

香港浸信會神學院

Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary



2020.5 Newsletter



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Joshua Cho

HKBTS Path to Environmental Protection

During the course of exploring and practicing environmental protection, Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary (HKBTS) has experienced the wonderful guidance and shepherding of God.

In as early as 2009, when I was inaugurated as the president of HKBTS, I mentioned environmental protection as one of the issues I was concerned with. Again, in the article entitled “The Synergy of Our Faculty Team” published in the February issue of our *Newsletter* in 2010, I mentioned the issue as one of the areas of interest in my research. Sadly, I did not have a chance to conduct an in-depth study on environmental conservation and to put it into practice at the beginning of my tenure due to the many things that were waiting to be done then. The issue, however, remains on my mind all the time. In early 2016, when the Board of Directors finalized its decision on the Extension Project of the Sai O Campus (Phase 3), and plans on the allocation of space for each floor in the new academic building were being drafted, there were voices proposing the installation of green facilities on the rooftop of the new building to promote green education in the seminary. As a result, the **Campus Environmental Consultation and Development Committee** was set up in June, 2018 to study and promote matters concerning energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, as well as the building of a green campus.

At the inception of the Committee, a member proposed that **solar energy power generation facilities** be installed on the rooftop of each building on the Sai O Campus. Not only would this initiative fully utilize the rooftop space and produce renewable energy by making use of natural resources, but also it would promote environmental protection education among our students, churches and community. That was why the proposal was promptly and unanimously adopted by other committee members and our directors. After rigorous screening, the seminary decided to work with New Energy Financing and Consulting Limited. The installation work commenced in the second half of 2019. By January, 2020, the solar energy power generation facilities on the Administration and Education Block, Student Activity Block and Single Student Quarters had been put into operation. The remaining

facilities installed on the rooftop of the Married Student Quarters and the Faculty and Staff Quarters became operative in mid-February.

Meanwhile, seeing that a considerable amount of food waste was produced daily at the seminary canteen and the quarters, the Campus Environmental Consultation and Development Committee started to look into the possibility of **producing organic compost with the food waste** in the seminary. Afterward, the canteen contractor liaised with a food waste recycling company and it was agreed that the company would be paid to recycle the food waste generated at the canteen and the quarters. Unfortunately, the canteen contractor was notified by the recycling company in February that it decided to stop recycling our food waste as the business became unprofitable when much less food waste was generated in the seminary and eateries in the vicinity under the impact of the epidemic in Hong Kong. This unexpected change has, in turn, brought about an opportunity for the seminary to purchase its own food waste composting machine. Our idea is this: when we repurpose kitchen waste, which is supposed to be useless, into compost, we can enhance soil quality, reduce waste, alleviate pressure on local landfills and produce environmentally-friendly fertilizers to further prevent pollution.



Exploring Ecological Theology

Amidst this background of green advocacy on campus, during the 2017-18 opening convocation ceremony, I pointed out that the seminary would introduce a new educational theme in the new academic year, namely ecological theology. The speech, entitled “On Ecological Peace,” was published in the column “President’s Word” in our *Newsletter* (November issue, 2017). I pointed out that the discussion of “ecological peace” was the continuation of my line of thought when I talked about “God-centred education” in the opening convocation ceremony in the previous year (academic year 2016-17).

The objective of theological education is not only

to nurture students toward maturity but also to guide them to “remember, be aware and look forward,” which means, to believe in God and have faith in this God of the past, the present and the future. While God’s actions are for the past and the future, they are also for the present. Therefore, we have to “remember” God’s creation and redemption (the matching between “creation arc” and “salvation arc”), be “aware” of God’s commandments, and “look forward” to the land that God will give us to inhabit. ***The content of God’s redemption, commandments and His promised land is all about “shalom.”***

“Shalom” (peace) correlates to the relationships between humans and God, humans and each other, as well as humans and the whole of creation. Peace in the first two relationships can be seen in the description in Ephesians 2:13-18, the main idea of which being: Jesus came to the world to destroy the walls that separate humans and God, and humans and each other, thus bringing a genuine peaceful relationship to all. Besides, Isaiah 11:6-8 describes the peace between humans and the whole of creation. The text projects an image filled with peace: the harmonious co-existence of various animals and the harmonious relationship between humans and animals when they get along with one another. Of course, it is an eschatological condition, yet this condition also has implications for the present.

Continuing my exploration of ecological theology, I delivered a speech, entitled “We Love Nature,” at the graduation ceremony on November 19, 2017, in which I encouraged the graduates to help the brothers and sisters in their churches to “remember” God’s creation and redemption, be “aware” of God’s commandments and “look forward” to the land that God will give us to inhabit. The speech was published in the column “President’s Word” in our *Newsletter* (February issue, 2018). On the one hand, I cited Romans 8:18-22 to point out that the fate of nature is not mere destruction, but transformation. On the other hand, I cited Colossians 1:19-20 pointing out that the whole created world has been reconciled with God in Christ. Therefore, the natural world is also under the sovereignty of Christ’s reconciling rule. It can hence be seen that the reconciliation in Christ not only includes the reconciliation of relationship between humans and God, and humans and each other, but also includes the reconciliation of relationship between humans and nature. For this reason, ***under the umbrella of God’s “reconciling gospel,” we, as Christ’s disciples, have to protect nature and love it.***

The Green Church

Then, let us first reflect upon an important question: have we, as Christ’s disciples, protected nature and loved it? An indisputable fact is that the Christian church as a whole is still indifferent to issues concerning environmental protection (such as global warming, air pollution and disappearance of species). To the majority of churches, these environmental protection issues are but a trivial item in our stewardship. For the “avant-gardes,” they may schedule one day annually for the “Green Sunday.” There are also churches which regard environmental protection as part of the managerial maintenance of the buildings and effective recycling of energy use. However, such limited “green practices” have revealed that these churches have mistaken property management or material management for environmental protection. They fail to place green issues in a central position in church life, like those of worshipping, preaching, teaching, praying, fellowship, caring and missions.

Then, how should the church face the global ecological crisis? From a theological perspective, the human destruction of nature reflects not only the extremely poor performance of our stewardship, but also our primitive economic calculations. Worse still, such destruction is to disregard God’s will in creation and redemption. ***God’s will in creation and redemption is that the entire created universe should reconcile with Him in Christ.*** Therefore, the church has to repent and devote itself wholeheartedly to God’s work of reconciliation (Rom 8:19-23). ***To join this reconciliation ministry, the church must also be concerned about the protection of the environment.*** In other words, the church has to put on a green outfit. Green is also one of the colors in our Gospel Story.

Specifically, we have to build up a genuine link between the environment today and church life. The link can be constructed in the worshipping, teaching and living of the church.

(1) To the majority of churches, **worship** is the holiest occasion. During the worship, we talk about the gospel story of salvation and proclaim God’s acts in the world. However, we must stop that kind of anthropocentric preaching which is only human-centred. Do not think that God is only concerned about humans. We must realize that during worship, we together with non-human creations (such as birds and plants) are celebrating God’s work and praising Him. The theme of all creation worshipping God (be they animals or non-animals) can

be widely found in the Book of Psalms (65:12-13; 69:34; 89:12; 96:11-12; 97:7-8; 103:22; 145:10; 150:6). It can also be seen in other parts of the Bible (1 Kgs 16:31-33; Is 35:1-2; 43:20; 55:12; Phil 2:10; Rv 5:13).

(2) Our **teaching** also concerns the story of salvation. Apart from the preaching during services, the church also tells the story of salvation through the teaching in Sunday School services and the sharing in fellowships. Moreover, the church proclaims and testifies to the story of God's redemption in society. In her daily order, the church repeatedly displays and celebrates the priorities and values revealed by the story of salvation, as demonstrated in her struggles with political and social controversies (such as wars, plagues, slavery, voting rights and civic rights).

Hence, the church has to redefine the role and purpose of natural ecology in God's creation. The church must also clarify the relationship between humans and the environment. In other words, the church must condemn both the powers and influences that devastate lives and the natural environment and also regard the "salvation arc" and "creation arc" as overlapping. The church is forging an "ecology of grace," recognizing the value of all creation, and drawing all creation into a suffering community worshipping God and looking forward to the salvation of God together.

Isaiah 35:1-2 read, "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God" (see also Is 32:15-20; 51:3; Am 9:13-14; Jl 3:18). Romans 8:20-21 also read, "For the creation was subjected to frustration...in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay" In all these texts, we can see that when God's people are redeemed, nature gets reborn and renewed at the same time. As it is humans who bring about the destruction of other creations, they should also bring hope to them. The hope and fate of humans and other creations are closely related and mutually dependent. As a matter of fact, God's people are judged because of the devastation they have done to nature. Therefore, if humans have hope, non-human creations should also have hope. The prophets were looking forward to God's renewal of non-human creations in the future as well. This is also what Romans 8:19-21 is about.

(3) Such an ecology of grace is calling us to respond with **a correct way of living**. It prompts the church to implement the Biblical values of simplicity and contentedness. Simplicity and contentedness are the right attributes for Christians. As such, the

church must also challenge the abuse of technological power and rampant consumerism in society, remind people not to wear themselves down in the rat race competing for money and power, and point toward a mode of life that goes deeper and gives greater peace. Such a mode of life is based on our firm commitment to God, which can be manifested in our love toward and concern for others and the environment.

Therefore, one of the important things that the church can remind people of is that we are all living in the holy temple and garden of God, in which everything is holy and bestowed by God. God can also choose to reveal Himself through the material things in the world. So, we should show our respect for nature. In fact, when we see the beauty of our surroundings, we simply cannot help worshipping the Lord and thank our God of creation for the grace He grants us, just in the way the poet praised God in Psalm 65: "You care for the land and water it... You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. ...they shout for joy and sing!" (vv. 9-13)

Green and Glossy Faith

These are some major theological teachings for the church in the area of environmental protection. The church must open humans' eyes and let them see our proper relationship to nature. Not only should the church awaken people to the realities of global warming and the extinction of non-human species, but also call upon us to respect and treasure nature. **The church's vocation is to live out the will of our God the Creator, namely to celebrate God's reconciling gospel with all His creations.** God's creative love is extended to all His creations; God's saving love calls upon the church to partake in His redemptive love. This is a kind of faith that carries depth and is rooted in God's love of and care for the entirety of creation. Such true faith can strengthen us so that we may shoulder the responsibility for nature and testify to the reconciliation and peace of the universe. This green and glossy color is a perfect symbol of this kind of faith.

Ultimately, we are not only showing respect for nature, but also showing concern for our own survival. Not only the earth, but also, we ourselves need salvation. Not only nature, of which we are part, but also, we ourselves need redemption. The devastation of nature is a song of lamentation. While nature can reflect the glory of God, it can also reflect that humans have fallen short of His glory. If humans ruin nature, they fall short of the glory of God at the same time. **The ecological crisis of nature is in fact a mirror reflecting our spiritual crisis.**



Pastoral Care and Reflection

amidst the Coronavirus Outbreak

Feature

Because we are currently living under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic, we have invited some of our teachers to share their reflections from various perspectives, such as theology, Bible, Church history, praxis, etc., in the hope of bringing us some much needed comfort, encouragement and insight that can help us to persevere in these challenging times.

Chicken Soup for the Soul: A Helping of Jeremiah 29 for COVID-19

Wong Fook-kong *Professor of Old Testament*

Two Natural Responses

Humans have a tendency toward *fight or flight* when faced with danger. This is also true in our present situation. Panic buying and demonstrations at designated quarantine sites are examples of the “fight” reaction.



Medical personnel volunteering for the dangerous task of taking care of infected patients represents a positive aspect of this “fight” mode. Examples of people fleeing from quarantine or simply fleeing the

city represents the “flight” mode. These reactions are not wrong in and of themselves. They are only wrong if, for example, they endanger others or work against the welfare of the whole.

A Third Option

There is a third option: *waiting upon the LORD*. At first blush, this seems like the weakest response. It feels like the proverbial ostrich putting its head in the sand, refusing to acknowledge the danger or doing anything about it. This is not true of the biblical concept of waiting on the LORD. In Jeremiah 29:1-14, the LORD told the exiles in Babylon what to do while waiting for His deliverance. This letter (ca. 597 B.C.E.) was sent to the first wave of exiles taken to Babylon with king Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:10-16).

Firstly, they were **to live a normal life** (Jer 29:5-6). These people were survivors of a catastrophic event (i.e., being exiled to Babylon). In today's language they would probably be categorized as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. God was not telling them to deny their feelings. Rather He was advising them to accept and adjust to their new situation. They should get back to normal life—building and living in houses, planting and enjoying the fruits of their labor; marrying and bearing children. Normalcy was a sign of their trust in God.

Secondly, God told them **to seek the welfare of the city** where they were exiled **and pray for it** (Jer 29:7). From what we know of the exiles (e.g., Ps 137) this must have been a very difficult command to follow. To rephrase it in Jesus' words, God was teaching them to love their enemies and pray for those who persecuted them (Mt 5:44). They have every reason to hate and be angry but this was not the way to live. God wanted them to forgive, seek the good of others and pray for them while waiting for His deliverance.

Thirdly, God told them **not to listen to false prophets** who gave them false hope (Jer 29:8-10). Some self-proclaimed prophets were telling the people they would soon return to Jerusalem, bringing a quick resolution to their exile and problems (v. 21). The truth was that there was no quick resolution and their exile would not end for another seventy years. There are different explanations for the number seventy. Whatever it meant, it certainly did not refer to something that would happen in the near future.

Actually, things took a turn for the worse and Jerusalem was destroyed within ten years of this letter. Instead of heeding "fake news" they were to wait patiently for the LORD to deliver them at the divinely appointed time.

Finally, God assured them that **His plan for them was for good and not evil** (v. 11). At the appointed time, He would hear their plea and bring them back to the Promised Land (v. 14). In view of their circumstances, those must have been difficult words to accept. Furthermore, if Jeremiah was correct, most of them would not live to see the fulfillment of his prophecy.

Trust God and Pursue Goodness

Waiting for God is not putting our heads in the sand or giving up in despair. It involves faith, patience and good deeds. God makes everything beautiful in its time (Eccl 3:11). We can't hurry Him and we cannot do a better job, so let's be patient. In times like these, it may be difficult to believe that God's intention for us is good rather than evil. It's easier to give in to despair or even give up. This is not the teaching here. **God was teaching them (and also us) to trust Him and wait for His deliverance. On the one hand, we trust God. On the other hand, we do all we can to live a good life and be a blessing to others.** I wish to end with the words of encouragement God gave the exiles: "You will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find, when you seek me with all your heart." (v. 12-13) Amen!

Perspectives on Suffering and Pastoral Care



Jonathan Lo
Assistant Professor of New Testament



In the past year, Christians in Hong Kong, along with the rest of the society, have had to endure many hardships and disruptions to daily life as a result of the social unrest caused by political differences of

opinion. The current novel coronavirus outbreak threatens to further prolong this troubling season of uncertainty and fear. Perhaps it is also a good time to think about what the Bible says about suffering so that when we do minister to those who are suffering, our words will not merely be encouraging but also contain theological substance—so that those we minister to will not only be comforted but come to a better understanding of who God is, what He is like and that they can trust in Him.

It is sometimes surprising to me that the Church

seems so ill-equipped to deal with suffering, when the Bible was mostly written by people who were writing from a place of weakness and helplessness and longed for deliverance. Suffering was often a result of their identity as God's people and their commitment to faithfully living out that identity (Jn 16:33; 1 Pt 4:12; Phil 1:29; cf. Mark 10:28-31). It is important to remember that **for Christians, there is always a spiritual dimension to what is going on, there is more than meets the eye.** Jesus is able to say to the "poor in Spirit" and the "meek" and the "mourning," "Blessed are you!" because there is more to reality than what we can see with our limited vision.

Be Mindful of Our Words

However, **attempts to theologize or explain away a person's suffering in a general way can sometimes cause more harm than good.** When Job's three friends visit him after his tragedy, they did well by mourning with him and remaining silent for seven days and seven nights (Jb 2:11-13). The problem was when they opened their mouths and tried to theologize Job's tragedy: "Job, this was your fault." "Job, you must have sinned." "God is punishing you." As it turns out, only God is wise and only God knows the reason behind human suffering. At the end of the story, God rebukes Job's friends for speaking foolishly and without knowledge (Jb 42:7). Just because two things can be correlated does not mean that one thing causes the other. Consider the following statement: "100% of people who breathe die." While it is true that everyone who dies breathed at one time, this does not mean that it is the act of breathing that causes death. In Luke 13:1-5, Jesus similarly warns against assigning blame and guilt to victims of calamities and accidents beyond their control. Jesus tells us it is unwise to speak for God in the midst of a tragedy; we should not make spiritual guesses about why bad things happen; instead, Jesus advises us to examine ourselves and to allow such tragedies to lead us to repentance. **In the moment of their suffering, people do not need a theologian's explanation but rather a pastor's care.**

Biblical Perspectives on Suffering

Be that as it may, although we are unable to explain why terrible things happen, Scripture does affirm that **God is somehow able to cause something good to emerge from our difficult experiences, regardless of the cause.** As Christians we are committed to this belief—after all, God allowed Jesus' death on a cross to become an atonement for our sins, securing our salvation (Rom 5:10). According to the Apostle Paul, the Jewish people's initial rejection

of the gospel, tragic as it may be, will lead to the Gentiles coming to faith (Rom 11:11-12). Joseph's betrayal by his brothers was an unspeakable evil, but he was able to accept that God is able to use his brothers' actions, which they intended to harm him, to accomplish God's own divine purposes (Gn 45:4-15).

The New Testament is full of examples of godly results (not causes!) of faithful endurance in the midst of suffering.

In the Book of James, suffering can cultivate endurance, which can make us mature and complete people so that we will receive the crown of life (Jas 1:2-4, 12). In Hebrews, suffering may be something that God allows in order to discipline those He loves, in order to produce fruits of righteousness and peace (Heb 12:1-11). In 1 Peter, the author suggests that suffering can have a redemptive purpose for the sake of others. Just as we have received healing and salvation because of Jesus' suffering on behalf of us, God may also use our suffering to bring redemption and wholeness to others in a way we do not expect (1 Pt 3:17-19; 2:22-24; 4:12-19). In Revelation, the Lamb's sufferings are not a sign of His defeat; neither are they forgotten and ignored. Rather, the Lamb's wounds are a crucial part of the story of God's final victory over evil (Rv 5:9). In the same way, the suffering of the saints will not be forgotten (Rv 6:10; 7:14). At the appointed time, God will make all things new and put an end to evil, suffering, and even death (Rv 20:7-21:8).

Walking with Those Who Are Suffering

While we should never callously "explain away" the suffering of others, we can walk alongside our hurting brothers and sisters and, if and when the time is right, affirm what God is doing in their lives as a result of what has happened. As Job discovers, the reasons why calamity befalls us may be ultimately too mysterious, too difficult for us to comprehend. What people who are suffering need most is not an answer to why something happened but, how they are going to get through the tragedy. And I firmly believe that it is within the area of pastoral care and compassion that theologians, pastors and theological students have the most to offer to those who are suffering in the Church and in society.

...Those Who Kill the **Body** but Cannot Kill the **Soul**

Nathan Ng

Professor of Christian Thought (Church History)

Following the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has recently begun ravaging the world. The outbreak has yet to be contained and the virus is spreading across the globe. Many people in infected areas feel shaken, including those in Hong Kong. Some are rushing to buy masks, disinfectants, bleach, rice and paper towels; a significant portion of them are Christians who have believed in the Lord for years. Facing this situation, apart from making alternate arrangements for church meetings, pastors and church leaders should also keenly consider how to provide the appropriate pastoral care for the various believers who are living under the threat of this epidemic and for those in isolation or quarantine. **Looking back over two thousand years of Church history, one finds that the church community has been struck by plagues many times; the experience, testimonies, and teachings of our predecessors may remind us of some valuable lessons today.**

The Plague in Alexandria

Two examples warrant mentioning here. In AD 263, a severe plague broke out in Alexandria. Eusebius of Caesarea, a church historian, preserves the testimony of the local bishop Dionysius of Alexandria in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. It is recorded that during the plague outbreak, with no modern isolation facilities at that time, these heathens had no choice but to desert those who caught the disease, even their relatives and close friends. They abandoned the dying on the streets, and no one dared to bury the dead. In contrast, the Christians were quite different. Dionysius praised them: "Most of our brothers showed unbounded love and fraternity. They encouraged one another, and heedless of danger, they visited the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ. They cheerfully shared their neighbors' suffering and pain, willingly exposing themselves to their disease; many brothers even fell ill and died as a result of taking care of the sick and strengthening them." Among those who died for the service of their neighbors were prestigious elders and deacons. Piety and faith were shown in their deeds, and Dionysius celebrated **their actions as tantamount to "martyrdom."**

The Black Death in Wittenberg

Another example occurred when the Black Death struck Wittenberg in AD 1527. Fearing for the safety of Martin Luther and other professors at Wittenberg University,



Electors John the Steadfast ordered all university faculty members to take shelter 90 miles south in Jena, and resume classes there. However, Martin Luther and his colleague John Bugenhagen insisted on staying in Wittenberg, so they could continue to minister to the sick and the frightened inhabitants. In his letter "Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague," Luther pointed out that for general believers, fleeing the infected area for self-preservation is a natural and reasonable reaction; however, those in ministry should not run away, because **"the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."** **Believers facing the threat of the deadly disease are those most in need of pastoral care.** By the same token, public officials and servants, such as mayors, judges, physicians and police officers, must also stay and continue to protect the general public through good governance. Only when their public duties had properly been taken by others could they leave the infected area.

Divine Mission and Earthly Life

The members of the early church in Alexandria as well as Martin Luther and the others insisted on staying in the infected areas amidst the plague outbreaks to take care of those who were frightened and ill, not out of their ignorance of the diseases' infectiousness or lethality, nor due to being overly optimistic that they would not get sick under God's providence. Instead, they upheld that **fulfilling their Christian missions was more important than preserving their earthly lives**, as the Bible says: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." (Mt 10:28) Their examples may serve as valuable reminder for Christians today. Faced with a terrible epidemic, are we

like the heathen and rushing to buy stuff merely for our own needs, or are we keeping the principles of Christian faith and willingly making sacrifices for others?

To have a deeper thought on this, we may find that in fact, all sorts of *spiritual plagues* have already been spreading in our world, such as the plagues of “Church secularization,” “fervent pursuit of fame and fortune,” and “falsehood and hypocrisy”; and last year during the social unrest in Hong Kong, many Christians, including those who have believed in the Lord for years, have unconsciously

caught the plagues of “lacking compassion” and “hatred of others.” These plague epidemics can cause us to go astray from the truth of the Bible and become confused about what is right and wrong. These are more horrifying than the virus that kills the body but cannot kill the soul. We pay great attention to wearing masks, washing hands frequently and avoiding gathering in order to prevent the spread of the infectious disease. But are we dealing with the spiritual plagues with the same caution? May the Lord enlighten and help us!

The Art of Losing

Sarah Shea

Assistant Professor of Christian Education

From moving around freely without restraint, we have all been forced to hit the brakes on our pace of life during this epidemic which started during the Lunar New Year: we have lost our customary daily routines; we have lost access to some activity areas; we have lost most of our social lives; we have lost the chance to learn face-to-face in the classroom; and we have even lost the chance to gather at church. Perhaps, we may now learn something from the disabled who often face these kinds of challenges; this I call “the art of losing.”

Still Alice

Adapted from a novel, the movie *Still Alice* premiered in 2014. It is about a university professor, Alice. She has outstanding academic achievements as well as a good marriage and a happy family, but she is then diagnosed with dementia.

When the professor is still able to talk, she delivers a speech to a charity supporting dementia patients. In her introduction, she quotes a line in the poem “One Art” written by Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979): “The art of losing isn’t hard to master.” As a dementia patient, she is forced to struggle with “losing” every day: she makes every effort to keep her precious memories, to stay connected with her favorite things and to retain her own place in the world. She calls upon the audience not to focus on the strange behavior that is part of the disease, and says, “This is not me.” She also asks the audience not to think that

she is suffering. “I am not suffering. I am just struggling, struggling to [master the art of losing],” she adds.

Alice’s husband is also a scholar. They have three children, two of whom are notable professionals. The youngest daughter, who

is an actress, can be counted as the lowest achiever in the family; yet, she is the only one in the family who wants to understand the mother’s struggles and who is interested in the question “Who is Alice?”

The movie ends with a dialogue between the mother and this youngest daughter. By then, Alice has lost the abilities of language reception and expression. In the face of her mother, who is seemingly unresponsive, the daughter reads aloud a passage from a play script, to the effect that what people have lost is not really lost, but that it has sublimed to somewhere in the universe. After reading this, the daughter sits next to her mother and asks, “Did you know what it is about?” With the persistent encouragement from the daughter, Alice finally muttered, “Love. Love.” Excitedly, the daughter said, “Yeah, mom. It was about love.”



The Logic of Transformation

To further understand the meaning of “mastering the art of losing” mentioned by the main character of the movie, Alice, I recommend making reference to “the logic of transformation” of the human spirit put forward by Dr. James Loder (1931-2001), the late Professor of Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary. His interpretation may be helpful to our reflections on our own experiences during this pandemic.

In his book *The Logic of the Spirit**, Loder pointed out that the human spirit is like a powerful cannonball. Ever since birth, the human spirit takes the initiative to overcome obstacles in its surroundings and formulate a pattern of wisdom for its interaction with the environment, hence constructing the meaning of its own self and that of the world. In case of confronting any changes that form an obstacle to this interactive pattern, it will make unceasing efforts to find a way out until a new pattern or a new structure of meaning is constructed.

Still Alice is a good case in point, illustrating the vitality of the human spirit. The experience of dementia depicted in the movie is not only a nightmare seizing one’s abilities and dignity, but also a struggle for Alice. In Loder’s words, the disease is the change Alice confronts, which forms an obstacle to the regular pattern of interaction between her own self and the world, namely her roles as a university professor, a wife and a mother. When Alice says she desperately wishes to master the art of losing, that is when her human spirit is making an effort to construct a new pattern. For example, she tries to maintain her relationship with her family in various creative ways and even becomes an advocate fighting for the rights of dementia patients. Even at the advanced stage of Alice’s disease, when her condition is nearing isolation from the outside world, her spirit still struggles to overcome the communication barrier by answering her youngest daughter’s question so as to maintain the love between her and her daughter.

The Ultimate Desire

Not only does Loder’s logic of transformation give us a better understanding of the vitality of the human spirit, but it also reminds us of the nature of creation and its getting lost. The picture depicting the human spirit’s unceasing pursuits of what it loves is beautiful at times, as in the case of Alice; however, please do not forget that the pursuit can also be ugly as in the example of invading others for one’s allegiance to his/her own clansmen. What Loder excels at here is his provision of a theological interpretation of the transmutability of the human spirit, pointing out that the human spirit is indeed full of power, like a cannonball, which does bear a target. Filled with desires, the human spirit keeps itself on the run in order to seek survival and self-satisfaction. Woefully, even when such desires are fulfilled, the human spirit still feels lost as what it obtains is not truly what it loves. It is easy for the human spirit to misplace love, getting caught in its own trap. The human spirit’s power, its misplacement of love and the feeling of getting lost, Loder explains, reflect that what the human spirit ultimately desires is uncreated. The union with the Divine Spirit is instead the best love of the human spirit which is created. ***Only by getting united with the Divine Spirit can the human spirit be at rest and find its own meaning and that of life.***

During the epidemic, we have experienced losses, visible and invisible. We are also struggling to learn “the art of losing.” We have displayed much of the creativity of the human spirit when trying to resume our connections with the world by various means, such as online teaching and online worshipping. Nevertheless, Loder’s theological interpretation of our human spirits does remind us to think about the following questions: Are these what our hearts and souls truly desire? Are we truly content when we obtain them? What is the true goal of “the art of losing”?

* James Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).



What Kind of Time *Are We Living in?*

A Meditation amidst the Pandemic

Andres Tang
Professor of Christian Thought
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What kind of time it is! Long before there are any signs of settlement for the political unrest which has lasted over half a year, there is the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease in our society. What kind of situation is Hong Kong society in? We really do not want to see any natural or human-made calamities. Who would like to live in terror? Who would like to get in a fluster? However, we should consider whether humankind has no responsibility for this situation? ***Or, do we have to acknowledge that both natural and human-made calamities are the outcomes of humans' failure in managing our society and nature well, as in the saying "you've made your bed, now lie in it"?*** This may be the judgment of "giving them over in sins" mentioned in the Bible. God does not have to take the initiative to punish us. When He simply turns His face away a bit, withdrawing part of His providence and not restraining us from sinning, this is enough for us to reap what we have sown and fall into panic and confusion.

Humans are truly arrogant and imperious. We think that we can govern our society well on our own, creating a flourishing, prosperous and ever progressing world. We also believe that autonomous human reason is capable of comprehending the mysteries of nature; so, we recklessly manipulate everything with our technology, resulting in unimaginable chaos. The chaos whether in human society or in nature is swallowing up our lives, causing restlessness in our minds and bodies.

The Never-forsaking God

In Lord Jesus's words, this is an "unbelieving and perverse generation" (Mt 17:17). God, however, has not forsaken us, evidenced by the fact that the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. In the past, Christ dwelled among us in the flesh; now, He is with us in the Holy Spirit; and in the future, He will be with us in His glory. Christ's presence among us in the past is a presence of suffering; He went through human death—suffered from the judgment of "God's absence." Christ's presence today is a presence of hope because His resurrection has brought us the promise, namely the end of death and the

transformation of life. Christ's presence in the future is certainly a presence of glory in which everything will be consummated, with no privation.

However, in our current situation, with the constant updates of verified infected cases from different media, and people queuing up for face masks, disinfectants and even toilet paper and rice, how can our hearts be at rest with all these endless stories? How much we hope that the life-threatening epidemic will halt soon and we can return to regular life. Yet, who can be sure of all these matters? ***For Christians, does the promise given by the resurrected Christ—the end of death and the transformation of life—truly keep us calm amidst the epidemic? This is an opportunity for life discipline, yet a tough one.*** It is natural for us to avoid things that are deadly and to strive for survival. The coming of death, however, is inevitable and unpredictable. So, can the eschatological promise granted to us by the resurrected Christ relieve our panic and anxiety here and now? This is definitely not a simple lesson.



Losing Control and Trusting in God

For a long period, humans probably got used to managing our own lives and manipulating nature; we deny contingencies and keep everything under control. Thus, we are not accustomed to losing control and trusting in a God who is outside ourselves; so, we do not know how to live in an out-of-control situation with our trust in God. A turbulent world reminds us of our inability to control; nevertheless, it helps us to be aware that we have to trust in God and learn to live in such a situation with humility. This kind of trusting relationship is not one of urging God to fulfil my desires, but of obeying His will. Instead of following the yearning of humans, we should learn to yield

to the will of God (Mt 16:23). Otherwise, our sense of losing control will only drive us to further our desire for mastery, striving to become omniscient and omnipotent like God and bringing forth more significant disasters.

Not only do we have to fear God, but we must also abandon our one-sided wish and self-righteous attitude toward our society and nature. Possibly, when

we recognize our blindness, we can hence respect other people and living things, understanding them better and approaching them correctly. This acknowledgement is nothing but admitting that we are creatures—limited and fallen. *May the Spirit help us discover our true self in Christ, move us to repent and learn to live in out-of-control situations with our trust in God.*



Love in the Time of Coronavirus

Vincent Lau

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(Christian Ethics)

Had it not been for the coronavirus outbreak, we would be able to gather and worship as usual. We would not need to keep a distance from one another or reduce social contact. Classes would not need to be suspended; members of different communities would not be feeling disconnected; and our city would not be sliding into a recession. It has been some time since classroom teaching at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary was suspended and lessons are being held online instead. Not able to study and do homework together, or simply spend time and hang out with each other, many of our students are missing face-to-face fellowship with their classmates, feeling disconnected with each other and spiritually dry.

Conquering Darkness with Love

Now, we must not be defeated by what appears to be days of darkness. We need to face the challenges with love! Whenever we talk about love, the passage that may come into our minds is 1 Corinthians 13, also widely known as the Chapter of Love. In fact, this chapter is frequently used for sermons at weddings or wedding anniversaries. However, Paul had not meant for this passage to be used for premarital counselling or wedding preaching. *In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul had meant to teach the Christians at Corinth how to love and bond with one another, that is, in essence, how members of the body of Christ should love each other.* Of course, it is acceptable for pastors to use this scripture at weddings, teaching couples how to love one another. After all, how can one love one's other half when they do not even understand the love between members of the body of Christ? But the scripture deserves more credit as a lesson about mutual love

amongst members of the community, as *one would wonder whether the church would still be the body of Christ if members of the church do not love each other.*



Ministries in the Community

Dr. Roger L. Walton, a Methodist minister in the UK, was surprised by what Dietrich Bonhoeffer had written in *Life Together* about "ministries in the community." He pointed out that ministries to be exercised between Christians living together are not identified by Bonhoeffer as preaching, teaching or pastoral care. Rather, there must be: first, a ministry of holding one's tongue; second, a ministry of meekness; third, a ministry of listening; fourth, a ministry of helpfulness; and fifth, a ministry of bearing.* As you may have noticed, these five ministries are not any new insights that blow us away, but simply what we should practice and live out as disciples of the Lord.

The fourth ministry of helpfulness is particularly meaningful to us in Hong Kong amidst this epidemic. *What the ministry of helpfulness means is the willingness to be interrupted,* seeing those who intrude into one's personal plans as a gift of God.† Everyone in the city has been living in times of shortage of face masks and hand sanitizers. Back in ancient times, a Chinese poet wrote, "A letter from home is worth ten thousand pieces of gold as the beacon fires have been burning for three months." Today, it is that "a face mask is worth ten thousand pieces of gold as the

plague has been spreading for over three months"! The general public are worrying that their stock of epidemic prevention supplies is running low. It may be the first time we found that money is not everything in our lives. How helpless, panicky and even desperate it is that even money cannot get us more face masks and hand sanitizers! This is a scenario that did not appear even back in the days of the SARS outbreak in 2003. We are heartbroken, worried and even furious when we see people, especially the elderly, queueing overnight for one or two boxes of face masks, as well as panic-buying at supermarkets.

Exercising the Ministry of Helpfulness

Do we see such helpless citizens sitting beside us today? Are there members of the church who dare not step out of the house, go to church services, or could not even go to work in the past months because they lack masks? Wouldn't this be the perfect opportunity and the responsibility given by God for us to exercise the "ministry of helpfulness," showing our care to those in need and sharing with them masks and other epidemic prevention supplies? We can even expect a widespread economic downturn is coming. We can support members of the church by conveying the love of God with our concrete actions. This is how you can shower them with blessings and nourish their souls. Therefore, *living out love in the times of a raging epidemic is the essence and mission of the*

disciple community (church). Of course, we must make it clear here that it does not mean that we only take care of members in Christ and neglect others who may or may not know Him. The point is, would it make any sense if we cannot even love members of our own family and church but care for those we do not know instead? This is just as irrational as it is to say that someone is passionate about mission work but has little interest in sharing the gospel with their own families and friends!

Being not able to gather and missing out on fellowship in the past few months, do you feel disconnected with others? The Bible teaches us to practice the teaching of 1 Corinthians 13 if we want to establish our daily relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ. If we can see members of the church as those we love, this bonding of love will become the energy and foundation of our fellowship. When our relationship is hit by the raging storm, this love in Christ is one of the powers that will see us through. ***As the epidemic continues to spread today, let us drive out the fears and uneasiness haunting many with the love of Christ, living out His gospel and hope.***

* Roger L. Walton, *Disciples Together: Discipleship, Formation and Small Groups* (London: SCM, 2014), 35-36.

† Walton, *Disciples Together*, 36.

In the Time of COVID-19 Outbreak, What Do We Care About?

Eric Kwong

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(World Religions)



Self-protection and Loving Your Neighbors

It is reasonable that we instinctively protect ourselves from getting infected during this difficult time of the COVID-19 outbreak. Such a response could

even be considered as a civic responsibility, since even one less infected person is a step further from overburdening Hong Kong's healthcare system, and it indirectly helps contain the disease. However, as the epidemic continues spreading, when all we care about is self-protection, our way of life could very well be transformed into a very self-centred one. ***Yet, such a self-protecting lifestyle is not what the Bible wants from us; rather we are to love the neighbors around us.***

In a time of pandemic, we must care about whether

healthcare workers have a sufficient supply of protective gear at work, but is this concern driven by the fear that they may not be well equipped enough to help save us, or are we purely concerned that they may get infected? Saving lives is the vocation of healthcare workers. We have witnessed how healthcare workers in Hong Kong have burnt themselves up like a candle to drive out the darkness of the epidemic during the SARS outbreak. Nowadays, apart from offering words of encouragement and expressing our gratitude, can we put in more effort such as demanding the government take timely and stringent anti-epidemic measures so that the healthcare workers no longer need to exhaust themselves trying to save patients?

Poverty-stricken and solitary seniors are among the disadvantaged in Hong Kong and they have become even more vulnerable in this time of pandemic. Many of them are clueless on how to order face masks on the internet or even search online to find out where masks are sold. When the price of face masks was being pushed up to as much as ten dollars each, there was no way that these elderly could afford them. Many of these elders dare not step out of the house without a face mask and hence could not make it to the hospital for their follow-up appointments. Day care centres for the elderly are temporarily closed as an anti-epidemic measure, meaning some of these elderly people have nowhere to go but anxiously stay at home all the day. What is gratifying is that many churches are aware of their needs and have distributed face masks to them. While this shortage of masks is still ongoing, there is also the panic buying of rice to contend with. Some elderly people running low on rice at home have to travel all around town to buy rice but to no avail. These elderly people are suffering more than the rest of us and deserve more of our attention and concern.

Sin and Injustice

The outbreak of COVID-19 is related to human sin. We must denounce the selfish acts of patients visiting the doctor without declaring their travel history which put healthcare workers in danger. The escalation of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan into the current critical situation was due to the attempts by mainland officials to cover up the truth about the epidemic. The now departed Chinese doctor Li Wenliang was one of the first healthcare workers to blow the whistle on the epidemic, and he was reprimanded by the police for spreading rumors. With over two thousand deaths resulting from the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, we should condemn and demand the

dismissal of those Chinese government officials who were responsible for this cover-up.

The battle against the pandemic relies not only on an excellent medical team but also on how much the general public trusts its government. Our society today does not trust the government for the following reasons: many Hong Kong people are still haunted by resentment toward the government accumulated during the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement; their trust in the government is even further degraded by the impression that the government has been slow in responding and reacting to the coronavirus outbreak. Not to mention the incapability of the government in stabilizing the supply of face masks which really aggravates this grievance. Mutual trust between the government and its people has been destroyed, and the general public turns a deaf ear to the government's repeated effort in assuring the stability of supply back in the days of the panic buying of rice and toilet paper. The security of a society and the trust of its people in the government are closely related. We may ask how it is possible to restore this trust. For a chance of such restoration to stand, I do think it may take as much as a change in government leadership for the sake of greater political accountability.

Humans and Nature

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decided to impose a full ban on all illegal wildlife trades on February 24, specifically pointing out that the bad habit of overconsumption of wildlife must be abolished. The decision of such being passed at this time implied that the mainland government was aware of the association between eating wild animals and the pandemic, but it was already too late! It was after the SARS outbreak that experts had discovered raccoons to be the hosts of the SARS virus. But not only did the mainland government then fail to impose a ban on wildlife consumption after 2003, it actually allowed such businesses to grow into an enormous industry. As for this time around, pangolins are suspected to be the hosts of the novel coronavirus. Had the mainland government been decisive to ban all wildlife consumption, today's epidemic might have been avoided.

This situation gives us an opportunity to reflect on the relationships between mankind and nature as well as between mankind and other creatures. *The Bible distinctively tells us that humans are not hegemony, but keepers of the land. God is the Lord of nature and we are only entrusted to keep watch as stewards.* But for a very long time, humans have mistakenly believed that we are the

masters of nature who can freely decide the fate of other creatures. With this mentality, some people have become overindulgent consumers. We did not become concerned about the nasty habit of eating wild animals until after a plague outbreak. It's a response that came late but better than never. Faced with this coronavirus epidemic, we must ponder what role humans should play in regard to nature, while Christians should allow messages from the Bible to reshape our understanding of the relationship between humans and nature.

Hong Kong had entered a tunnel of darkness since June last year and not even the dimmest light could seem

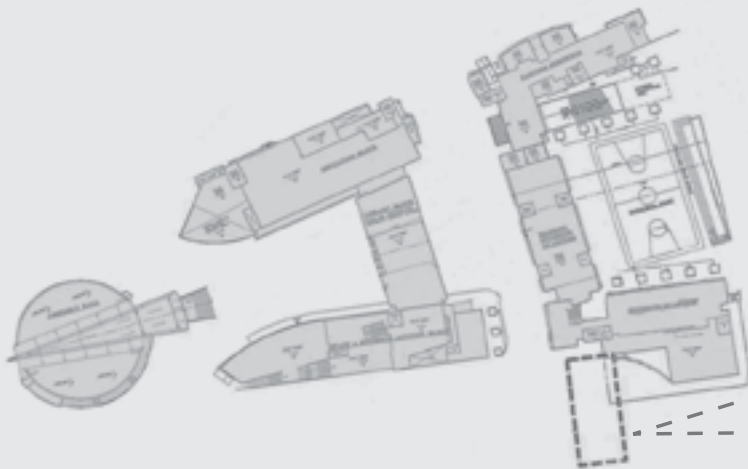
to be seen from the end of this tunnel despite having suffered from months of hardship. The past few months have only led us further into pitch darkness along the tunnel. But the pandemic could also transform this tunnel into a classroom at the same time, *allowing us to learn to care about those in need around us, to show our concerns for sin and injustice in society, and urging us to reflect on our relationship with nature.* Although the lessons learned may not lead us out from the darkness right away, they certainly can help us avoid another time of darkness in the future.

Campus Extension News

The Extension Project of the Sai O Campus (Phase 3) under the “Faith, Hope, and Love Project” is in progress. We ask for your continuous prayers and support.

Feb.-Apr.
Mid-May
End of May

Tender Out Main Contract and Lift
Award Main Contract and Lift
Completion of Foundation Works



Foundation works at the new building's construction site

The Essence of Worship: Worship Service

Recently, many public gatherings have been canceled due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. Numbers of churches also adjourned gatherings such as fellowship gatherings, Sunday school classes and talks. However, some insisted that “Sunday worship service is the only thing that cannot be suspended,” and that even though congregations may not gather in person, they are strongly advised to attend worship services online. The reason given was that worship service is a sacred time during which believers worship God and it is the core activity of a church. Increasingly, Hong Kong Chinese churches are giving more attention to worship, with more and more teachings and discussions focusing on worship. Since the singspiration style of worship which became prevalent years ago, hymn-leading has practically become mandatory ministry training for the younger generation within churches. While some ministers and leaders criticize the deficient content of modern hymns, there are signs that traditional hymns and orders of worship are regaining traction within the Christian community. Many scholars who are concerned with these trends in worship services share their thoughts from various perspectives in music, liturgy, theology and pastoral ministry. They all strive to construct a more feasible foundation and try to discern the right direction for public worship. However, what is the true meaning of worship throughout history? I want to point out that the understanding of public worship in modern churches to a certain extent deviates from the historical traditions of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Church.

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Worship and Service

In the Bible, “worship” is mainly a translation from two words in Hebrew, עָבַד and שָׁחָה, as well as two other words in Greek, προσκυνέω and λατρεύω; they all share the meaning of “service.” As the *New Bible Dictionary* notes, “the vocabulary of worship in the Bible is very extensive, but the essential concept in Scripture is ‘service.’”¹ Moses warned the Israelites before his death that “if you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and *worship and bow down* to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.” (Dt 8:19 NIV; italics added for emphasis here and hereafter) Also, in response to the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus said, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Mt 4:10). Obviously, **worship** and **service** are parallel and carry the same meaning. The true almighty God is the only subject of worship and service for the people of God. When the Israelites served other gods, they were punished (2 Kgs 17:7); similarly, Christians cannot serve two gods (Mt 6:24).

If worship means service, service can never be confined to a worship service that happens only once a week.

If worship means service, service can never be confined to a worship service that happens only once a week. The Israelites in the Old Testament put much emphasis on serving YHWH, namely that they should worship God through their lives, and recognize Him as the only Lord worthy of honor and their submission. Its most clear outward expression is their obedience to His Word, and their observation of the Lord’s commandments announced through Moses (Dt 10:12; 13:4; Jo 22:5). The requirement for living a life of worship and service is even



Primacy?

more evident in the New Testament: we are asked to offer our bodies as **a living sacrifice** to God. The NIV translation of Romans 12:1 is: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper *worship* [λατρεία]." This means believers have to do the will of God from their hearts and serve the Lord wholeheartedly (Eph 6:6-7).

Worship and Meeting

Worship is not a specific kind of **meeting** but a kind of **living** that honors God as the Lord. Probably because of this, both testaments never focus their attention on any worship service. As mentioned, God's major request to Israel's service in the Old Testament era was to obey His commandments. The laws in the Five Books of Moses consist of offering guidelines, food restrictions, and behavioral codes. These laws relate to the maintenance or retrieval of the Holy People's identity; they should concentrate on living out a life that belongs to God, rather than participating in meetings. There was a time when the Israelites wrongfully thought they could please God through frequent religious activities, such as regular offerings and feasts, despite the fact that they neglected social justice and oppressed the poor. God thus proclaimed through a prophet: "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. ... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Am 5:21-22, 24) Evidently, daily life and behavior as worship and service to God are far more important than any religious activities (including worship services). When the era of New Testament came, our Lord Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom, urging everyone to confess their

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sins and believe in God; He explained the truth, taught His disciples to pray by faith, to love God and neighbors, and set an example for all through His own lifestyle and being obedient to death. Even though our Lord's teaching is profound and immense, He taught nothing about worship service. He proclaimed the new commandment of loving each other, the great commission of making the Lord's disciples, and asked His believers to be the light and salt of the world. These teachings all require practice in daily life, which is the true worship and service to God.

According to the two testaments, the aim of these communal activities is ... to help God's people act out their faith in life, rather than regarding such meeting as sacred times of worship.

Someone may ask: are not the Israelites required to observe Sabbath and feasts prescribed by the Old Testament? Also, is not the believers' community forbidden to stop meeting in the New Testament? According to the two testaments, the aim of these communal activities is for **teaching, mutual exhortation and reminding** so as to help God's people act out their faith in life, rather than regarding such meetings as sacred times



of worship. Except for the Day of Atonement which bears the connotation of national purification, all feasts (including feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) prescribed by the laws aim to help the Israelites to remember God's grace in the past and presence lest they may forget and forsake YHWH. Reading the laws of Moses is essential in Jewish synagogue service on Sabbath; especially in the ancient time when literacy levels were relatively low, public reading played a crucial role in teaching people the truth. Christian communities continue this tradition of reading scriptures during their meetings. Paul, for example, assertively told local churches to read his letter in turn (Col 4:16). As a result, when the New Testament calls believers to "not [give] up meeting together," the reason given is to "encourage one another" (Heb 10:25). When Paul deals with the chaos of church meetings, he asks everything—hymn singing, teaching, speaking of tongues, revelation and prophecy—be done in order separately, emphasizing that "everything must be done so that the church may be built up" (1 Cor 14:26) and "so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged" (1 Cor 14:31).

Worship and Hymn-singing

As for *hymn-singing*, the Bible certainly provides us with an early tradition of presenting thankfulness and praise to God through music and dance. The best examples are the songs that Moses and Miriam led the Israelites to sing after their successful escape from the Egyptian armies (Ex 5:1-18, 20-21). However, these praises are the natural response of God's people to His grace and mightiness revealed in their lives; these are not worship rituals in the regular meetings. Without a doubt, it is King David who first made sacred music a regular element in the Israelites' religious meetings. He arranged twenty-four rotations of officers responsible for singing and playing music in the temple all year round (1 Chr 25:1-31). The scripture text, nevertheless, does not further explain David's intentions regarding this arrangement. However, the New Testament has clear advice on the function of sacred music. When we are discussing hymns, Ephesians 5:19-21 and its close parallel Colossians 3:16-17

are probably the most cited verses. What is the purpose of Paul here asking believers to use "psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit"? Through careful study of the text, it is not difficult to see Paul's emphasis: to "let the message of Christ dwell among you richly ... with all wisdom." In other words, hymns are a way to help believers *learn, deepen, and remember the truth*. Thus, the texts repeated the importance of "speaking to one another," "submit[ing] to one another," "teach[ing] and admonish[ing] one another," in order to "sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" and "[sing] to God with gratitude in your hearts." It is worth noting that the instructions for Christian households follow the above two texts; this arrangement implies Paul expects a concrete practice in daily life after one receives of the Lord's message through hymns, so that one can live out the disciple witness of loving one another. Some modern churches believe that they have to praise God through incredible music, and some even think that they need to enhance their musical techniques to please God; none of these, unfortunately, is the stance of the early church.

Some modern churches believe that ... they need to enhance their musical techniques to please God; none of these, unfortunately, is the stance of the early church.

Holistic Worship

All *early church fathers* who succeeded the apostles affirm *holistic worship*. Clement of Alexandria states: "We are commanded to reverence and to honor [Christ] ... not on special days, as some others, but doing this continually in our whole life, and in every way." ² Origen further explains that Christians need to worship by "an upright course of life," highlighting that "the worshipper of God is he whose life is regulated by the principles and precepts of the divine word." ³ Early Christians did not call their meeting on Sunday "worship," but a meeting in memory of the Lord's resurrection. The meeting's main content was for the attendants to hear the Word and to receive the communion; believers were thus expected

to learn about the truth, remember the grace of the Lord and to have their lives transformed. In addition, their worship and service to God did not finish at the end of the meeting. On the contrary, after the meeting, believers went out giving alms to those in need, and put the message of the Lord into practice; besides, deacons also sent out the remaining bread and wine to their sick members, as a sign of showing the unity of the community.

Undoubtedly, it is challenging for common Christians to remember that we have to worship and serve God through our lives. Thus, *the medieval church* tried hard to integrate the worship of God into the believers' *life cycle*. These measures covered the various significant phases of life, including infant baptism upon one's birth and confirmation in one's adulthood, marriage when two join together as husband and wife, and anointing of the sick on one's deathbed. Moreover, the Liturgical Calendar was widely used: from the Season of Christmas to the Season of Epiphany, followed by the Season of Lent, Easter, the Season after Pentecost, the Season of Advent, and back to Christmas. There were also regular weekly meetings. Apart from the Mass every Sunday, cathedrals held Mass every morning and evening; even small rural chapels often held a few meetings during weekdays, reminding their Christians about the salvation of the Lord. The monastic communities even have Canonical Hours, a divine service consisting of seven separate hours a day which included Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. The practice of fixed-hour prayers, from one's waking up in the early morning to late night when one went to bed, was to remind monks and nuns to live a life of worship and service to God with awe and thankful hearts.

During the early *Reformation* period, famous reformers continued this medieval tradition to a certain extent. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed churches adopted the Liturgical Calendar and held many meetings on weekdays. Martin Luther preached three times every Sunday, taught on catechisms every Monday and Tuesday morning, studied the Gospel of Matthew on Wednesday morning, taught about the letters of the apostles or other books of New Testament on Thursday and Friday mornings, and gave sermon on the Gospel of John on Saturday nights. John Calvin also demanded that pastors preach three times every Sunday, and organize early morning preaching events every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Furthermore, all reformers maintained that Christians need to worship God through their *life practices*. Just as Luther said, "God does not want hearers and repeaters of

words, but doers and followers who exercise the faith that works by love."⁴ Indeed, the sixteenth-century reformers changed the name of the Sunday meeting from "Mass" to "Worship." We must examine their reasoning behind the change. As Luther criticized, the Roman Catholics at that time turned the liturgy into a means for earning God's grace and salvation, which resulted in the loss of faith.⁵ Therefore, the Church must use a language understood by the common people for preaching, so they may learn the true Word. The Word and the Sacraments should be the focus of church worship services, in order to train and build up believers, enabling them to grow in the true Word.⁶ In Luther's eyes, the function of public worship is not to praise God through participating in the meeting, but to *build up the lives of believers*, so that they can have faith and serve the Lord in everyday life.

The true worship of Christians to God is to offer themselves as living sacrifices and to serve the Lord with their living witnesses that demonstrates the truth. It is something more than singing and listening to sermons in meetings.

From the above review, we can conclude that the idea of focusing our worship to the Triune God during one single meeting is not biblical, nor in accordance with the Church's traditions; it is a misunderstanding that arose later in the history. The true worship of Christians to God is to offer themselves as living sacrifices and to serve the Lord with their living witnesses that demonstrates the truth. It is something more than singing and listening to sermons in meetings. *The essence of a worship service in church is to help believers understand, reflect, and deepen their Christian faith so that they can live out a life of worship and service to God in everyday life.*

* This essay is a modified version of my article "Worship vs. Life," *Soulcare* (Issue 42), May 2019, 5-7.

1 J. G. S. Thomson, "Worship," in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. J. D. Douglas (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1982), 1262.

2 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 7.7.

3 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.10.

4 Martin Luther, *The Eight Wittenberg Sermons* (LW 2:392).

5 Martin Luther, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* (LW 53:11).

6 Martin Luther, *The German Mass and Order of Service* 1526 (LW 53:60, 80, 89).

Academic Affairs News

- **2019-2020 Spring Opening Convocation**

The spring term this school year began on January 13. The Spiritual Formation Day was held the next day with the theme “Social Concern and the *Telos* of the Church.” A talk was delivered by Rev. Lawrence Chan, Head of Social Concern Ministry Division of the North Point Alliance Church, in the morning. There was a time of reflection for individual students, followed by a group sharing session in the afternoon. Each group was led by the chaplain, the associate chaplain or a teacher.

- **Faculty Movement**

Dr. Lindsay Robertson, Associate Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Philosophy), left his post and went back to Australia in February. We thank him for his faithful service to the seminary. May God bless the next chapter of his life in Australia.

- **Latest Arrangement of Activities**

In view of the latest situation of the pandemic, the following activities have been postponed or canceled.

- The “Experiencing Seminary Life Camp” originally scheduled for February 26 to 27 was transformed to “Experiencing Seminary Life Week (Online Version)” series which was held from April 22 to 24 through online programs and video conferences.
- The “Belote Lectures” originally scheduled for March 24 to 26 have been postponed until further notice.
- The “Spiritual Revival Concert 2020” originally scheduled for May 3 has been canceled.

- **Online Theology Salon**

The Online Theology Salon was held on April 13 with President Joshua Cho acting as host who discussed the topic “Reflection on the Origins

of Baptists in a Turbulent Age” with Dr. Alex To, Assistant Professor of Christian Thought (Baptist History).

- **The Awards and Inauguration of the Board of Directors Ceremony**

The ceremony will be held on May 21 (Thursday) at 7 pm at the Sai O Chapel. The annual awards ceremony recognizes students for academic excellence and non-academic achievements, honors our long service staff members, and expresses our gratitude to scholarship donors. The Inauguration Ceremony for a new Board of Directors will also be held that evening. Together we give thanks and praise to the Lord.

From the Chaplain

Rev. Brian Lam Chaplain

Perhaps, the Lord is reminding us ...

O Lord, please see our wretchedness! Some of us have to go out with our entire family, old and young, early at 5 am to line up outside a shop just to guarantee their successful purchase of a box of masks: a box per person and first come, first served. Some of us have to make desperate efforts to beg here and there for just a few masks for urgent use at work, as their employers are either reluctant or simply unable to provide them. During school suspensions, some parents have to rack their brains in order to find care for their young children at home while they have to go to work. Some of us are allowed to work from home, but being confined within the four walls for a prolonged period of time, together with the fear of going out to public areas, the whole family are ultimately “struggling with one another like caged beasts,” and hence feeling disheartened or even depressed. Besides, under the impact of the pandemic, many trades are experiencing heavy losses in business while individuals are also left in dire straits financially.

O Lord, please see our wretchedness! That said, is the Lord reminding us about something through the tribulations we are facing? I don't know and hardly do I have a definite answer. However, I would like to raise some possibilities based on my personal experiences over the past few months.

Perhaps, our Lord is reminding us about what is indispensable in our lives. Owing to the epidemic, we are forced to make adjustments to many habits in our lives. On the one hand, we have to stop doing what we have been used to (namely, going to school, going to work, gathering for worshipping and having social gatherings); on the other hand, we have to get accustomed to doing something we rarely did (such as wearing masks, frequently washing hands and keeping distance from others). For the sake of health and safety, we have made a lot of choices, big or small. Such decisions are, in fact, forcing us to see clearly what is ultimately indispensable in our own lives.

Perhaps, our Lord is reminding us about the true nature of what we thought we were very familiar with. Online teaching is an alternative to face-to-face classes. However, what have we gained and lost when we switch to online teaching? When we cannot attend physical worship services, and so we watch live or recorded worship services. It is not bad, but is online "worship" really worship? What is worship per se? By the same token, if dining together means "eating at the same table," sharing food with one another, then is it possible to have "online dining together"? Taking one step further, probably we have to ask what the essence of life together for a faith community is.

Perhaps, our Lord is reminding us that we have been going on in the same old rut, getting so accustomed to a fixed pattern of life that we rarely give thought to other possibilities. When there is no school for our children, have we ever thought of the possibility of self-learning at home or homeschooling other than online teaching? When we cannot eat out as often, how difficult could it be for one to cook at home and live closely with the family for a lengthy period of time? How many novel possibilities have been inspired therein? Home visits by church pastors have become difficult. Well, then, other than making a visit in person, is there any alternative, or even better, way of caring and sharing?

Let me emphasize again that I have no definite answers to all these questions; nor do I want to jump to any conclusion too soon. Nevertheless, amidst distress and hardships, besides asking God to set us free from the pain, we do have to pay some attention to the possibility that perhaps, our Lord is reminding us about something. May the Holy Spirit guide us!

Lay Theological Education Department

Toto Choi Associate Director

Never Stop Learning Even amidst Class Suspensions

In light of the coronavirus outbreak, classes at the seminary have been suspended immediately after the Lunar New Year holiday. Subsequently, with cases of community spread in Shenzhen and the epidemic showing no sign of slowing down in Hong Kong, the seminary decided to extend the suspension. As the epidemic continues to spread, the seminary has stopped face-to-face classes so as to reduce the risks of virus transmission and infection between people.

In fact, amongst the programs within the Lay Theological Education Department that started in January, most already have two to three lessons conducted before the Lunar New Year holiday. I believe that both teachers and students hope to be able to continue their studies in various ways in order to complete the full programs. As such, we discussed with individual teachers to find out ways for facilitating ongoing learning for students amidst school suspension.

However, certain programs, due to their contents and nature, required much in-class interaction. Having discussed with the concerned teachers, we could not but decide to postpone those programs. Among the special arrangements we made, that for one particular program is worth mentioning, namely, "Learning Locality through Exploring Local Churches." The program is set out to outline and study the missionary heritage in Hong Kong over the last hundred years. It involves field trips and guided

tours led by the teacher. The program began in early January; yet due to the epidemic, as gatherings are not recommended, we hoped to postpone the lessons but have not been able to do so for various reasons. I am grateful that the teacher came up with the idea of “supervised individual self-learning”: with detailed information and recommended routes provided, students can then arrange their own itinerary for the relevant topics. The teacher would then answer individual students’ queries and questions in real time through mobile communication in the originally scheduled class time for “individual self-learning” supervision. It creates a new mode of supervision for these expeditions.

For many other programs, special arrangements have been made in accordance with the teachers’ consideration and preference. Some teachers keep to the original schedules and conduct real time teaching through video conferencing programs; and others record videos or audio in advance for the students to study first, before exchanging with students and answering their queries through video conferences. Some conduct the recording in our town centre and then provide detailed notes; and others create their own recordings for us. Some also make use of screenshot and screen recording softwares to produce files (PowerPoint, images, etc.) and recordings for online teaching. There are a great variety of arrangements, and we can see that the effort required is no less than that for face-to-face classes! They all have to make special preparations for these new modes of teaching. As for the students, each has their own limitations and preferences, yet they are willing to cooperate with understanding for these ad hoc measures in the current time of difficulty. Thankfully everything is going rather smoothly!

In such a time of difficulty and uncertainty, I am truly grateful that we could find feasible alternative ways of teaching! The arrangements may not be ideal, but do resolve some of the challenges so that some programs can continue without interrupting the learning progress of the majority of our students. And all prospective graduates for this academic year can now be on track to graduate in time. I can only be thankful to God for everything!

Distance Education Program

Peggy Tam Executive Officer (Administration)

Going through the “Harsh Winter” by God’s Grace

Recalling my previous sharing in this column, I remember likening our lives to the experience of going through a series of “baptisms of fire in a long summer.” Never did I imagine that not only Hong Kong but also China, Asia and even the whole world would be experiencing a “frozen winter” when I would next write. People’s souls, time and the flow of daily operations are disturbed yet again. No longer can we take for granted the life we used to have—attending school, going to office, gathering at church, meeting up with friends and hanging out. It is now the norm for one not to have such activities while it is virtually grace if one does have any of these. Jesus once said, “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Lk 21:32-33) When everything has become so unpredictable, we still have to give thanks because we still have God’s Word, which endures forever in our heart, resounding in our souls. I hope we can still experience the nourishment from the living Word of God every day.

We thank God for using the Distance Education Program (DEP) to allow learning of His Word at different times and places. The diploma programs for the spring of 2020 commenced on March 1. This season, we have 27 new students joining the DEP (enrolling in diploma or certificate programs). Please pray that they may understand God’s Word more during their learning and be more empowered to live a Christian life. The Student Orientation and tutorials of various subjects were canceled because of the coronavirus outbreak. Nevertheless, thanks to the provision of our Father in Heaven, as well as the dedicated efforts of our tutors, we are able to put in writing the details of the tutorials so that the students can still achieve self-learning through access to such materials online. While the diploma programs for the spring term is in progress, the programs for the autumn term is now open for application. As for the certificate programs, they are open for enrollment

all year through. Interested brothers and sisters are welcome to approach us for enrollment or inquiries.

Topical lectures are regularly held by DEP. This year, the topical lecture is scheduled to be held on May 9. Dr. Wong Fook-kong, Professor of Old Testament, will be delivering a talk on "Reflections on Violence in the Old Testament." Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the lecture will be conducted online. For enrollment or inquiries, please contact our DEP office. We hope more students or interested brothers and sisters will attend the lecture during this difficult period so that we may learn from and bless one another.

Finally, readers are invited to pray for the DEP students, especially the visually-impaired students of the "Spiritual Light (Mainland) Project." (They had been scheduled to come for a learning exchange program in February, which was however canceled.) We believe it is by no means easy for them to face the pandemic on the Mainland. Let us pray with one heart so that we, with God's Word, may experience God's grace and go through this "bitter winter against the epidemic" together.

Student Union

Law Yuet-ho Chairperson

To Walk with God and Neighbors

The new committee of the Student Union (SU) was inaugurated in January. Its seven committee members include Law Yuet-ho (Chairperson), Lam Kar-ho (Vice-chairperson), Law Hoi-yui (Head of Secretary Department), Ng Wai-yin (Treasurer), Ng Siu-yin (Head of Spiritual Devotion Department), Cheng Kim-ho (Head of Mission Department) and Cheung Tsz-wai (Head of Daily Living Department). The committee have invited the following teachers as consultants for the year: Dr. Vincent Lau (Student Union), Dr. Nathan Ng (Secretary Department), Chaplain Rev. Brian Lam (Spiritual Devotion), Ms. Grace Chan (Spiritual Devotion), Dr. Eric Kwong (Mission) and Dr. Sarah Shea (Daily Living).

The theme of the SU this year is "To Walk with God and Neighbors." Since June last year, much conflict has arisen as a result of the ongoing social unrest. Such strife is seen not only in society, but also in schools, churches and even homes. At times, it seems that we are unable to do anything in the face of such predicaments. The theme of the SU last year was "To Live out Faith in an Era of Turmoil." This year, the present SU committee is going to explore further the meaning of "to live out faith" and reflect on ways that we may serve as a bridge in our church to enhance communication and harmony, that we may mend broken relationships, etc. However, we find that such tasks are beyond the abilities of mere mortals like us. We must be connected with God ourselves before we can be connected to others and live out our faith in this day and age. May we walk with God, and learn from this walk-with-God experience how to walk with the others.

The coronavirus broke out during the Lunar New Year. Due to this severe epidemic, the seminary has suspended all face-to-face teaching and switched to online teaching. SU activities, including the Spring Tea Gathering of the Daily Living Department, Noon-time Sharing Meetings of the Mission Department, and prayer meetings of the Spiritual Devotion Department, have also been postponed or canceled. However, under such circumstances, we should seize the opportunity to be closer to God. Therefore, starting from February 14, the Spiritual Devotion Department has organized online prayer meetings on every Friday at 8 am, in the hope of guiding fellow students to continue to worship and pray to God despite the pandemic.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has not yet passed, we are convinced that we will experience more of the provision and guidance of the Triune God during this difficult period. May our SU become an instrument of God, and may we continue to serve each other in the seminary as we walk with God and our neighbors.

Publication News



The seminary's biannual academic journal, *Hill Road* (issue 45), will be published in June with the theme, "**Temptation and Trial.**" There will be six thematic articles: "Trial and Temptation: A Biblical Theology Discussion" (Wong Fook-kong), "The Meaning and Function of OT Citations in Matthew's Temptation Narrative" (Jonathan W. Lo), "Temptation and Trial in *Vita Antonii*" (Nathan K. Ng), "The

Paradox of Trial: Mother Teresa's Spiritual Experiences" (Annie Yi-jung Pan), "From Temptation to Salvation: The Christology of Colin E. Gunton" (Andres S. Tang), and "Crossing the Boundary: Reflection on Pastoral Sexual Misconduct" (Ip King-tak). In addition, there will be miscellaneous articles and book reviews.

Hill Road is available at the seminary, its town centres and Christian book stores. For inquiries, please call the Publication Office at 2768 5168.

Faculty News

- The article of **Dr. Andres Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture), "'Christ and Culture' or 'Jesus is Lord': John H. Yoder's Perspective" has been included in *China Evangelical Seminary Journal* (December 2019).
- **Dr. Wong Fook-kong**, Professor of Old Testament, spoke on the topic "Why Did God Use Samson?" at a talk organized by the Ming Dao Press on January 10, 2020.

Alumni News

- Alumna **Mak Wai-yin** (class of 2011) was ordained as a pastor by the Chuk Yuen Baptist Church on January 12, 2020.

Lay Theological Education Department

Student Recruitment 2020-21

Master of Arts in Christian Studies

- This master-level degree, part-time evening program enables students to lay a solid Biblical and theological foundation.
- Students may select courses according to their interests and needs.
- Students may choose "Biblical Studies" or "Communication" as their major or they may choose not to pursue any specific major.
- Some credits acquired in this program can be transferred to the Master of Divinity or the Master of Christian Studies degree programs in the seminary's Main Programs.

Application Date for Admissions: From late May
Class Start Date: Early October

Early Childhood Ministry Diploma/Certificate Program Childhood Ministry Diploma/Certificate Program Mission Ministry Diploma/Certificate Program Youth Ministry Diploma/Certificate Program

Application Date for Admissions: From early June
Class Start Date: Early October

Bachelor/Diploma/Certificate Program in Christian Studies

Certificate Program: Christian Studies, Music Ministry
Diploma Program: Christian Studies, Biblical Studies, Music Ministry, Caring and Counseling Ministry
Bachelor Program: Christian Studies, Biblical Studies, Music Ministry, Caring and Counseling Ministry

These are part-time evening programs.

Application Date for Admissions: From late May
Class Start Date: Early October

All the classes above are conducted in Cantonese. For inquiries or registration, please call 2711 2552, email ltedinfo@hkbt.edu.hk or log on to our web page at www.hkbt.edu.hk/lted to download the application form.

Distance Education Program

Exploring Truth • Reflecting upon Faith • Equipping for Ministry

Student Recruitment: Diploma programs will begin in September 2020, while certificate programs can be joined at any time.

Correspondence Program	Program Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Diploma in Biblical Studies Program	Through an in-depth study of a specific book of the Bible, students can gain a better understanding of the Bible.	Secondary school graduates with their church pastor's recommendation	March and September	March semester : <i>Hong Kong:</i> February 10
Diploma in Christian Studies Program	Designed for equipping students for ministry, the program helps students strengthen their foundations in the Christian faith and doctrine.			September semester : <i>Hong Kong:</i> August 10
Higher Diploma in Biblical Studies / Christian Studies Programs	Further studies for students having completed the diploma program.	Completion of the diploma program and with a church pastor's recommendation		<i>Overseas:</i> July 10
Certificate in N.T. / O.T. Studies Programs	Introductory programs in biblical studies, guiding students to study each book of the Bible systematically.	All are welcome	Register at any time	

Elective students: Students may choose subjects offered in the correspondence courses according to their own personal interests. For details, please log on to the Distance Education web page at www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist.

Online Program	Program Description	Date of Commencement
Online Version Online Certificate in Old Testament Studies Program Online Certificate in New Testament Studies Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Students can read and download learning materials and course work directly from the website. * Upon completion of the coursework, students may upload it for the tutor to mark and provide comments. * Time-saving, quick and efficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Students may join the program at any time with fee concessions. * You may try the trial study of the online program: http://elearning@hkbts.edu.hk

For inquiries, please call 2768 5105, email deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk or log on to the Distance Education web page at www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist.

Pastoral Continuing Education Centre

Courses and talks offered from April to July 2020

Course / Talk	Lecturer	Date	Time
Abnormal and Normal: Youth Ministry in an Age of Chaos	Mr. Ringo Ng, Ms. Carmen Liao	20/4	9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Old Testament World and Bible	Dr. Wong Fook-kong	20/4, 27/4	2:00 - 5:00 pm
Pastoral and Spiritual Care in a Politicized Society	Dr. Andy Chiu	27/4	9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Reflection on the Theology Foundation and Practice of Prayer	Dr. Sam Ip	11/5, 18/5	9:30 am - 12:30 pm
From Public Speech to Pulpit Speech	Mr. Lee Kam-hung	11/5, 18/5, 25/5	2:00 - 5:00 pm
How to Lead a Group Devotion Here and Now?	Rev. Brian Lam	8/6	2:00 - 5:00 pm
Pre-marital Counselling	Ms. Wan Mei-yee	15/6, 22/6, 29/6	2:00 - 5:00 pm
The Troublesome Corinthians	Dr. Benjamin Fung	6/7, 13/7	9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the above courses will be conducted online through video conferencing programs.

Fee concessions:

Those who enroll and pay the course fee a week prior to the course beginning may enjoy either the *Early Bird Reduction* or a *fee discount*.*

- (1) *Early Bird Enrollment*: those who pay the full fee of the enrolled course may enjoy a reduction of HK\$20 (for 3-hour course) or HK\$30 (for 6-to-9 hour course).
- (2) A *10% discount* for graduates from HKBTS degree programs, pastors of Baptist churches and students in our Lay Theological Education Department;
- (3) A *20% discount* for valid cardholders of HKBTS Alumni Association members;
- (4) A *50% discount* for full-time seminary students.

Registration: Application forms can be downloaded from the seminary website, or you may enroll online at www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce/apply2.html

Inquiries: Please call 2768 5179 or email pce@hkbts.edu.hk

* One cannot enjoy both the Early Bird Reduction and fee discounts. After the Early Bird concession period, please pay the full fee. For fee details, please see the Application Form (www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce).



Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Awards Ceremony

and Inauguration of the Board of Directors

*The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary
requests the honor of your presence
at the Awards Ceremony
and the Inauguration of the Board of Directors
on Thursday, the twenty-first of May
Two Thousand and Twentieth
at seven o'clock in the evening*

Seminary Chapel

1 Nin Ming Road, Sai Kung North, Sai O, N.T.

*Please stay tuned to our latest announcements in case there are any contingency measures or rescheduling due to the pandemic.

DONORS REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2019

Education Fund (Church / Organization)					
九龍城浸信會會眾	3,000.00	張日桑	1,200.00	Distance Education Program	
九龍國際浸信會	11,800.00	曹啟明伉儷	400.00	陳之虎	2,000.00
上水浸信會	15,000.00	梁明財伉儷	500.00	鄭鵬程	300.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	梁錦松、郭詠文	1,000.00	無名氏	2,000.00
元朗浸信會	20,000.00	梁麗嫻	300.00	無名氏	620.00
屯門浸信教會	500.00	許錦威	1,000.00	無名氏	444.00
以馬內利浸信會	4,700.00	陳偉倫	200.00	無名氏	100.00
生命渠浸信會	2,000.00	陳麗英	1,000.00	HKS	<u>5,464.00</u>
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	10,000.00	陸澤浩伉儷	2,000.00		
何文田浸信會	5,000.00	曾慶忠	500.00	DE: Special Need Training Program	
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	馮德華、鄧如玉	200.00	無名氏	HKS <u>1,700.00</u>
香港天樂浸信教會	2,000.00	黃念施	200.00		
香港浸信教會	125,000.00	黃華燭	100.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
香港聖尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00	楊謝金玉	3,000.00	王梅玉萍	2,000.00
將軍澳浸信會	1,000.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	500.00	杜桂鵬	2,400.00
深水埗浸信會	15,000.00	蔡煥章	300.00	蔡麗桃	500.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00	HKS	<u>4,900.00</u>
第一城浸信會	8,000.00	劉玉珍	1,000.00		
愛群道浸信會	8,750.00	劉建紅	100.00	Theological Education for	
新希望浸信會	1,500.00	蔡慧英	200.00	Filipino Leaders Program	
置富浸信教會	3,000.00	鄧活靈伉儷	800.00	馬德明	1,000.00
新羅灣浸信會	3,500.00	鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00	陳麗英	400.00
觀塘浸信會	1,907.00	羅佩珊	100.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
浸信宜道會明道堂	500.00	羅凱慈	1,000.00	HKS	<u>1,800.00</u>
基督教宜道會信愛堂	1,000.00	關志偉	100.00		
基督教宜道會萃基堂	2,000.00	關廣智、鄧慧然	500.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
啟關基金	500.00	關德華伉儷	200.00	張智運伉儷	10,000.00
HKS	<u>264,357.00</u>	無名氏	4,000.00	楊美玲	300.00
		無名氏	2,000.00	鄧小寶	1,500.00
		無名氏	2,000.00	無名氏	8,000.00
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		無名氏	2,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
Kwok Wai Kit	120.00	無名氏	1,000.00	HKS	<u>20,800.00</u>
香港神學生聯誼會	1,530.00	無名氏	1,000.00		
方志強	200.00	無名氏	500.00	Campus Extension Project	
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	500.00	恩潮浸信會	20,000.00
王群	800.00	無名氏	500.00	基督浸信會	5,000.00
朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	500.00	富安浸信會禧年堂	20,000.00
何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00	李德祥	8,000.00
何惠娟	2,000.00	無名氏	500.00	張智運伉儷	20,000.00
何錦燕	1,000.00	無名氏	400.00	黃智惠伉儷	3,000.00
余小玲	800.00	無名氏	300.00	謝任生伉儷	1,000.00
吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	200.00	無名氏	4,000.00
吳國傑伉儷	500.00	無名氏	200.00	無名氏	4,000.00
志慧	500.00	無名氏	150.00	無名氏	4,000.00
李德祥	7,000.00	無名氏	100.00	無名氏	3,500.00
林威烈	1,000.00	無名氏	2.00	無名氏	3,000.00
洪錦漢	100.00		HKS	無名氏	2,500.00
洪廣輪	100.00	馬志遠伉儷	<u>63,202.00</u>	無名氏	1,000.00
胡文恩伉儷	500.00		US\$		
殷振強伉儷	1,000.00		<u>300.00</u>	HKS	<u>99,000.00</u>
馬德明	2,000.00				
		Bursary Fund			
		香港中華基督教青年會	HKS		
			<u>22,000.00</u>		

DONORS REPORT FOR JANUARY 2020

Education Fund (Church / Organization)		吳明宗伉儷	5,000.00	Distance Education Program	
九龍區廣河教會	13,250.00	吳國傑伉儷	500.00	何曉程	300.00
上環浸信會	5,000.00	胡文基伉儷	500.00	無名氏	444.00
大埔王葛浸信會	3,025.00	倪武強伉儷	1,000.00	HK\$	<u>744.00</u>
大埔浸信會	2,000.00	馬德明	1,000.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
澳門浸信教會	600.00	曾世明伉儷	800.00	李智進伉儷	10,000.00
牛車灣竹園浸信會	5,000.00	吳永源伉儷	10,000.00	高麗純	500.00
牛車水浸信會	20,000.00	梁明財伉儷	500.00	HK\$	<u>10,500.00</u>
以馬內利浸信會	4,500.00	梁錦松、梁詠文	1,000.00	Lay Theological and Distance Education Fund	
竹園浸信會	8,000.00	梁麗嫻	800.00	北角浸信會	
沙田浸信會	8,000.00	許錫清	1,000.00	明義神學助學金	HK\$ <u>500,000.00</u>
香港西區浸信會	5,000.00	陳偉倫	300.00	Theological Education for	
香港仔浸信會	18,460.20	譚偉權	800.00	Filipino Leaders Program	
香港浸信會新柱福音堂	5,000.00	陳麗英	500.00	吳德明	1,000.00
香港聖尼路堂浸信教會	1,200.00	貝麗志	500.00	陳麗英	250.00
恩約浸信會	5,000.00	馮偉權、鄧智三	300.00	馮祥、鄧程鈞	800.00
四福浸信會	200.00	黃永權	5,000.00	黎素潔	500.00
粉嶺浸信會	50,000.00	黃志強	200.00	HK\$	<u>2,000.00</u>
粉嶺浸信會	50,000.00	黃華娟	100.00	Graduate School Program	
海濱浸信會	500.00	黃登真	5,896.63	北角浸信會	
富亨浸信會	1,117.50	譚祥、黎球強	500.00	明義神學助學金	HK\$ <u>500,000.00</u>
嘉咸浸信會	2,000.00	靳美森	300.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
喇羅灣浸信會	2,500.00	劉永生、鍾梓淳	300.00	樓嘉祥	HK\$ <u>300.00</u>
錦安浸信會	14,557.00	劉玉珊	1,000.00	Campus Extension Project	
觀塘浸信會	1,971.00	劉德紅	100.00	李鳳琴	500.00
中華傳道會慈得堂	500.00	莊慧英	200.00	譚錦權	1,000.00
香港華人基督教聯合會	80,000.00	鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00	黃雅志	20,000.00
基督教宣道會九龍堂	500.00	羅佩珊	100.00	羅小賢	1,500.00
基督教宣道會聖基里	2,000.00	羅志強	100.00	無名氏	5,000.00
基督教福音堂(王愛堂)	20,000.00	羅廣智、鍾麗燕	500.00	無名氏	4,000.00
啟關建堂	500.00	無名氏	4,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
HK\$	<u>371,136.40</u>	無名氏	2,500.00	無名氏	1,000.00
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		無名氏	2,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
沈淑珍	10,000.00	無名氏	2,000.00	無名氏	5,000.00
方志強	200.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	4,000.00
江國儀	700.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	1,000.00
王群	600.00	無名氏	800.00	無名氏	1,000.00
吳浩平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	300.00	HK\$	<u>36,000.00</u>
何仲興	1,000.00	無名氏	300.00	Bursary Fund	
何新英	1,000.00	無名氏	51.50	聖地亞哥華人基督教聯合會	HK\$ <u>100,000.00</u>
		HK\$	<u>30,251.53</u>		

DONORS REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2020

Education Fund (Church / Organization)		張明財伉儷	500.00	Distance Education Program	
九龍福音教會	280,000.00	梁桂華	3,000.00	鄭觀程	500.00
大埔福音教會	12,000.00	梁蕙琪	390.00	無名氏	500.00
澳門福音教會	600.00	梁錦怡、黃詠文	1,000.00	無名氏	444.00
以馬內利福音教會	4,300.00	梁麗雄	300.00		HKS 1,244.00
長洲福音教會	10,000.00	許慧威	1,000.00		
旺角福音教會	1,172.00	陳偉倫	200.00	Lay Theological Education Program	
香港(西區)福音堂教會	5,000.00	陳德潔高	5,000.00	張智明伉儷	10,000.00
香港福音教會	250,000.00	黃煥忠	500.00	劉豐桃	500.00
香港聖約翰福音堂教會	1,200.00	黃煥華、張加玉	200.00		HKS 10,500.00
香港聖潔福音教會	10,000.00	黃士誠	200.00		
嘉應福音教會	10,000.00	黃榮顯	100.00	Theological Education for	
海怡福音教會	12,000.00	楊榮志五	4,000.00	Filipino Leaders Program	
新區福音教會	500.00	譚恩賢伉儷	20,000.00	馬德明	1,000.00
平基福音教會	500.00	譚偉、黎卓源	500.00	溫其、黎卓源	400.00
愛群福音教會	8,750.00	黃卓雄	300.00		HKS 1,400.00
觀音福音教會	6,000.00	劉永仁、鍾仲澤	500.00		
聖潔福音堂青年福音會	15,000.00	劉建紅	100.00	Campus Maintenance and Repairs	
九龍福音堂福音會	16,734.50	劉少鵬伉儷	20,000.00	楊國輝	300.00
上水福音教會	15,000.00	蔡慧琪	200.00	鄭少賢	1,500.00
觀塘福音教會	2,083.00	鄧志強伉儷	1,200.00		HKS 1,800.00
基督教宣道會大埔堂	500.00	鄧志強伉儷	1,000.00		
基督教宣道會翠華堂	2,000.00	區炳文伉儷	1,000.00	Campus Extension Project	
啟關基堂	500.00	梁錦熾	500.00	李德輝	6,000.00
HKS 663,799.50		譚靜貞	1,000.00	區雪文、王孟輝	5,000.00
Chinese Indep. Baptist Church-S.F. USD	540.00	譚佩珊	100.00	梁志勇	10,000.00
		蔣新榮	500.00	陳煥榮伉儷	1,000.00
Education Fund (Individual Donor)		關志偉	100.00	黃永傑	3,000.00
Ho Ka Keung	4,000.00	關善賢、張麗敏	500.00	黃楚文伉儷	10,000.00
Ng Cheng Wai	2,000.00	無名氏	5,000.00	楊有賢伉儷	2,000.00
方志儀	200.00	無名氏	5,000.00	劉玉強伉儷	2,000.00
王木珍	1,000.00	無名氏	4,000.00	黎鎮權	10,000.00
王紹儀	1,200.00	無名氏	2,000.00	關志強伉儷	500.00
王群	600.00	無名氏	1,000.00	王江名	50,000.00
吳志平伉儷	800.00	無名氏	1,000.00	無名氏	50,000.00
何仲儀	1,200.00	無名氏	1,000.00	無名氏	50,000.00
何麗燕	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	20,000.00
馮炳南伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	10,000.00
吳國權伉儷	500.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	7,000.00
李麗嫻	3,000.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	5,000.00
李煥祥	6,000.00	無名氏	500.00	無名氏	7,500.00
洪耀輝	100.00	無名氏	600.00	無名氏	3,000.00
容志榮	500.00	無名氏	300.00	無名氏	1,000.00
黃振強伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	200.00	無名氏	1,000.00
馬建南	2,000.00	無名氏	100.00	無名氏	1,000.00
馮正光	1,800.00	無名氏			
曹詠明伉儷	400.00				
			HKS 121,201.80		
		Corrie Bvng K. L. USD	300.00	Pandemic Prevention Supplies	
				無名氏	100,000.00
				無名氏	100.00
					HKS 100,100.00

Financial Report

General Fund, 1 December 2019 - 29 February 2020

	HK\$
Income	6,473,500.11
Expenditure	<u>(9,155,672.52)</u>
Deficit	<u><u>(2,682,172.41)</u></u>



Reply

I will support The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary by

- praying for the Seminary's theological education ministry
 contributing \$_____ for
 Education Fund Campus Extension Project Others: _____

Name: _____
(Mr / Ms / Rev / Dr / Mr & Mrs)

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Donation Methods:

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"Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary"
 Cash either deliver to the Seminary or direct deposit into our
Hang Seng Bank Account No. 787-471721-883
 Monthly Autopay by Bank Account —
autopay form will be forwarded to you

- Credit card:** VISA MASTERCARD
 One-off Donation Monthly Donation

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Cardholder's Signature: _____
(Same as signature on credit card)

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

Verification Code : [] [] [] [] (The last 3 digits on the back of the card)

Card Expiry Date: _____ / _____ (MM/YY)

Amount: HK\$ _____ (Credit card donations are denominated in HK\$)

- I do not wish my name and donation amount to appear in the Seminary's Newsletter.

- Please send cheque or bank deposit slip with this reply to the Seminary at 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong.
- Receipt will be issued and donation is tax-deductible in Hong Kong.
- Your personal data will only be used for issuing receipt and Seminary's administration purposes.
- Please tick the appropriate box ()
- For donation inquiries: Tel : (852) 2715 9511
Fax: (852) 2761 0868
Email: inquiry@hkbts.edu.hk

Thank you for your support !

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Spiritual Formation Day

January 14, 2020

The second day of the spring semester in the 2019-20 school year was the Spiritual Formation Day on the theme of “Social Concern and the *Telos* of the Church.” In the morning seminar, the speaker was Rev. Lawrence Chan, Head of Social Concern Ministry Division of the North Point Alliance Church. There was reflection time for individual students, followed by a group sharing session, in the afternoon. Each group was led by the chaplain, the associate chaplain or a teacher.



Theology Salons

January 21, March 10

On January 21, President Joshua Cho and Rev. Brian Lam held a “Theology Salon” at the chapel on the topic “The Preaching, Teaching and Shepherding in the Current Situation in Hong Kong” and made a survey of the various approaches of some relevant Western scholars in a conversational manner.

On March 10, the seminary held its first online live “Theology Salon.” President Cho and Dr. Alex To talked about the topic “Reflection on the Origins of Baptists in a Turbulent Age,” exploring the features of Baptist faith as well as aspects of the Baptist history in Hong Kong.



Online Teaching

February 24-

In view of the current epidemic situation in Hong Kong, some contingency measures have been taken. For example, all classes on the Sai O campus were temporarily switched to online teaching since February 24 for the safety consideration of both our teachers and students.



今日

可以做什麼？

**What Can I do
in Hong Kong Today?**
— Calling and Discernment

Student Recruitment for 2020-21

Bachelor of Theology

Master of Divinity

Master of Divinity (Further Studies)

Master of Religious Education

Master of Christian Studies

Master of Theology

Doctor of Theology

Application Date for Admissions

Hong Kong : January 2-June 5

Overseas : January 2-April 29

Admission Test Date

By individual arrangement during the
seminary's office hours

For Inquiries

Telephone: 2768 5130

Email: admissions@hkpts.edu.hk

Website: www.hkpts.edu.hk