better help us avoid anachronism and more faithfully hear what Paul intended to communicate.**

### Conclusion

In the end, transliterating *pneuma* is not an act of laziness or an evasion of the translator's task. It is an expression of deeper faithfulness to the text. It invites us into an ongoing exploration, allowing Paul himself to tell us what his *pneuma* truly means. In the course of this exploration, we come to know better not only Paul but also the God who spoke through him.

## Academic Affairs News

### 2025-26 Spring Opening Convocation

This school year, the spring term began on January 15 (Thursday) with Spiritual Formation Day. The program featured a message from the Rev. Wai-keung Chau, Senior Pastor of the Taipo Baptist Church, on the “Experiences in Caring for and Supporting Disaster Victims and the Community,” followed by a message on Lamentations 1 by Dr. Hing-weng Seng, Assistant Professor of Old Testament, titled “Between the Need and Me.” Afternoon sessions included small group discussions and a time of prayer.

### 2026-27 HKBTS Discovery Day

HKBTS Discovery Day was successfully held on March 14 (Saturday) at our Applied Theological Education Centre in Mong Kok. Dr. Fook-kong Wong, Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament, delivered the keynote speech, “Called or Not Called?,” exploring the significance of a calling for believers and how believers can discern whether they have been called. This was followed by a classroom experience in which participants chose one of the following sessions: “Know the Faith, Spread the Faith” by Dr. Nathan Ng, Vice President (Academic Affairs) and Professor of Christian Thought (Church History); “Let’s Catch the Calling Beat!” by Dr. Hing-weng Seng, Assistant Professor of Old Testament; and “Learn (Ancient) Greek the Modern Way: A Stress-Free, 30-Minute Taster” by Dr. Daniel Lam, Assistant Professor of New Testament. The event also featured testimonies from seminary students about their callings, as well as a group prayer session.

## Events and Activities

### Bible Conference 2026

The Bible Conference 2026 on the theme “When Our Body Is Not in Our Favour: Exploring Disability in the Old Testament” was held in the Grand Conference Hall of the New Academic Building on Sai O Campus on March 16 (Monday). Two topics were explored: The Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Coleson-Derck, Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Biblical and Near Eastern Studies of Nazarene Theological Seminary, spoke on “Useless Women? Infertility and Its Effects on Women in Ancient Israel,” with Dr. Lilian Wing-ting Li, Josiah Mann Assistant Professor (Biblical Studies) at the China Graduate School of Theology, serving as the respondent. Dr. Fook-kong Wong, Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament, presented on “Disability and Service: Leviticus 21:16-23 Revisited,” with Dr. Leo Kwan-hung Li, Lecturer of the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CUHK, as the respondent. About 80 participants attended onsite and online.

### “The Bible on Contemporary Issues” Lecture Series

The lecture series “The Bible on Contemporary Issues,” co-organized by the seminary and the Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church, began on January 24. Dr. Bernard Leung, Associate Professor of New Testament, spoke on “The New Testament on Poverty.” Three more talks are scheduled in this round: “The Bible and the Pursuit of Spirituality” by Dr. Fook-kong Wong, Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament (June 20); “Death and the Bible” by Dr. Daniel Lam, Assistant Professor of New Testament (August 29); and “The Old Testament and Oppression” by Dr. Hing-weng Seng, Assistant Professor of Old Testament (November 28). All lectures will be held on Saturdays from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church (31 Cameron Road, Tsim Sha Tsui). Admission is free, and no registration is required.

Another round of lectures in this series was co-organized by the seminary and the Fanling Baptist Church and successfully held on March 7, 14, 21, and 28 (Saturdays) at the Fanling Baptist Church. Participants responded enthusiastically and found the lectures inspiring.

Attendance at all talks within a round, along with the submission of a 2,000-word reflective report, will be counted toward half of a credit. The seminary will host more lectures in this series across different districts in Hong Kong, allowing participants to accumulate up to three credits. These credits may be transferred upon enrollment in programs at the seminary's Main Campus, the Lay Theological Education Department, or the Distance Education Program.

## Online Taster Lesson

The Main Campus and Distance Education Programs are jointly organizing an Online Taster Lesson (Systematic Theology) on May 22 (Friday) at 8:00 pm. Dr. Curie Qu, Assistant Professor of Christian Thought, will deliver a live Zoom lecture on "Is Time a Divine Creation? Revisiting Augustinian Time in Light of Theoretical Physics and Psychology," tracing contemporary theories of time in theoretical physics and psychology back to Augustine's account of the origin of time, aiming to achieve a new theological-hermeneutical "fusion of horizons." The lesson will be conducted in Mandarin. Admission is free. Come and join us.

## From the Chaplain

### Having the Eyes of Your Hearts Enlightened

I ... remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ... (Eph 1:16-19 ESV)

The Epistle to the Ephesians expounds on God's eternal plan of salvation, emphasizing the universal significance of God's salvation through Christ—namely, that God unites all things and accomplishes cosmic reconciliation in Christ. The church is the initial fulfillment of this plan of unity. God intends to use the church to bear witness to Him on Earth and to manifest His glory.

In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul praises God the Father's will in Christ and explains that believers have received all spiritual blessings in the Triune God, including:

- God chose us before the foundation of the world;
- God redeemed us through the blood of Christ;
- The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance.

In other words, the "spiritual blessings" (v. 3) refer to the fact that God's redemptive plan in Christ has come to all of

Grace Chan *Chaplain*

us—that we have been chosen and redeemed to become God's children, to receive His abundant grace, to know His will, and to inherit an eternal inheritance in heaven.

Therefore, Paul gives thanks to God for the believers' steadfast faith and overflowing love (vv. 15-16). He then prays for all the believers (vv. 17-23), asking God to grant them spiritual wisdom and insight so that they might truly know Him, have the eyes of their hearts enlightened, and thus see the hope to which they are called. He prays that they may understand how precious they are as God's inheritance and how great the power God has displayed toward them is, enabling them to live godly lives in accordance with His will.

Following this, in verses 20-22, Paul marvels at and extols God's mighty power. God raised Christ from the dead, exalted Him, and granted Him victory and authority; now He sits at the right hand of God the Father, with all things subject to Him. Christ is the Lord who rules over all creation; He is the sovereign King who reigns in authority, and no power in the human or spiritual realm can prevail against Him. Verse 23 speaks of Christ filling the church (that is, His body); His mighty power is to be manifested through the church, enabling believers to overcome the world and giving them the faith and strength to face all manner of difficulties and challenges.

Today, what do your eyes see? Are they clouded by

the gloom of the world, so that you see only a difficult environment—full of challenges and obstacles?

Today, do you see the mighty power of Christ's resurrection and victory? As a witness for Christ, how should you proclaim Him to the world?

May God open the eyes of our hearts, granting

us spiritual vision and insight so that we may grasp the glorious hope found in being chosen by Him and continually experience His mighty works. May God awaken our hearts to love Him, inspire us to commit ourselves to proclaiming Christ, so that His name may be exalted, His will be done, and His kingdom be revealed on Earth!

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## Lay Theological Education Department

Carter Pang *Director*

### Facing Death and Living in Hope

In the blink of an eye, spring is ending, and summer is beginning. Looking back over the past few years, our department has been committed to responding to the call of our times. In recent years, society and churches have placed increasing emphasis on such issues as impending death, grief, and loss. We have observed that when believers face separation and loss, they urgently need the courage and wisdom firmly rooted in the Christian faith. Consequently, our department has gradually established a progressive framework for Christian education on life and death, offering courses at various levels—ranging from non-degree certificate programs to master's-level postgraduate certificates and diplomas. We have witnessed many brothers and sisters experience spiritual renewal and transformation through these training programs.

Praise God for His guidance that our department is taking another step forward by **officially launching the Master of Arts in Christian Life and Death Education (MACLDE) degree program this October.**

The MACLDE program offers more than just a master's degree; it is an educational journey toward whole life integration. Designed to provide in-depth training for believers who are inspired to explore the meaning of life from a Christian perspective, the program is characterized by "connection, reflection, and integration." We weave together biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, and practical theology with life and death education, while providing opportunities for practical application. To accommodate the needs of working believers and pastors, we offer both live lessons and flexible options for students to attend classes either at our town centres or online. Believers from Hong Kong and overseas are welcome to apply.

Notably, after completing the modules on life and death education in this program, participants may apply to the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) in the United States to have these modules counted toward the continuing education hours required for Certified in Thanatology designation, thereby enhancing their professional qualifications. Furthermore, for their final project, students may choose to make a practical "Christian Life and Death Education Ministry Plan" for their home churches, thereby directly applying what they have learned to serve their congregations. We earnestly hope that this program will equip more Christians to become life guides who trust in the Lord and know how to live well, enabling them to sow seeds of hope within their churches and throughout society.

To provide the public with a deeper understanding of Christian life and death education, our department will organize a series of enriching activities. We worked closely with the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service (hereinafter referred to as "Oi Kwan") and co-organized a seminar on May 9 (Saturday). Last year, we collaborated with Oi Kwan to provide audit seats for their frontline staff in our Christian Life and Death Education programs. This year, both parties have decided to deepen our partnership to jointly promote life and death education in the community.

Furthermore, on June 27 (Saturday), our department will jointly host a talk titled "**Death and Life from a Biblical Perspective**" with Immanuel Baptist Church. This event serves as a key warm-up activity for the MACLDE program. We have invited four professors from the seminary's Division of Biblical Studies to share their insights on the topic of death and life from various perspectives: Vice President Fook-kong Wong will explore the sensitive

and profound issue of “voluntary death” (suicide); Dr. Hing-weng Seng will contrast the contradictory descriptions of death in Ecclesiastes and Genesis; Dr. Daniel Lam will analyze the views of the afterlife in the Second Temple period; and Dr. Bernard Leung will guide us in bridging the gap between death and resurrection from the perspective of Pauline theology.

Dear brothers and sisters, life and death education is not about studying death, but about learning how to live richer and more meaningful lives. Whether you are seeking to deepen your understanding in this aspect, supporting those who are grieving in the workplace or at home, or have faced or are currently facing loss, we warmly invite you to join our events in May and June and encourage you

to prayerfully consider joining the MACLDE program this October.

Let us face death and live in hope together in the love of Christ.



*A class snapshot from the course “Orientation to Pastoral Thanatology”*

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## Distance Education

### Flexible Learning and Holistic Training

***Starting this March, the Distance Education Program officially launched the “Certificate of Lay Christian Training in Mandarin” program,*** designed to provide Chinese Christians worldwide with a diverse and comprehensive theological education in Mandarin (Putonghua), helping participants strengthen their faith, grow holistically, and dedicate themselves to serving churches and society. The program consists of two semesters each year: Spring (March to August) and Fall (September to February of the following year). The curriculum covers biblical, theological, and practical studies, offering students a comprehensive theological education. Courses are flexible and may be taken through in-person classes, online sessions, or recorded lectures. Credits earned may be transferred to other programs at the seminary.

The first course, “Introduction to Biblical Exegesis,” taught by Dr. Hing-weng Seng, began on March 17. It introduces key concepts and methods of biblical interpretation, distinguishing between “exegesis” and “eisegesis,” and exploring the worlds “behind,” “within,” and “before” the text. The course also surveys historical, literary, and theological approaches, analyzing their respective focuses and limitations, establishing a sound foundation for exegesis, and connecting the essence of Scripture to practical living.

**Charis Chan** *Director*

On May 2 (Saturday), we hosted the “Bible and Theology Lectures in Putonghua: The Past and the Present.” This event consists of two lectures. The first one, **“Journey through Genesis: Entering the Narrative World of the Patriarchs,”** was presented by Dr. Hing-weng Seng. Genesis recounts the origins of the world and God’s people while standing as a masterful work of narrative literature. The patriarchs appear in diverse settings, with circumstances driving the story forward. Beyond cultural context and historical setting, readers can appreciate the narrator’s crafted world, observing how plot, dialogue, and twists convey the story of the Lord and humanity. Dr. Seng guided participants into this narrative world of the Patriarchs.

The second lecture, delivered by Dr. Curie Qu, was titled **“Vacuity, Virtuality, and the Image of God: Christian Anthropology in the Digital Age.”** Ever since humanity first asked “Why do we exist?” and “How do we exist?,” vacuity (nothingness) has remained central in metaphysics and epistemology. Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Taoism have also reflected deeply on this topic. Rapid advancements in modern physics and artificial intelligence have, paradoxically, blurred boundaries between matter (being) and vacuity (non-being), as well as between the real and the virtual. Building upon traditional Christian anthropology (“humans as the image of God”), this lecture reexamined humanity’s place within the created order in

the digital age and offered a biblical perspective on the future of humanity.

To give a preview of our Mandarin programs, Dr. Qu visited the Putonghua Fellowship at the Kowloon City Baptist Church on January 11 to deliver a talk titled **“Exclusivism and Inclusivism: How Christians Should View Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.”** He explored exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism in the theory of interreligious dialogue, analyzing their respective interpretive strengths and unique challenges. After discussing the core tenets of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, he drew comparisons and offered conclusions from a Christian perspective. Approximately fifty people attended the gathering, actively engaging in thoughtful questions and lively discussion. Dr. Qu will offer a theology course in the fall semester of 2026. Please stay tuned for updates. Additionally, the “Certificate of Lay Christian

Training in Mandarin” program is currently accepting applications. Inquiries and registrations are welcome.

In addition, we jointly organize an **online taster lesson** with the Main Campus Programs every two months. The fourth lesson was held on January 16 on the theme “Biblical Studies—Old Testament: Spirituality and the Pursuit of Joy,” presented by Dr. Fook-kong Wong, Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament. The fifth lesson was held on March 27, presented by Dr. Daniel Lam, Assistant Professor of New Testament, on the topic “Beyond the ‘Good Samaritan’: What We’ve Always Missed about Jesus’ Story.”

We hope you will continue to support the development of our distance education programs through your prayers and offerings. May God use us as channels of His grace, bringing blessings to many.

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## Student Union

### Interlocking Neighbors

Thanks be to God, under His guidance, our new Student Union Executive Committee officially took office in January. By God’s grace and thanks to the active participation of our fellow students as well as the loving support and assistance of our teachers and staff, we successfully held this year’s events, including the annual general meeting, morning tea break, the Spring Feast (*Chunming*), and the Joint-Seminary Student Day. Activities currently underway include the publication of *Soul Wind*, a magazine capturing the voices of students and teachers; a farewell gathering with graduating seniors to recount God’s blessings; the Spiritual Formation Camp for teachers and students to enjoy fellowship and retreat together at the end of summer; and a mission trip abroad at the end of the year to learn and practice our mission. At the same time, we maintain the daily operations of the Living Department, hoping that all members may relax, rest, and enjoy fellowship there. We also continue to hold Friday morning prayer meetings, hoping that all members may “pray for one another and practice spiritual disciplines together.”

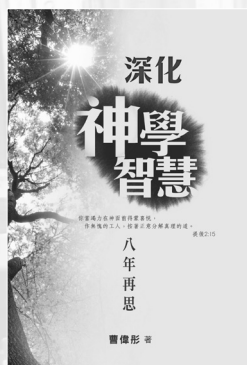
This year’s Executive Committee members include Phasura Chanvititkul (Chairperson), Shing-chi Chung (Vice-

### Phasura Chanvititkul *Chairperson*

chairperson), Ngan-po Ng (Secretary), Chi-wai Chong (Treasurer), Ka-leung Tam (Spiritual Devotion), Kai-sum Yip (Mission), and Kuan-wa Wong (Living). Our teacher advisors include Ms. Michelle Chan (Student Union), Dr. Hing-weng Seng (Student Union), Dr. Chi-yeung Lam (Secretary), Dr. Grace Chan (Spiritual Devotion), Ms. Wai-sze Yiu (Spiritual Devotion), Dr. Kit-ying Law (Mission), and Dr. Daniel Lam (Living).

The theme of the SU this year is “Interlocking Neighbors.” This means that we are not only neighbors to one another but also like interlocking gears that move as one. We are a community that shares the same mindset as Jesus Christ and is guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Let each of us do our part to meet the needs of our neighbors; let us build each other up and watch over one another: when someone next to us is weary, let us lend a helping hand; when we ourselves are weary, let us accept the support of those around us; as we enjoy our freedom, let us also be willingly interlocked together in response to the love of Christ; as each of us moves or is moved, let us together lead the whole community forward, responding together to the mission God has entrusted to us!

## Publication News



Since assuming the presidency of the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Joshua Cho has continually explored ways to cultivate *theologia* among seminary students and apply it in practical contexts, to better equip them to serve and lead churches in this fast

paced world. ***The Deepening of Theologia: Another Eight Years of Discernment*** can be considered a sequel to his other work, *Forging of Theologia: Eight Years of Impression*. This collection of his articles published in the seminary's *Newsletter* over the past eight years and beyond documents his deepening reflections on *theologia* and his journey of practice. Now the author places greater emphasis on practical theology, expands some previous topics while explores some more topics of *theologia*, including environmental protection, human nature, trauma theology, and child theology. The insights shared in this book offer inspiration for theological education and church ministry, as well as valuable references.



The seminary's semi-annual academic journal, *Hill Road* (issue 57) will be published in June on the theme "**The Proclamation of the Divine Word.**" There will be six thematic articles: "Preaching the Strange and Inconceivable Word of God" (Shung-ming Chiu), "Reality, Interpretation, and Proclamation: The Task of Christian Semiotics according

to Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*" (Andrew Chuek-kei Wong), "The Threefold Forms of the Word of God: Karl Barth's Shortcomings and Critical Revisions in Recent Barthian Theology" (Shao-kai Tseng), "The Construction of Chinese Rhetoric and the Legitimacy of Chinese Homiletics: A Preliminary Study Using the Concept of 'Persuasion' as an Example" (Ken K. S. Lui), "Preaching as Pastoral Care" (Brian K. B. Lam), and "Baptismal Repentance: Christ-Centered Proclamation and Spiritual Formation through the Ministry of the Word" (Kit-ying Law). In addition, there will be discussion articles and book reviews.

*Hill Road* is available at the seminary, its town centres, and Christian bookstores. For inquiries, please call the Publication Office at 2668 5168.

## Lay Theological Education Department

### Degree Programs

June-September 2026 (auditing is welcome)

Subjects	Lecturer	Date/Time	Instruction mode
Foundation to Biblical Interpretations <sup>#</sup>	<b>Dr. Hing-weng Seng</b> Assistant Professor of Old Testament, HKBTS	2/6-30/6 Tues 7:00-10:00 pm (5 lessons)	In Person/ Video Conferences
Church History II (Core Course in Christian Thought)	<b>Dr. Sam Ip</b> Visiting Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, HKBTS	10/6-16/9 Wed 7:00-10:00 pm (1/7 class suspended; 14 lessons)	Video Conferences
Worship and the Arts Practicum	<b>Dr. Grace Chan</b> Chaplain and Lecturer, HKBTS <b>Mr. Felix Du</b> Experienced Drama Educator	22/6-24/8 Mon 7:00-10:00 pm (10 lessons)	In Person
Dying in the Love of the Lord: A Practical Theology of Good Death	<b>Dr. Sarah Shea Ip</b> Visiting Assistant Professor of Christian Education, HKBTS	25/6-27/8 Thur 7:00-10:00 pm (10 lessons)	Video Conferences

<sup>#</sup> To register as an auditor for the course "Basics of Biblical Interpretation," please call 2711 2552 or email [ltedinfo@hkpts.edu.hk](mailto:ltedinfo@hkpts.edu.hk) for more information.

## Non-Degree Programs

April-June 2026 (admissions are now open; auditing is welcome)

Subject	Lecturer	Date/Time	Instruction Mode
The Abundance of True Self: Living a Holistic Life	Ms. Wells Yiu	27/4-22/6 Mon 9:30-11:45 am (25/5 class suspended)	In Person
Youth Ministry: Study Visits and Tours	Rev. Frankie Chow	8/5-26/6 Fri 7:15-9:45 pm, 16/5 Sat TBC (19/6 class suspended)	In Person
Education and Pastoral Care	Ms. Yvonne Chu	14/5-2/7 Thur 7:15-9:15 pm	In Person
Introduction to the Old Testament	Rev. Wai-hung Koo	14/5-2/7 Thur 7:15-9:30 pm	In Person/ Video Conferences
Conversations with Christ: Listening to the Lord's Voice	Dr. Che-chun Cheung	3/6-5/8 Wed 7:15-9:30 pm (24/6, 1/7 classes suspended)	In Person

\* All the programs above are conducted in Cantonese. The lecturer names are listed in no particular order.

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

## Pastoral Continuing Education Centre

### Courses and talks offered from April to June 2026

Course/Talk	Lecturer	Date	Time
Modern Apologetics for Pastors*	Rev. Charles Chu	4/5, 11/5, 18/5	10:00 am-12:00 pm
The Twelve Minor Prophets: Exegesis and Preaching/Teaching	Dr. Fook-kong Wong	1/6, 8/6	10:00 am-12:00 pm
Children in the Eyes of Jesus: Reframing Our Conceptions of Children*	Dr. Sarah Shea Ip	1/6, 8/6	2:30-4:30 pm
Retirement Is Not the End: A New Opportunity for Ministry	Dr. Joseph Tam, Mrs. Addy Wong	15/6, 22/6	2:30-4:30 pm
Discovering the Power of Humor in Preaching	Dr. Ken Lui	22/6, 29/6	2:30-4:30 pm

\* Live Zoom classes only; recordings available for 7 days after each class.

#### Fee concessions

- (1) *Early Bird Discount*: Students who pay the full course fee at least one week before the course begins are eligible for a reduction of HK\$20 (for a 2-hour course) or HK\$30 to HK\$40 (for a 4- to 6-hour course).
- (2) A 10% discount for graduates of HKBTS degree programs, pastors of member churches of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong, and current part-time students of HKBTS.
- (3) A 20% discount for valid cardholders of HKBTS Alumni Association members.
- (4) A 50% discount for full-time seminary students from the 16 member seminaries of the Hong Kong Theological Education Association.

**Instruction Mode** In-Person/Video Conferences/Recorded Video (7-day access)

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

**Registration** Application forms can be downloaded from the seminary website, or you may enroll online at [www.hkbits.edu.hk/pce/apply2.html](http://www.hkbits.edu.hk/pce/apply2.html)

**Inquiries** Tel: 2768 5179  
Email: [pce@hkbits.edu.hk](mailto:pce@hkbits.edu.hk)

# *The Early Bird discount cannot be combined with other fee discounts.*

# Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Centre

## Classes offered from April to June 2026

Class	Lecturer	Date/Time
Primary Class Voice III	Mr. Sanson Lau	19/5-16/6 Tues 7:00-8:30 pm (5 lessons)
Intermediate Class Voice III		20/5-17/6 Wed 8:30-10:00 pm (5 lessons)
Intermediate Class Voice VI		15/4-13/5 Wed 7:00-8:30 pm (5 lessons)
Intermediate Class Voice IX		Class A: 14/4-12/5 Tues 7:00-8:30 pm (5 lessons) Class B: 14/4-12/5 Tues 8:30-10:00 pm (5 lessons)
Hymns in Cantonese as Methodology I: An Integrated Text for Music and Theology		20/5-17/6 Wed 7:00-8:30 pm (5 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training II (15)	Mrs. Wong Fung Chi-lai	17/4-12/6 Fri 1:30-4:00 pm (8 lessons)
Evening Class: Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training II (15)		13/4-8/6 Mon 7:00-9:30 pm (8 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training III (17)		15/4-3/6 Wed 10:00 am-12:30 pm (8 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training I Follow Up	Ms. Rachel Kwok	Class A: 16/4-11/6 Thurs 10:30 am-1:00 pm (6 lessons) Class B: 20/4-15/6 Mon 2:00-4:30 pm (6 lessons)
Integrated Voice and Musicianship Training V		Class A: 20/4-15/6 Mon 10:30 am-12:00 pm (6 lessons) Class B: 16/4-11/6 Thurs 4:30-5:30 pm (6 lessons)
Conducting 101 Series: Conducting Basics II	Mr. Vicky Shin	21/4-16/6 Tues 7:30-9:30 pm (6 lessons)
Drama Art at Church: Bible Study through Drama Workshop I	Mr. Felix Du	30/4-21/5 Thurs 7:30-9:45 pm (4 lessons)
Expressive Arts Therapy Experience	Dr. Ka-kit Lai, Ms. Jackie Fu, Ms. Cathy Cheng	Class A: 10-24/4 Fri 7:30-9:30 pm (3 lessons) Class B: 5-26/6 Fri 7:30-9:30 pm (3 lessons)
Expressive Arts and Trauma-Informed Workshop	Dr. Ka-kit Lai, Ms. Jackie Fu	8/5, 29/5 Fri 7:30-9:30 pm (2 lessons)

\* For class details, please refer to our website.

Inquiries/Registration Tel: 2789 2200 Email: [worship-arts@hkpts.edu.hk](mailto:worship-arts@hkpts.edu.hk)  
Website: [www.hkpts.edu.hk/waec](http://www.hkpts.edu.hk/waec) WhatsApp: (852) 9433 7726

# Distance Education Program

## Exploring Truth . Reflecting upon Faith . Equipping for Ministry

Degree Program	Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
<b>Master of Arts/ Postgraduate Diploma/ Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Studies (Degree Programs)</b>	To nurture church leaders who aspire to serve effectively in Christian organizations or in churches. Some credits earned in these programs can be transferred to master's degree programs at the seminary.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born-again, mature believers of good character who have been baptized into the Church for three years or more.</li> <li>Holder of a recognized university degree or equivalent qualification.</li> <li>Their pastors' recommendations.</li> <li>Passed a written test and an interview.</li> </ol>	February, June, and October	<b>Spring trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> November 20 <b>Overseas:</b> October 20 <b>Summer trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> March 20 <b>Overseas:</b> February 20 <b>Fall trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> July 20 <b>Overseas:</b> June 20
<b>Bachelor of Arts/ Higher Diploma/ Diploma in Christian Studies (Degree Programs)</b>	To provide students with basic, practical theological training, equipping them to serve in churches and to witness Christ in society. Some credits earned in these programs can be transferred to master's degree programs at the seminary.	Secondary school graduates with their pastors' recommendations, who have passed a written test and an interview.		

These are all online degree programs.

Non-Degree Program	Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
<b>Higher Diploma in Christian Studies (Non-Degree Program)</b>	Providing basic theological training including biblical studies, theology, and practical studies. It enables students to lay a solid foundation of faith, reshape their lives, and live out their calling.	Diploma (non-degree program) graduates with their pastors' recommendations.	March and September	<b>Spring semester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> February 10 <b>Overseas:</b> January 10 <b>Fall semester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> August 10 <b>Overseas:</b> July 10
<b>Diploma in Christian Studies (Non-Degree Program)</b>		Secondary school graduates with their pastors' recommendations.		
<b>Certificate in Biblical Studies</b>	Introductory programs in biblical studies, guiding students to study the Bible systematically.	All are welcome.	January, May, and September	<b>Spring trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> January 20 <b>Overseas:</b> December 20 <b>Summer trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> May 20 <b>Overseas:</b> April 20 <b>Fall trimester:</b> <b>Hong Kong:</b> September 20 <b>Overseas:</b> August 20
<b>Certificate of Lay Christian Training in Mandarin</b>	To provide Chinese Christians worldwide with a diverse and comprehensive theological education in Mandarin, helping them strengthen their faith and be fully equipped to dedicate themselves to serving churches and society.	Secondary school graduates with their pastors' recommendations.	March and September	—

Non-degree programs can be taken online or by mail.

Trial online programs: <http://elearning.hkbts.edu.hk>


Inquiries Tel: 2768 5105

Email: [deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk)

Website: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist)

A Talk on Life and Death Education 2026

# Death and Life from a Biblical Perspective



From the perspective of Scripture,  
four speakers engage participants  
in reflections on life and death,

each approaching the topic through  
specific themes from the Old Testament,  
the intertestamental period,  
the New Testament, and across the whole Bible.

**June 27 (Saturday)**

**2:30-5:30 pm**

**Immanuel Baptist Church** (1 Fortune St., Cheung Sha Wan)

**Registration Deadline: June 20 (Saturday)**

Topic	Speaker
To Be or Not to Be: A Biblical View of Voluntary Death	Dr. Fook-kong Wong Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament, HKBTS
RIP: How Long the Wait Between Death and Resurrection in Paul?	Dr. Bernard Leung Associate Professor of New Testament, HKBTS
Death Triumphant over Life? Ecclesiastes Meets Genesis	Dr. Hing-weng Seng Assistant Professor of Old Testament, HKBTS
Death and Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism	Dr. Daniel Lam Assistant Professor of New Testament, HKBTS

Free admission • Register online

Inquiries  2711 2552  [ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk)  [www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted)  HKBTS1951  HKBTS\_1951

Financial Report  
*General Fund (1 October - 31 December, 2025)*

	HK\$
Income	5,940,000
Expenditure	<u>(8,848,000)</u>
Deficit	<u><u>(2,908,000)</u></u>

\* Amounts are rounded to the nearest thousand Hong Kong dollars.

## Reply Slip

I will support the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary by

- praying for the Seminary's theological education ministry
- contributing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for
- Educational Fund    Campus Extension    Campus Maintenance and Repairs    Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Church Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

- I do *not* wish to receive a hard copy of the Seminary's Newsletter
- I do *not* wish to receive any information from the Seminary by email
- I do *not* wish my name to appear in the Seminary's Newsletter.
- Your personal data will be used for issuing receipt and the Seminary's communication purposes only.

### Donation Methods

- Crossed Cheque** payable to "Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary"
- Transfer** to our Hang Seng Bank Ltd. (024) Account No. : 787-471721-883
- Fast Payment System Identifier** (FPS ID): 166215137
- Monthly Autopay** by bank account (Autopay form will be sent to you)
- Online Donation** thru our website (via "BOCHK E-Donation Platform")
- Credit Card:**    VISA    Mastercard
- One-off Donation    Monthly Donation

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

- Please send to the seminary the completed reply slip with crossed cheque by post, or bank deposit slip via email, fax or WhatsApp to 852-8491 4750 (designated for donation only).
- A receipt will be issued and tax-deductible in Hong Kong.
- Please tick the appropriate box
- Inquiries Tel: (852) 2715 9511   Fax: (852) 2761 0868   Email: [inquiry@hkbtn.edu.hk](mailto:inquiry@hkbtn.edu.hk)  
Address: 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong   Website: <http://www.hkbtn.edu.hk>

*Thank you for your support!*



## DONORS REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2025

<b>Education Fund (Church / Organization)</b>			<b>Distance Education Program</b>		
九龍城潮語浸信會	55,000.00	吳國傑伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00
九龍國際浸信會	13,525.00	李新蘭	200.00	無名氏	500.00
上環浸信會	10,000.00	杜國維伉儷	3,000.00	無名氏	444.00
大角嘴浸信會	16,290.50	殷振強伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	100.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	曹啟明伉儷	800.00		
元朗浸信會	80,000.00	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,500.00	HK\$	<u>1,544.00</u>
屯門浸信教會	700.00	許煥英	300.00		
以馬內利浸信會	5,400.00	許鋒威	1,000.00	<b>Lay Theological Education Program</b>	
生命頌浸信會	2,000.00	陳偉倫	200.00	無名氏	50,000.00
百德浸信會	12,000.00	陳偉權	800.00	無名氏	1,000.00
阡陌社區浸信會	5,000.00	陳華	544.00	無名氏	40.00
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	曾慶忠	500.00	HK\$	<u>51,040.00</u>
香港（西區）潮語浸信會	5,000.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00		
香港仔浸信會	6,372.00	黃念施	200.00	<b>Campus Maintenance and Repairs</b>	
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	黃華娟	100.00	邱禮學	5,000.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,000.00	黃雅忠	10,000.00	柳慧敏	243.50
朗福浸信會	600.00	葉煥章	300.00	許煥英	200.00
荃灣潮語浸信會	1,000.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00	楊美玲	300.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	劉錦卿	5,000.00	無名氏	2,500.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	蔡慧英	300.00	無名氏	1,000.00
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	羅佩珊	100.00	無名氏	500.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	7,000.00	關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	HK\$	<u>9,743.50</u>
觀塘浸信會	1,517.00	蘇美好	1,500.00		
中華錫安傳道會慈雲山錫安堂	400.00	無名氏	4,000.00	<b>Campus Extension Project</b>	
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	無名氏	1,000.00	鄧輝祥	500.00
基督福音堂（主愛堂）	15,000.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	9,000.00
番禺恩典家教會	400.00	無名氏	500.00	HK\$	<u>9,500.00</u>
迦勒牙科植牙中心有限公司	1,000.00	無名氏	200.00		
數研教育機構有限公司	100,000.00	無名氏	200.00	<b>Ming Yee Theological Bursary</b>	
HK\$	<u>488,704.50</u>	無名氏	200.00	北角浸信會	HK\$ <u>370,500.00</u>
		無名氏	100.00		
<b>Education Fund (Individual Donor)</b>		無名氏	100.00	<b>Faculty Support</b>	
方志強	200.00	無名氏	2.00	茶果嶺浸信會	5,700.00
王紹良	700.00			無名氏	7,000.00
朱活平伉儷	300.00	HK\$	<u>42,346.00</u>	HK\$	<u>12,700.00</u>
何仲儀	1,000.00	<b>Support “Chinese Preaching Research Project” in Practical Theology</b>			
何栢濠、李惠芳	1,000.00	銅鑼灣浸信會	HK\$ <u>4,000.00</u>		
吳炳榮伉儷	2,600.00				



January 15, 2026

## Spiritual Formation Day

On the first day of the spring semester in the 2025-26 school year, Spiritual Formation Day took place. The morning session featured a message from the Rev. Wai-keung Chau, Senior Pastor of the Taipo Baptist Church (left), on the "Experiences in Caring for and Supporting Disaster Victims and the Community." This was followed by a message on Lamentations 1 by Dr. Hing-weng Seng, Assistant Professor of Old Testament (right), titled "Between the Need and Me." In the afternoon, teachers and students participated in small group discussions and a time of prayer:



March 9

## Mini-Conference: Child Theology in Practice

The mini-conference was held in the grand conference hall of the new academic building. Alumna Ms. Lowena Lo introduced "a creative and imaginative approach to the art of Christian spiritual direction and faith formation," which guides children to understand the Christian faith through stories, silence, imagination, and interaction. To give participants a tangible experience, she offered a simple demonstration. Many found it eye-opening and inspiring for children's ministry.



March 16

## Bible Conference

The Bible Conference 2026, on the theme “When Our Body Is Not in Our Favour: Exploring Disability in the Old Testament,” was held in the grand conference hall of the new academic building on the Sai O Campus. The first session, titled “Useless Women? Infertility and Its Effects on Women in Ancient Israel,” featured the Rev. Dr. Sarah B. Coleson-Derck, Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Biblical and Near Eastern Studies at Nazarene Theological Seminary (left), as the speaker, with Dr. Lilian Wing-ting Li, Josiah Mann Assistant Professor (Biblical Studies) at the China Graduate School of Theology (right), serving as the respondent.



The second session, titled “Disability and Service: Leviticus 21:16-23 Revisited,” featured Dr. Fook-kong Wong, Vice President (Research) and Professor of Old Testament (left), as the speaker, with Dr. Leo Kwan-hung Li, Lecturer at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CUHK (right), serving as the respondent.



March 23

## Mini-Conference: Church Growth: What Is the True Path?

The mini-conference brought together alumni, pastors, and church leaders concerned with church growth. Alumnus the Rev. Jeremy Sin, currently serving as Executive Director of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the United States and Canada and as a National Church Planting Catalyst for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, spoke on "Church Growth: What Is the True Path?" He discussed "9Marks," a framework prevalent in North America today, and elaborated on the nine essential qualities of mission workers. He emphasized that churches are vital places for preparing future mission workers.



Jointly organized by the Main Campus and Distance Education Programs  
Online Taster Lesson(Systematic Theology)

Admissions Open  
for 2026

# Is Time a Divine Creation?

## Revisiting Augustinian Time in Light of Theoretical Physics and Psychology

Time is a central concern in both natural sciences and religious studies. The concept of "time" not only captures the attention of scientists and religious thinkers but also shapes the way we ordinary people perceive the world.

In *Confessions*, Augustine situates time within the divine order of creation, and his ideas have become a vital intellectual resource for subsequent explorations of physical and psychological temporality.

This lecture traces contemporary theories of time in theoretical physics and psychology back to Augustine's understanding of the origin of time, aiming to achieve a new theological-hermeneutical "fusion of horizons."



Dr. Curie Qu

Assistant Professor of Christian Thought  
Ph.D. Brunel University London



May 22, 2026 (Fri)



HKT 8:00PM



Zoom



Putonghua



Free admission  
All are welcome

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# Main Campus Programs

## Admissions Open for 2026-27

### Ministry Programs

**Bachelor of Theology** 4-year full-time

**Master of Divinity** 3-year full-time/7-year part-time

### Pastoral Training

**Master of Divinity (Further Studies)** 2-year full-time/5-year part-time

### Lay Education

**Master of Christian Studies** 2-year full-time/5-year part-time

### Graduate Programs

**Master of Theology** 5-year part-time

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### Application Deadline

Hong Kong: June 13 | Overseas: April 30

### Start Date for Fall Semester

August 2026



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