

# The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

## Annual Report 2006



Today's seminary students will be ministers of tomorrow who will shoulder the crucial responsibility of ministering, teaching, mission and evangelism. They deserve both the seminary and the Christian Church to join hands, to commit resources and to nurture them the best we can.

---

### 1. Nurturing ministers of tomorrow

Thirty-six new students have been admitted to the Seminary for the academic year 2006-07. Among our new students, two are in the Master of Theology program; nineteen, in the Master of Divinity program; ten, in the Pastoral Studies (B.A.) program; and five, as non-classified students. Almost sixty percent of the new students come from Baptist churches. Currently, the Seminary has a total of 163 students entrusted to us by God. We are willing to follow God's command and are committed to equipping them to become workmen fit for God's use.



In recent years, the Seminary steers our educational development in the following directions:

- **Biblical teaching and character formation**

In the past few years, the Seminary has been gradually, yet intentionally, strengthening our biblical teachings with positive results thus far. Besides beefing up Biblical Studies in the B.A. program, we have also increased interpretation of scriptures in our day-to-day lessons and chapel services. There is now a greater focus on Scripture in our forums and seminars as well as in our faculty members' publications and lectures. We particularly train students to make practical applications of the Bible's teachings as they are faced with complicated situations in their fields of service after graduation.

Another important direction of the Seminary is to nurture character formation. Not only do teachers spend time guiding their students outside the classes, but they also lead spiritual formation camps and small groups and stress spiritual formation in chapel services. The Seminary recognizes how essential it is for students to develop a strong prayer life, to reflect upon their lives and to learn to develop themselves in all their relationships. We also acknowledge the value of corporate worship, studying the Bible in students' private devotions, developing good social skills and practical service to people.

Nurturing the student's character also implies nurturing the teacher's character since it is essential that the teacher be a role model in order for seminary education to be successful. We need to have a team of teachers who have the heart, the will and the strength to teach and nurture our students. We will continue to recruit the right candidates to strengthen our faculty team. This is certainly our important goal for the future.

- **Strengthening academic training and widening vision**

Besides its normal lessons, the Seminary conducts academic and ministerial talks and seminars and sends students to join intellectual exchange activities outside the school campus. Our aim is to heighten their theological and analytical thinking and to make them aware of the broad spectrum of ministries in many different places. In the past two years, we have held academic forums in order to allow a lively exchange of ideas between teachers and students. The response has been so strong that a contingent forum was held. We are



delighted by the good response. We are also pleased to report on the enthusiastic response to this year's Belote Lectures. Students were enlightened by this year's speaker, the world-renowned theologian J. Wentzel van Huyssteen.

## 2. Graduates entering their fields of ministries

There are thirty seven graduates for the year 2005-06. One is from the Master of Theology program; thirteen, from the Master of Divinity program; three, from the Master of Religious Education program; three, from the Master of Pastoral Counseling program; sixteen, from the Pastoral Studies (B. A.) program, and one, from the Advanced Diploma in Cross-cultural Studies program. We are pleased to see that they have now completed their studies with the prayers and good wishes of teachers and fellow

students they begin their full time ministries. The Seminary will continue to support them and pray for God's guidance and help so that they can be obedient servants of God throughout their lives.



## 3. The Lay Theological Education Department

Remembering that Baptists have always emphasized the priesthood of all believers, LTED endeavors in achieving its objective to equip and prepare Christian believers for their future ministries in the church or in their work place by providing diversified programs and catering to their different needs. There are more than 800 individual students taking LTED courses each quarter with a total number of class registration up to 2,500. There are approximately 300 students graduating each year.

The Lay Theological Education Department is currently offering thirteen Certificate, Diploma, B.A. and Master's programs. For example, there are Certificate and Diploma programs for Christian Women's Theological Training, Ministry for the Elderly, Church Clerk Training, and B.A. and Master programs for Christian Studies. These programs fall roughly into two categories: One is for basic theological training and the other is for ministerial skill equipping. We are convinced that the crux of theological education is the nurturing of lives. Thus from the end of this year onwards, six ministerial-training-oriented programs will be revised to incorporate elements of Bible knowledge, Christian thought, spiritual formation, and the understanding of one's personality and temperament. The goal is to enhance students' spirituality and to foster their holistic growth. Thank God that these upgraded programs have been met with enthusiastic responses from students so that more than 100 graduating students have signed up. From this, we can see that such theological training programs are indeed in great demand.

The enrolment figures, students' responses and graduates' sharing have all been very encouraging. Not only do we see that brothers and sisters from various churches can be equipped through our programs, but we also see that they all have such yearning for God and such a love for the church that they study diligently in preparation for their future ministries.

#### 4. Distance Education Program

The DEP is designed for students who are too busy to attend regular classes but who through correspondence or online study can be equipped for better ministries in their churches without the constraints of time and space. Since its establishment in 1998, 190 students have graduated from the Program, and there are now 380 enrolled. We offer a Certificate Program in New Testament Studies, a Certificate Program in Old Testament Studies, a Diploma Program in Christian Studies, a Diploma Program in Bible Studies, an Advanced Diploma Program in Christian Studies, an Advanced Diploma Program in Bible Studies, and the special New Testament Online Program. While students taking DEP are mainly from Hong Kong, more than 60 students are from overseas.



In another program, we work with the Gospel Center for the Visually Impaired to offer their members the "Spiritual Light Project." The second class on Certificate Program in New Testament Studies ended in May with five graduates. Besides, we collaborate with Kun Sun Association to set up the "Onesimus Project" for prison inmates who have come to Christ in correctional institutions. We now have 32 students participating in the Project. Through financial assistance, we enable Christian prison inmates to be equipped so that they can become witnesses for Christ in the correctional institutions.

The Theological Education Program for Filipino Leaders (TEFL), inaugurated in January 2003, has had, to date, class registration of over 800 since its beginning. All the classes are conducted on Sunday afternoons with an average of 55 students enrolled in the program each quarter. Since the end of 2005, the subjects "Church Music" and "Biblical Studies" have been added to the curriculum. Moreover, lecturers and pastors from Hong Kong and the Philippines with the right professional qualifications are appointed to teach short-term courses. In June last year, the First Graduation Ceremony was held with 23 students receiving Certificates or Diplomas. The Second Graduation Ceremony will be held in June next year with 28 graduating students.

#### 5. The Applied Theological Education Center

Situated in the Bute Street, Mongkok, Applied Theological Education Center has been in operation since its inauguration four years ago. Classrooms on level 7 are mainly used for courses run by the Lay Theological Education Department and the Distance Education Program. The Pastoral Continuing Education Center is located on Level 8, whereas Level 9 is the Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center.

##### ● Pastoral Continuing Education Center

The Advisory Committee of PCEC, set up last year, has provided many suggestions to provide a full range and variety of courses to meet the needs of pastoral workers. A total of forty three courses and talks have been conducted. 580 pastors or ministers have joined these courses or talks throughout the year with a total enrolment of 1000. The following series and topics have been conducted: Workshop on Dynamic Preaching at the Pulpit Series; the Church's Creative Ministry Series; Worship Renewal Series; Pastoral Care Series; Pastoral Leadership Series. The Pastoral Care Series has been most popular. This year we started the first Certificate Program for Clinical and Pastoral Education. This is the first time that such a program has been conducted by a local theological seminary. In the program, professional training in pastoral care and visitation are offered to church pastors and ministers.



● **Edna Wong Christian Workshop and Arts Education Center**

The Center aims to instill in lay Christians a renewed understanding of worship based on the wisdom of the Bible, and the teaching of theology and church history. Moreover, by receiving a diversified and integrative training in the fine arts, students are able to broaden the vision and scope of their ministry. The wide range of courses offered at the Center can help students apply their artistic skills to church worship and their ministries. In 2005-06, an average of 150 students were enrolled in courses each quarter. A variety of courses and workshops were offered, such as “The Space Set Aside: The Environment for Worship,” and “Drama at Church: Creative Workshop for Short Dramas in Meetings.” Courses are both theoretically-based and practically-oriented. Furthermore, there are also daytime and evening courses on vocal performance, Chinese and western musical instruments playing, electronic and keyboard music, dancing, dramas and plays, movies and regional opera classes. The Fundamental Certificate Program for Choral Music Ministry is recognized as a valid course in the Certificate and Bachelor Degree programs offered by LTED.



**6. Library**

The Seminary’s Rankin Library offers abundant resources for the purpose of teaching and learning. Up to August 2006, the total size of the collection has reached 88,000 items, including 70,000 Chinese and English books, 7,000 audio-visual materials, more than 500 CD-ROM discs, 4,800 bound periodicals, and approximately 6,000 books and music scores kept in our center at Mongkok. Besides, the Library has subscribed to one more electronic database in 2006/07, bringing the number of



online full-text databases to three and providing some 1.2 million research articles from nearly one thousand journal titles. Authorized library users are able to access this vast amount of knowledge freely over the Internet. The Library has also established a new Web catalogue. In addition to the searching functions for determining the availability and location of library materials, library users can also review their personal loan records, make reservations or renew borrowed items through this new catalogue from home.

**7. Publication**

We quarterly publish the *HKBTS Newsletter* in both Chinese and English to share the latest developments of the Seminary with local and overseas churches, and that there can be prayer support for the Seminary’s many needs. The *Hill Road* is our biannual academic journal, first published in 1998, has been set up as a platform for our faculty to share the latest scholarship. In the last few years, our faculty has worked hard to introduce important intellectual issues to Chinese churches through *Hill Road* to enable Christians to reflect on these issues as both different ideologies and practical situations are integrated into the journal’s essays. Each issue of *Hill Road* has a particular focus. The themes of some of our latest issues include the following: “Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Ministry,” “*Phronesis*,” “Old Testament Ethics” and “Theology and Practice of Mission.” Besides local and overseas seminaries and individual professors and students, our subscribers also include churches, ministers, and lay Christians.

In March, Dr. Samuel Tang’s *Psalms of Prayer (I)* and in December, Dr. Andres Tang’s *Boundary and Ethics: The Ethical Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* were published respectively by the Seminary. Dr. Andres Tang’s book is the second volume of the Church Ethics Series, and the third and fourth volumes will be Dr. Wong Fook Kong’s *Old Testament Ethics* and Dr. Poling Sun’s *New Testament Ethics* to be published in 2007.

