

Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Annual Report 2008-09

"... we went through fire and water,

but you brought us to a place of abundance."

(Psalm 66:12)



With a heart of thanksgiving and joy, HKBTS's faculty and students together shouted "Alleluia" !

The Lord who founded HKBTS is the same Lord who has established HKBTS

HKBTS has continued to belong to God since he founded the Seminary 58 years ago and entrusted it with a great mission — the mission to train ministers.

HKBTS also belongs to all the churches, for in these 58 years God has commanded this seminary to hear the needs of the churches and to prepare tomorrow's ministers and leaders by meeting these needs.

Over the past year, God has led this seminary, which belongs to God and the churches, to pass through fire and water and now he leads it to enter into a land of abundance. All the faculty, students and staff would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to our churches and our brothers and sisters in Christ for keeping watch over us. Moreover, we very much hope that together you and we can bear witness to history, testifying to God's abundant and sufficient grace. His grace has brought forth the power of renewal so that we can proclaim with one voice the Lord who founded HKBTS is also the same Lord who has established HKBTS!

Prospect and Progress:
Succeeding Our Precious
Heritage and Making Steady
Progress

● **The Spirit of God Is in Our Midst**

The 2009-10 school year began at the end of August. From the Faculty Retreat in the summer to the Spiritual Formation Camp held just before the beginning of the new school year, to the Opening Convocation on August 26, to the All-Seminary Prayer Meeting on September 1, members of the seminary community have all experienced the sweetness of God's Spirit in our midst.

In the Faculty Retreat, we strongly experienced God's presence and we understood the importance of stepping forward with one accord on the Seminary's road of solid, steady development. As all the faculty looked to God and discussed future teaching strategies and directions, we became aware that God had filled our hearts with the same mind. At the same time, we experienced a strong sense of mutual trust, harmony and unity among our faculty members.

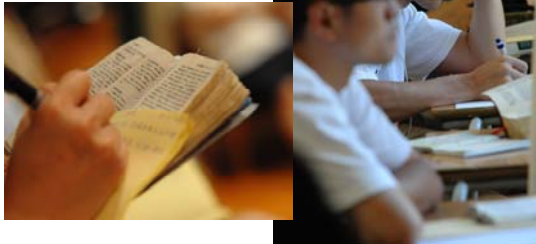


▲ *The faculty and new students at the Opening Convocation*

▼ *All-Seminary Prayer Meeting*



The Spiritual Formation Camp



Then, just before the beginning of the school, both the faculty and students came together for the Spiritual Formation Camp. Once again we witnessed how the Spirit of God touch the hearts of both teachers and students. In this three-day camp, as our teachers Dr. Eric Kwong, Dr. Clement Shum and Rev. Brian Lam delivered well-prepared and timely messages, it was obvious that students were listening with open hearts and minds. The theme speakers, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Chang, spoke on serenity and rest in the Lord and shared their own experiences. Students were devotedly taking down notes, and it was obvious they had a strong desire to experience God's peace and rest in a greater way. In the sharing meeting on the last day, the students were of one accord as they eagerly shared the Spirit's promptings. Through these gatherings, we witnessed that God had allowed us to experience not only quietness and rest in the Holy Spirit but also joy in the Spirit. The whole seminary community experienced renewal.

- **To Train for the Churches Excellent Leaders: Servant Leaders**

HKBTS is a spiritual learning community and our goal is this: To respond to the real needs of the churches and nurture a group of excellent future leaders grounded in the spirit of renewal, competent to live out their call to ministry and capable of blending and balancing their call to be both servants and leaders. We are convinced that such leaders can stand firm in the midst of the strong, competing currents of the day. We are also convinced that

these leaders can lead the churches to witness for Christ in diverse cultural contexts where they proclaim the gospel of Christ through their words and their life styles.

This goal determines the direction toward which we are now heading and it shapes the Seminary's instruction, its research study and its ministerial training. As a body, the Seminary faculty and the administration make every effort to nurture future servant leaders for the churches, enabling them to be excellent leaders, who not only express the characteristics of mature Christians: faith, love, hope, humility, truthfulness, and joy. Our purpose is also to prepare our students to develop theological wisdom and to apply such wisdom to their lives, especially in their roles as church leaders.

- **Strengthening Teaching Personnel in Biblical Studies Division • The MCS Program**

▼ *Three New Teachers:*



Dr. Alexander Mak Dr. Tony Sher Dr. Sam Tsang

Thank God that he has led Dr. Alexander K. S. Mak, Dr. Tony H. K. Sher and Dr. Sam S. H. Tsang to join our faculty team this year. Dr. Mak, our Assistant Professor of the New Testament, is a graduate of the Australian College of Theology. His research has centered upon Biblical Greek, the Pauline Epistles and Narrative and Rhetorical Criticism. Dr. Sher, Visiting Assistant Professor of the Old Testament, is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. His research has dealt with the Hebrew Bible and the Books of the Former Prophets. Dr. Tsang, Associate Professor of the New Testament, is a graduate of the University of Sheffield. He

continues to do research in Empire and Roman Religion Research, Epistolary Rhetoric, Pauline New Perspectives and Preaching. In the mean time, Dr. Clement Shum, formerly Visiting Assistant Professor, has changed to Assistant Professor of the New Testament.

These teachers have brought new dynamics to our entire faculty team and strengthened the teaching personnel in the Biblical Studies Division. Their presence will help us to construct a practical theology with biblical vision, shape students' character and spirituality grounded in God's Word. It will further strengthen our commitment to nurture our students to go out as witnesses and proclaimers of God's truth.

We continue to revise the Seminary's curricula to meet the current needs of the churches. Beginning with the new school year, we have

launched a new program: the Master of Christian Studies Program. This program aims to train lay church leaders and staff in para-church organizations by equipping them with basic theological training. Then, in our effort to meet the needs of the pastoral ministry, we have made a small-scale revision of the Master of Pastoral Counseling Program. The result is that the spirituality dimension has been strengthened, enabling students to integrate spirituality elements into their pastoral counseling ministry.



▲ The newly launched Master of Christian Studies Program

Retrospect and Thanksgiving

Even as we look to the future and prepare to march forward, it is important that we reflect on the 2008-09 school year. We also count God's grace to HKBTS, thanking him for his faithful leading and provisions.

● Inauguration of the New President

In January, Professor Joshua Cho accepted the appointment from the Seminary's Board of Trustees and assumed his presidency to become the sixth president. Upon his shoulders falls the heavy responsibility of leading HKBTS forward. We thank God for choosing our Seminary's new president. We also thank God that his strong hand is still leading us as the Seminary sets out on its new voyage to prepare the future leaders of our churches.



▲ The Inauguration of the Sixth President

January 19 was the date for the inauguration of the new president. 1,200 people from the academia, churches and Christian organizations came to bring us their greetings and joined us as we proclaimed our witness to God's grace and guidance to HKBTS. The inauguration was an evening of celebration, filled with joy, gaiety and Christian love. Although the inauguration was cut short due to some unforeseen interruption, everyone present keenly felt God's presence. God continues to reveal his deeds and power in countless ways. He has led us to see and to be convinced that his love and presence remain strong and unswerving and that the churches continue to support the Seminary. HKBTS has now entered into a land of abundance. Today the whole seminary steadily strides forward.

● **Ministerial Training Program**



◀ *The 58 class of graduates from the Ministerial Training Program*

In the 2008-09 school year, there were 126 students who studied in our Ministerial Training Program. God has entrusted 32 new students to us while he has also led 34 students to complete their studies and commit themselves to ministry. In this spiritual learning community, not only do our teachers equip students by different ways and means, but students also learn through morning prayer meetings, chapels services and the co-walker project. They also grow through spiritual formation groups and activities organized by the Student Union. Students are encouraged and equipped to minister to one another, to keep a close watch over each other and to grow through mutual support in the Lord. In an effort to strengthen the ministry to our students, we have appointed an additional chaplain. Mrs. Cheung Ho Yuk-ling assumed her responsibilities as

<i>New Students</i>	
<i>Master of Theology Program</i>	6
<i>Master of Divinity Program</i>	10
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Studies</i>	9
<i>Christian Pastoral Counseling Program</i>	1
<i>Master of Christian Studies Program</i>	6
<i>Total</i>	32

<i>Graduates</i>	
<i>Master of Theology Program</i>	3
<i>Master of Divinity Program</i>	17
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Studies</i>	10
<i>Christian Pastoral Counseling Program</i>	4
<i>Total</i>	34

assistant chaplain in April this year. Mrs. Cheung has since begun to work with Chaplain Rev. Brian Lam in ministering to students and taking care of their spiritual needs.



▲ *The Spiritual Formation Group Meeting*

▼ *Student Union Activity: Parents' Day*



We especially want to encourage our students to build up their prayer lives. In this school year, the All-Seminary Prayer Meeting was strongly promoted and took place on the second day after the opening convocation as the whole seminary community came together to seek God's guidance and strong leadership. We have recently set aside a weekly, silent prayer and fasting meeting. This special gathering reflects the Seminary community's commitment to lead our students to develop a disciplined prayer routine and a rich inner life. Besides striving to be a seminary of prayer, HKBTS is also eager to be a singing seminary. So HKBTS's another emphasis is to nurture students' singing lives. We do this through the morning chapel, music lessons, our church music revival meeting, the seminary choir and the worship team. In fact, both faculty and students are becoming better singers as they train their voices and lead the singing. All in all, we are learning to experience the presence of God through music as we sing our faith.

▼ *Our Church Music Revival Meeting*



Practicum is another important discipline. In this school year, God has led our students to 83 different churches and para-church organizations to do their practicum. Through the practicum, they experience discipline and build up valuable experience in ministry. Besides, there are all kinds of regular topical seminars through which students exercise their minds and broaden the horizons of thinking and understanding. Last year's Baptist Heritage Week held from October 14 to 16 was one such opportunity. The theme was "Snapshots of

the Early Baptist Leaders in China and Hong Kong (II)." The Belote Lectures, a biennial lecture series, allow the seminary community and the Christian public to be exposed to a great theological mind. The recent Belote Lectures were held from February 10 to 12, 2009. The speaker was Prof. Glen H. Stassen, the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in California and he is a seasoned professor of ethics and a faithful Baptist churchman. The theme of the Morning Academic Lectures was "Christian Ethics as Incarnational Discipleship" while "The Sermon on the Mount as Transforming Initiatives of Grace and Deliverance" was the theme of the Evening Public Lectures. Prof. Stassen is a scholar who cares deeply about the world and is concerned that the Christian faith and ethical conviction be put into practice. Our students continue to reflect upon Professor Stassen's call to greater ethical responsibility and sharing of his personal struggle to implement his own principles.

▼ *Belote Lectures 2009*



This summer, some of our teachers and students found their horizons broadened as they went to Mainland China on an exchange visit. They were two such tours: The "Christian Music Tour of 'Hill Singers'" and the "Summer Visit and Exchange Tour to Jiangxi." Our students visited the minority tribes in the south western part of the Mainland and attended Jiangxi churches and met minority tribes in the region.



▲ *Summer Visit and Exchange Tour to Jiangxi*

Beyond our campus, God continues to offer opportunities for Christians to consecrate themselves to him and to learn more about the Seminary. These Christians are invited to attend the “Talk on Full Time Ministry” and the “Experiencing Seminary Life Camp.” The Seminary is blessed to hold Seminary Sunday Worship in 38 churches where our teachers are invited to share messages and inform congregations about HKBTS.



▲ *President Cho went to San Francisco to visit our alumni*

Further afield, President Joshua Cho went on a tour to Los Angeles and San Francisco where he visited the Chinese Baptist churches and our alumni. He was the speaker in a revival meeting, a topical seminar and a pastoral conference. While in the States, he met with the President of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and the Director of its Extension Department. He also met the Consultant of the Church Planting Group of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Together they explored the possibility of future cooperation. President Cho described this trip as representing the fruits of mature friendships with alumni and Baptist church pastors and ministers. Having feasted with our American friends, our president came home to the Seminary with renewed strength and joy and a new determination to lead the Seminary forward.

● **Lay Theological Education Program**

“Equipping the Laity and Shouldering the Mission” has always been the objective of Lay Theological Education Department. Faced with the rapid changes of our society, today’s education ministry must continue to diversify and remain current. LTED strives to meet the needs of churches and the lay Christians by providing a number of relevant programs which equip lay Christians to serve God in churches and be effective witnesses for our Lord in the marketplace.

In the last school year, LTED offered 10 programs allowing students to earn certificates, diplomas, bachelor and master degrees. The programs include Christian Studies, Lay Theological Training, Women Theological Training, Elderly Ministry, Youth Ministry, Childhood Ministry, Early Childhood Ministry, Sports Ministry, Mission Ministry, Church Administration and General Affairs. Last year, LTED launched the Childhood Ministry Program, providing training for those ministering to children aged from 6 to 11 at church or in school. The program provides a holistic and systematic

▼ *LTED: A Christian Ethics class*



ministry technique and also basic theology training for a ministry to children. There was an enthusiastic response to the new program as 80 applicants responded. Students come from different backgrounds: most being tutors involved in children ministry in churches, several kindergarten or primary school teachers and of course some parents concerned about their children's upbringing.

Apart from regular programs, we also organize a variety of topical seminars, equipping lay Christians to reflect upon their Christian faith in light of the current challenges of the world. Some of these topical talks were held in students' regular meetings. Through the input of Christian professionals, students broadened their vision and deepened their understanding. A total of 12 such talks were held over the past year. We thank God for the large number enrolled in our programs each quarter and for the participation in our seminars last year. The average number of students in the programs each quarter was 915 in the past while the total number of people enrolled recently in the programs and joining the talks each quarter averaged over 2,600.



▲ *LTED Graduation Ceremony 2009*

In the 2008-09 academic year, we had a total of 382 students graduating, including 6 in the Master of Christian Studies program; 21 in the Bachelor / Diploma / Certificate of Christian Studies programs; 355 in the non-degree programs. It is encouraging to see so many lay Christians devoted to equipping themselves despite their busy lives and many difficulties. We continue to pray that they will experience God's grace as they serve him in the churches and witness for the Lord in the marketplace.

And may God continue to use LTED as we join hands with local churches to equip more lay Christians to be our Lord's crack troop.

● **Distance Education Program**

The Distance Education Program provides correspondence and on-line study programs for lay Christians who are unable to attend regular classes due to their hectic modern lives or their frequent overseas trips. They can be quipped without the constraints of time and space and their study will benefit their church ministry. The programs offered include the following: the Certificate Program in New Testament Studies, the Certificate Program in Old Testament Studies, the Diploma Program in Christian Studies, the Diploma Program in Bible Studies, the Advanced Diploma Program in Christian Studies, the Advanced Diploma Program in Bible Studies and the New Testament Online Program. In accordance with each individual program design, we offer students individualised learning support: the assistance of personal tutors, tutorial lessons, an online resource room and topical lectures. Up to now, the total number of graduates has exceeded 290 and the average number of students enrolled each quarter is approximately 350. While students taking DEP are mainly from Hong Kong, more than 80 students are from overseas.

▼ *DEP: A Topical Lecture*



The Seminary provides learning opportunities for two groups with special needs. The first group is to the visually impaired. HKBTS and the Gospel Center for the Visually Impaired have cooperated to

offer the “Spiritual Light Project” to Christians with sight problems. The third class of Certificate Program in New Testament Studies of the “Spiritual Light Project” will have four students graduating. The first class of Certificate Program of Old Testament Studies has been progressing smoothly with 11 students enrolled. A second group is inmates of prisons. We collaborate with the Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association to set up the “Onesimus Project” for prison inmates who have come to know Christ while in correctional institutions. There are over 60 students enrolled in the diploma and certificate programs. We also thank God for the opportunities to cooperate with churches and Christian organizations to serve Christians in Mainland China. It is hoped that more Christian communities with specific needs can be built up through DEP.

The Theological Education Program for Filipino Leaders (TEFL), inaugurated in 2003, has had a class registration of over 1,200 in the six years since its beginning. All classes are conducted on Sunday afternoons for four quarters each year. There are, on average, 50 students enrolled in the program each quarter. The Bachelor Program of Theological Studies launched last July had an enrolment of 25 students. A Matching Scholarship program, established in 2006, is a one-to-one course fee matching scholarship. It is funded by the Seminary’s subsidy and church. A total of 145 students have been subsidized through this program. The third graduation ceremony for TEFL was held in June with 19 graduates receiving certificates and diplomas.

▼ *TEFL: The Third Graduation Ceremony*



● **Applied Theological Education Center**

The Applied Theological Education Center located at Bute Street, Mongkok includes the following two centers:

The Pastoral Continuing Education Center

As a result of re-engineering of Pastoral Continuing Education Center in January 2009, this program has further developed in two directions: (1) the Pastoral Continuing Education Program; (2) the Executive Training for Christian Leaders Program.



Launched in early 2004, the PCE program has had an enrolment of over 4,000 pastors and ministers taking courses and joining seminars. The most popular seminar series include “Dynamic in the Pulpit,” “Personality Analysis,” “Counseling” and “Current Affairs.” In the new school year beginning September 2009, the program has been revised with a consideration for the ever changing environment, the targeted ministers and the current needs of the churches. It is hoped that the new program will help in-service ministers deepen their understanding of their ministries, get a firm grasp of current information and open new ministry frontiers. The PCE program aims to cover four areas: Shepherding, Leadership, Pastoral Care and Theological Equipping. It places emphasis on deepening pastoral staff’s understanding of the Bible, seeking to put God’s word into practice in the modern age, and providing diversified and practical guidance to the Christian community.

The Executive Training for Christian Leaders Program, jointly organized by HKBTS and Peter F. Drucker Academy (Hong Kong), aims to nurture excellent talents in leadership among church ministers and Christian managerial staff in the

Christian community and in the society. Lecturers are Christians with years of executive experience in management and the lessons are conducted in the form of lectures, case studies and workshops. Students are led to use resources effectively, to make good use of personal strengths and to carry out their God-given mission with greater strength. Since the beginning of the program in October 2007, 53 people have graduated from the program. The fourth class will begin in October this year.



▲ *Executive Training for Christian Leaders: The Third Graduation Ceremony*

Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center

The center aims to instill in Christians a renewed understanding of worship based on the wisdom of the Bible, theology and church history. Moreover, by receiving diversified and integrative training in all sorts of art-forms, students can broaden their vision, scope and experience of their ministry and come to understand how to integrate arts in church services and other ministries.

In the 2008-09 academic year, over 10 courses were launched every quarter with an average enrolment of 200. These courses and workshops are theoretical-based and practical-oriented and they provide a variety of training for pastoral staff: For example, one is the “PowerPoint in the Church Series,” another includes courses such as “Integrative Vocal Training” and “Intensive Vocal Music Workshop.” These courses integrate music theory, sight reading training and the study of vocal music. Still another category is like the course

“Appreciation and Analysis of Indigenized Hymns Lyrics” which explores the relationship between local dialect and the composition and singing of hymns. The center also offers day and evening courses, which include vocal performance, keyboard music, music appreciation, choral music, conducting, Chinese and western musical instrument performance, dance, drama and theater, cinema and regional opera classes.



▲ *Teachers and Students of the Appreciation of the Songs and Lyrics of Cantonese Hymns class*

● **Library Resources**



Rankin Memorial Library

Thank God for granting our students a library so rich in resources, with a spacious and comfortable reading environment. Until August this year, the total size of the collection of our Rankin Memorial Library had reached over 105,000 items, including over 82,000 Chinese and English books, 9,400

audio-visual materials, more than 650 CD-ROMs, 1,300 periodicals and full text electronic periodicals, 5,100 bound periodicals; and 6,500 books and music scores are kept in ATEC at Mong Kok.

After adding the extension a few years ago, our library has become even more spacious than before, and the collections keep increasing steadily. Among all the seminary libraries in Hong Kong, our library is blessed with the largest collection. We owe this to God's grace and we offer him our hearty thanksgiving. It is our sincere hope that all these resources can practically help our students as they study and attend lectures and our teachers as they do research and prepare lectures. We want also to provide support for our alumni and ministers of Baptist churches in their continuing education and pastoral ministry.

● Publication

Through publishing the HKBTS's *Newsletter* quarterly in both Chinese and English, we regularly share our theological education development with local and overseas churches. In our *Newsletter* published last year, there were feature articles on "Voices of Our Graduates" and "New Students' Testimonies of God's Call" to allow our readers to know our students directly. We also share the vision of HKBTS in equipping "Future Servant Leaders" and the anticipation and practice of our seminary to become "A Seminary of Prayer" and "A Singing Seminary."

We also reported the "Inauguration of HKBTS's Sixth President" and President Cho's



"Journey to Los Angeles and San Francisco." Moreover, there are Faculty Sharing, Departmental Reports, News about the Student Union and Seminary News. The HKBTS's *Newsletter* is also posted on our website, allowing Christian brothers and sisters to log on at their convenience.

Hill Road is the Seminary's biannual academic journal first published in 1998. From deepening its root to growing up healthy and sturdy, *Hill Road* has become a garden extending outwards and providing an opportunity for our Seminary to have an intellectual exchange with Chinese churches and other seminaries. It is a thematic journal, with the themes of our recent publications being "Worship as Ethics," "Forgiveness" and "Theology and Psychology."



As for our book publication, our recent publications are: Prof. Joshua Cho's *Friendship of Heart and Spirit* (the first volume in our "Spiritual Theology Series"), Dr. Poling Sun's *New Testament Ethics* (the final volume in the "Church Ethics Series") and Dr. Samuel Tang's *Psalms of Different Genres* (the final volume of the "Psalms among Psalms Series").

A Call for an Offering

**If there are no seminary students today,
there will not be any ministers for tomorrow.**



We cordially request the churches to share the theological education ministry with us by supporting us and setting aside an offering in the church's budget for next year.

May the churches remember the needs of our students and your offering is of immense importance to theological education both now and in the future.

RESPONSE

Our church hereby pledges support to the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary:

- We will pray for the development of the Seminary's theological education
- We support the Seminary with a donation of HK\$_____.



Church: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail Address: _____