



Lutheran Theological Seminary News

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There's no business like church business ...

*When did the Church become a business
and the calling on our lives become a job?*

*When did the Lord become our servant,
rather than us giving service to our God?*

*When did our words become so empty?
It must have been when our opinions took his place.*

*When did our prayers become so selfish?
When it became only for our own gain
we chose to seek his face.*

Excerpt from a song by Jason Bellard

There's no business like church business ...

Hong Kong is a city, vibrant with people and commerce. Its market economy is among the most deregulated and competitive. In 2004, the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom ranked it for the 10th consecutive year as the freest economy in the world. Henry Tang, financial secretary at the time, commented, "We see the role of the government as a facilitator that provides a business-friendly environment where all firms can compete on a level playing field."

Except for the Philippines, Christianity is a minority religion in Asia. Many Christians tend to think of themselves as a subculture, or even a counter-culture, with a calling to establish the kingdom of God in society. Of course, society rubs off on the church as well. In Hong Kong, a major rub off is fervor; fervor for the pursuit of success and excellence, fervor for competitiveness, even fervor for the pursuit of fervor. Like the rest of the city, Christians seem forever busy and exhausted. You squeeze at least one evening class into an already tight schedule. You take naps on the subway in order to cope. After six long working days at a job you spend the rest of your time in Church.

Chinese Churches in Hong Kong are no Sunday morning churches but rather something like an extended family with which you spend all day, not just for worship and bible study or choir practice, but also for meals and leisure activities. However, the church is also a professional, even business-like, community on the move to expand and take the next step. Fund raising is a natural part of taking responsibility together, ministers don't hesitate to charge, and members are ready to pay, for bible studies and other activities, admission fees are perceived to indicate quality. The concept of the Church as a place of rest, acceptance and comfort for wearied souls, so prominent in the West, resides in the background. For many Hong Kong Christians, Christianity is about being on the move, about spiritual growth, about utilizing the resources of faith and advancing towards a higher calling.

Looking at numbers, the fervor pays off. According to The Christian Weekly, over the last five years Protestant churches in Hong Kong have been blooming with an annual growth rate of 6.2%, especially among young people. The number is drawing close to 300,000 (in 2004 it was 216,000) and most of them are actively practicing their faith. Togeth-

er with the 353,000 Catholics, Christians in Hong Kong make up 9.2% of a total population of 7 million. The growth is said to be due to an increase in the number of large congregations with more than 1,000 members, the development of youth work, and the integration of church ministry with worship services in schools and student outreach.

The growth strategy seems clear enough: you provide a competitive package for all ages and you will grow; you don't, and you will diminish or disappear. As young people have few, if any, denominational ties, there are no restrictions as to who can establish a new church. 'Hong Kong has the most deregulated church market in the world, a visiting professor to LTS observed/lamented recently. The appearance on the market of the Mega-Church seems to boost growth with its promise of high and professional standards in terms of facilities, parking, equipment, "stage" performances and childcare. Is Church business bad?

During a visit of a church delegation from a European country to LTS, a delegate put the question to our faculty: 'What is your role in society? How do you make your Christian voice heard in parliament, how do you affect policy decisions? The person who asked the question seemed suspicious of a tendency towards introversion among Hong Kong Christians. The question generated a few moments of awkwardness. Then one of our colleagues began to share about the social network that he is heading in his "free time," a network that employs more than 600 social workers. True, Hong Kong churches don't usually use the public arena to voice their opinions on human rights, democracy or minority concerns; however, a closer look reveals that Churches and church-related organizations in Hong Kong are on high societal alert when it comes to doing something about the shortcomings in society. They step in and fill many of the gaps that are passed over by bankers and the government. They provide social services for the elderly, rehabilitation centers for drug addicts, and shelters and assistance for domestic workers from abroad. The aforementioned social network is just one "small" example of how a Lutheran church in Hong Kong takes responsibility in and for society. Yes, the government distributes funds for these activities, but it is mostly Christians who accept the challenge of putting the funds to work. Citizens from all sorts of religious and societal backgrounds (continued on page 14)

President's New Year Greeting

by Simon CHOW Siu-chun

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." ¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 2:13-23

Dear Friends and Supporters of LTS,

All of us at LTS wish you a blessed 2011, and may the Lord of all abundance richly bestow on you His grace in the coming year.

It is exciting to be able to greet each one of you in the New Year, and we are thankful to what God did for us in the past year through your support. Just to mention a few of them: the enrollment of new students has been stable; the number of cooperation partners has increased; our team has been consolidated. At our Walkathon on Oct 31, 2010, close to eight hundred thousand Hong Kong Dollars were collected, which means that we are closer to have the resources to realize the study programs of the two candidates for faculty development.

Last week I preached on Matthew 2:13-23, and here I would like to share with you some of my thoughts from the same text.

When we look at the passage a bit more closely, we can easily recognize that it is divided into 3 units, i.e. 2:13-15; 2:16-18 and 2:19-23. The first unit talks about why Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt; the second about Herod's killing of the children in Bethlehem; and the third about the return of the Holy Family back to the Holy Land. In addition, all 3 units close with the same

statement, "This was to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet..." In Matthew's eyes, the Old Testament passages quoted here are fulfilled and everything happened according to God's plan. It is here I would like to draw your attention.

Matthew was written in 75-80 AD, so it is about 75-80 years after Jesus' birth. When Matthew looked back, he found that all events were accomplished according to God's will. If we look closely at the events mentioned in the passages, we can easily discover that nearly all of them were related to difficulties and miseries. They include exile, hunger, bloodshed, fear, insecurity and tears. However, Matthew saw in them the guidance of God.

Can this be our experiences as well? As we look back on our own past, can we come to the same conclusion, that the Lord has been leading us even in times of difficulties? Even more so, do we have the faith and courage to believe that what confronts us now and in the future is under the control of our Heavenly Father, who loves us with His eternal love?

I am comforted by the words of Matthew, and I hope they can be a comfort to you as well.

Dr. Chow, President of LTS and
Professor for New Testament.

Experiencing Cultural Exploration in Mission



The cross-cultural mission group in Concordia Theological Seminary

by Pilgrim LO

The Cultural Exploration in Mission program during the summer session of the spring semester 2010 was arranged to visit the Canton Union Theological College in Guangzhou and churches in Jieyang and Zhongshan. In previous years, visits were made to Pakistan, Indonesia and Vietnam. At those occasions, we noticed remarkable differences between our culture and the cultures of these countries. An important question on our minds was therefore: How about Mainland China and especially Guangdong province which is so close? Are there many differences between us and them? Now that the sovereignty of Hong Kong has been returned to China, now that we are all eating Chinese food and reading the same version of Chinese Bible, aren't we all very much alike? To our amazement, the cross-cultural experiences during this 11-day trip were abundant. Here are some glimpses from my perspective as organizer and leader of the group.

On June 21st, together with ten students of LTS, I took the direct train from Hung Hom to Guangzhou, where we arrived at around noon. Our first stop was Canton Union Theological College. In preparation of the trip, I had been asked by the College to hold a thematic lecture. On arrival, however, I was informed that I should give a four-hour class lecture on systematic theology to the fourth-year students. I felt in such a maze about this sudden and

unexpected request. At least, I was not assigned a specific topic. So I could still use the lecture "The Priestly and Worldly Ministry of Believers – The Reformation of Martin Luther" that I had originally prepared. Yet, how should I fill a four-hour session? I made some changes and extensions to my prepared lecture, but still there were another two hours to fill. To the best of my ability, I devised two additional lectures on the spot, one on "Systematic Theology and Theology of Life" and the other on "A Perspective on Luther's Theory of Sola and the Sacraments".

Two days later we took the train heading for the second stop. After six hours we arrived in Jieyang at about nine o'clock in the evening. The same thing happened again. I was asked to lecture for three hours to 50 graduates-to-be at the Theological Training Centre of Jieyang city. I learned that the theological foundation of the students of the Training Centre was rudimentary and most of them were preparing to serve in church ministries. So I gave a lecture with a focus on pragmatic contents under the title "A Systematic Theological Perspective on Prayer and Faith/Hope/Love".

There was a marked difference between the Seminary and the Theological Training Centre. Students of the Seminary had a better theological foundation and were able to pose questions, showing their knowledge in theology and mature theological training. Students of

the Theological Training Centre received the contents of the lecture in a more direct manner. Their interests were in church and missionary work. Yet they shared many of the common points, including hospitality shown to visitors and their interests in the conversation and conduct of the visitors.

In terms of educational background, there was a marked difference compared to Hong Kong seminary students. But there was a strong dedication to faith and service. In line with the Confucian tradition, there was much respect and willingness to obey pastors and seminary teachers. Schedules were tight and well organized in both places. Especially at the Training Centre, all students were required to attend the morning prayer at 5 am and another meeting for sing and praise at 6:30 am every morning. Then there would be a three-hour class and another three-hour class in the afternoon. After dinner, there was choir practice. They lived a simple life. Apart from the daily meals arranged by the cook, all other meals were "self-assisted." Compared to the life of Hong Kong seminarians, these students were really living a harsh life.

Sometimes it seemed to me that better planning could have lead to better efficiency. Everybody works hard, responds to needs and is quite flexible in dealing with various matters on the spot. For my own part, I

would have preferred to be informed of a proper schedule and about the actual expectations prior to the trip. It would have made preparation easier and I could have brought adequate learning materials with me. However, as servants of God, we also need to learn to trust God's sovereignty and to be ready for God's calling. I learned that "readiness for a task" might mean that there is neither a chance nor the time for preparation.

The mainland students I encountered impressed me with their energy and joy. Their standard of living lags behind that of Hong Kong in many respects. Their learning environment is less sophisticated than that of Hong Kong. Yet, there is a tremendous amount of learning ambition, sincerity of faith, and hunger for theological knowledge. Their dedication has the caliber of soldiers of Christ.

The experience of this trip was limited to two cities among a 1.3 billion strong population of China. As such it cannot represent the full picture of China. But for me, it was a challenging and meaningful cross-cultural experience.

Dr. Lo, Professor for Systematic Theology and Historical Theology



Pastors of Jieyang Church and mission group

To Comprehend the Circumstances of the Chinese Churches

Olivia CHEUNG
B.Th Student

During this year's summer holiday, two professors and ten students went on a 21-day long "Cultural Exploration in Mission Trip", arranged by Lutheran Theological Seminary. The trip had four main purposes:

1. To strengthen the adaptation capability of students in a foreign culture and to learn to respect other cultures in the wake of globalization;
2. To experience God's mind and the mission in His invitation to preach the gospel and to receive the vision of embracing the whole world as given by God;
3. To transform our knowledge by elevating our life to the service of sharing the gospel; and
4. To learn to trust God and succeed in team building under unfamiliar circumstances.

In the past, the mainstay of the Cross-cultural Missiology Experience Program was held overseas. This was the first time that a group went to Mainland China, which we all thought was very special, as while largely unknown to us, is also our Own Country. Soon we learned that China is a huge country with differences from one countryside to the next, that each specific area maintains special cultural characteristics and that there is quite some disparity from place to place.

Thank God that we had more opportunities to come to know the circumstances of the Chinese churches. We also wish that we would be more willing to leave our comfort zone and to be pastors with visions to embrace the whole world.



San Xiang Church
in Zhongshan

To understand the trends of development of theological education and churches in Mainland China

Polly WUN
B.Th Student

The cross-cultural exchange experience was very precious to me as I was able to go to Mainland China and experience the local culture and customs of the people, together with professors and other fellow students. I learned about trends in the development of theological education and about churches in Mainland China.

I wish that I had the opportunity to stay longer, so that I would be able to deepen my relationship with God during this trip of learning. I want to say thank you for another opportunity to experience the great love of God. Not only that I gained a deeper understanding of myself, I was also able to see how God used His love to attract people to come before Him and to receive His salvation.

We visited different churches and discovered that the pastors and co-workers in the cities of Jieyang and Zhongshan have been striving to their utmost to minister to their churches. Their devotion and life testimony has been a great example for us as seminary students, a motivation to pursue holiness and a challenge to be loyal to God and love everyone. I pray that the ministry of God's gospel will be more prosperous. Glory be to the name of God.



Pastoral co-workers at
San Xiang Church in Zhongshan



Ms. Cheung Po Chu
sharing with church co-workers in
Zhongshan

What is being revealed to ourselves? What can we do in respect of development of Christianity in Mainland China?

YUEN Tsui Ping
B.Th Student

Articulating my thoughts concerning the future of Chinese churches and theological education is impossible in a few lines. During this short term trip of 21 days, we visited some twenty churches and points of gathering in Guangzhou, Jieyang and Zhongshan and interviewed a number of pastors, church leaders and believers. As in Chinese saying, "to watch the leopard through a pipe," I could only gain a superficial knowledge in these areas, and don't dare to make any special assertions. It is probably more to the point, to follow another Chinese saying, "better to look at oneself than to look at others." Being exposed to God's work in Mainland China, what did we learn? What can we do to support the development of Christianity in Mainland China?

What I have learned:

There is no division of denomination of churches in China. While they inherited influence by different schools of theological thoughts, in the main there is no restriction of doctrine based on different camps, as is so common in Hong Kong. Cooperation is not influenced by un-called for traditions. We can definitely learn from our brothers and sisters on the mainland about the pursuit of unity.

The development of theology in Mainland China has been hindered due to historical factors. However, the abundance of resources across the country's deep rooted cultural inheritance and the contributions by many intellectuals and outstanding scholars seems to indicate greater potential than what we have in Hong Kong. Historically, here in Hong Kong, we have been following in the footsteps of

Western development. Christianity in Europe appears to have run into a cul-de-sac, so perhaps theology needs a new dimension to commence with. While Mainland China is still learning from Hong Kong, it is not necessary for them to follow suit in the stages of development. As Chinese have skillfully adopted the economic model of capitalism into the communist structure, it is therefore dubious that should not be able to construct their own particular theology. Honestly speaking, this is not to be accomplished in a few days. We cannot just be proud of the early development in Mainland China and enjoy a sense of superiority in a teaching role. In contrast, we should be humble in our observation and keep our eyes open.

In Mainland China, compatibility with Government policy is well looked upon. The advantage is to be aware all the time of the inseparable relationships between faith, country and society. We cannot distance ourselves from the people. Yet, when government policy makers deviate from the right track, is it doubtful whether the Church can still function as a prophetic voice. In the absence of political pressure, Hong Kong churches are lagging behind in response to culture and social participation. We sometimes even label politics as taboo. We should not forget that faith is not to be confined within four walls, nor preaching the gospel to the mere purpose of bringing people within those walls. In contrast, we should bring the gospel to the people and to look for Christ among the people.

There are remarkable cultural differences among different classes. While in Hong Kong we do not stress class, we have heard of some labeled as "notorious pastors" and "mega churches," denoting unseen classes. Notwithstanding all these topologies, such classes do exist in Hong Kong. This is the reality. As pastors and seminary students, we should always remember the reasons why God has called us, what He asks us to do. We should be vigilant of that and not be lost.



Home visit to church members in Jieyang



Outdoor fellowship



Traditional residence in Zhongshan

Great and Pleasant Discovery of Cultural Differences

Eric CHAN
B.Th Student

As we were about to visit Mainland China for the purpose of cross-cultural experience, we could not stop asking ourselves the question, "Is there any culture barrier that has to be crossed, even though Guangzhou is so close to Hong Kong?" In fact, I discovered that it is long way to Guangzhou, even though it is so close to us.

I discovered that ... they had special ways of receiving guests. They tendered the local fruits to receive us. In Chiu Chow, I discovered that every family, whether they are wealthy or poor, still have a set of tea utensils in order to be able to welcome guests with the "Kung Fu Tea" (i.e. Chiu Chow tea).

I discovered that ... they go to bed early and wake up early. They live a comparatively simple life. They do not have too many modes of entertainment nor ways of spending their spare time. At the Training Centre, all trainees would attend the Early Morning Prayer Meeting at 5 o'clock in the morning. Then at 6:30 am they would attend the Worship and Praise Meeting which included both spiritual exercises and physical workout.

I discovered that ... the requirements imposed on students are very different from us. For instance, I learned that the entrance examination covers the areas of news, history, politics, and biblical knowledge. It does not seem to be an easy task. If they intend to graduate with a curriculum certificate (i.e. B.Th), they are required to attend a Grade Four English exam and make an oral test. As we learned about how much more demanding the study conditions in Mainland China are than ours, we realized that our complaints are not always justified.

In recollection, the whole trip was a journey of grace and confidence. I discovered that the Lord is faithful and present in Mainland China and that knowing the Lord is not just a matter of theological knowledge. He is truly alive and present, and we are able to find him in our lives. Despite cultural differences, there is a common denominator, namely, that we believe in the same God.

Note: the editors are very grateful to Mr. Johnathan Lee and Mr. Wan Fook Gun for translating these articles from Chinese to English.



Xiao Lan Church in Zhongshan



Our student helping in church



Church leaders sharings



Church members at Tai Ping Church in Zhongshan



Picture on the wall in Tai Ping Church



Any meaning?

LTS is celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2013

Share your memories!



1913-2013



Dear Friends of Lutheran Theological Seminary !

In 2013, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. An Essay Collection tentatively entitled "Lutheran Theological Seminary 100 years – Personal Memories and Experiences" is scheduled for publication.

Looking back at a hundred years of seminary history, we are made grateful aware of all the LTS coworkers, students, alumni, and financial and spiritual supporters. Without your faithful partnership, the continuous development and growth of LTS, in times of success and difficulties, would not have been possible. Thank you very much!

At this time of celebration, we want your voices to be heard and your personal memories and experiences to be made available to the LTS community at large. We invite you, therefore, to contribute to a collection of essays that will reflect your individual recollections of the history of LTS, as you are part of that history.

Whether you are a teacher, a student, a staff member, a member of the Board of Directors or a coworker from a supporting Mission, we trust that you want to share about the role and function of LTS for your spiritual, academic and professional life, in days of sorrow and in days of happiness. This, we believe, can be an encouragement and a source of wisdom for generations to come.

In terms of themes, titles and contents we welcome your suggestions in the areas of campus life, life as a non-resident student, experiences from Daytime or Evening Program studies, memories of relationships between teachers and students, and between colleagues. We welcome reflections on your calling and academic learning, experiences of pastoral ministry, memories of incidents and events concerning the history and life at LTS from the perspective of the Board of Directors and of co-workers in supporting Mission organizations.

The length of contributions can be up to 1000 words, either in English or Chinese. Photographs are welcome.

Thank you!

Dr. Simon Chow, President of LTS

Cut Off Date: April 30, 2011

Contributions should be emailed to publication@lts.edu or sent to Editorial Committee of the "LTS 100 years – Personal Memories and Experiences", c/o, No. 50, Tao Fung Shan Road, Shatin, Hong Kong.

Report on Walkathon

Olivia CHEUNG
B.Th. Student



The 2010 Lutheran Theological Seminary Walk-a-Thon finally commenced amidst the “Dong! Dong! Dong! ...” forceful drum music by the brothers of the Rebirth Fellowship.

As in the previous years, we started our journey from the Tsung Tsin Secondary School in Shatin and walked up the hill to the Seminary. The young and energetic members walked at a fast pace while many were also taking along with them the older and very young members of their families. They were all chatting and cheering heading towards the destination. As there were more than 400 staff members and students of the Seminary, the road was full of people and the scene was very enjoyable. The autumn breeze, though slightly cool, could not deter the warm feelings in our hearts and the sense of purpose. We were delighted and joyful, just like the praise aerobatics of the Lutheran Women Fellowship, and we were also reminded to serve God with a loyal heart in the same way as the cadres of the Boy Scout and the Saint John Ambulance Brigade.

The notion of unity among brothers and sisters was manifest as we assembled at the Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School, as the sisters of the Lutheran Women Federation prepared delicious snacks for sale, and in the harmonious co-operation of the volunteer teams. When everybody arrived at the seminary, collections were handed to the Walk-a-Thon Committee. We surely believe that what was given was not only a monetary offering, it was a commitment from the bottom of our hearts. The international students, local students, as well as the professors, sang and everything contributed to the purpose of the Walk-a-Thon, which was to gather support for the training of faculty candidates for LTS. The goal of donations was set very high and we are so pleased to have come so close to reaching it.

I felt the love of the Lord in the sunlight at the top of To Fung Shan during the sunset. I felt immersed in God’s abundant grace. The strong drum beat from the inauguration of the Walk-a-Thon lingered in my ears and I wished for the beat to continue to echo in my heart. Not only that the passion will not fade away, but that it motivates me and others to continue to support the Faculty Development Program. “Dong.. Dong.. Dong.”

Reflection on the 97th Founders Day of LTS

LO Suet Fun
B.Th. Student



worship at the fish pond



tribal dance by South-east Asia students



evening activities begin with drum music



feather dance by local students



tree planting ceremony by President & Mrs. Hsiao



LTS Choir



Alumnus Sharing

Without previously knowing much about the history of LTS, I have now been studying at LTS and participated in four Founder's Days. I realize that there is a big difference between four years and ninety-seven years. LTS has been promoting and providing theological education for nearly a century, which tells me that God is preserving and guiding LTS. This 97th anniversary is not only a day of joy for faculty, staff members and students, but more importantly, it is also a day of giving thanks to God. Every year on the morning of this day there is a Eucharist worship that reminds us of the reason of our gathering for celebration.

On November 26, we gathered beside the pond, singing praises and listening to Dr. John LeMond narrating the history of LTS. We learned that the old library had been consumed by fire, which led to the establishment of the present library. This library has developed into one of the largest Chinese theological seminary librar-

ies in the world. My mind was filled with thankful words to our gracious God for his abundant love and care. This year, our ceremony at the pond was extra special as our president Dr. Simon Chow and Mrs. Hsiao jointly planted a tree. The saying goes: a tree grows to maturity in ten years, LTS grows to maturity in a hundred years. We hope that LTS will have more than another hundred years to train more servants of God.

Singing and beating of drums, professors, students and guests walked up to the chapel to start the Eucharist worship. During service, three graduates from different decades shared from their experience as students at LTS. One of them had been a member of the Student Association Committee and remarked how he had made frequent innovative proposals that the Seminary had responded to graciously and conservatively. The remark immediately spurred smiles from the audience.

As the sky gradually turned pale and colorful light-



culture introduction by Lao students



the 'Tao Fung Trio'- professors

thanksgiving worship



South-east Asia beauties!



enjoying buffet dinner



audience filled campus garden

ing was turned on, guests and friends of LTS began to gather. Everywhere, the campus was filled with laughter and talking. At about half past five, the cheering team, called "Drum Beating Up LTS" opened up the scene of the evening program. The team started from the pond, marching and dancing in resonance with the sound of drums to the stage just outside the Chapel. The team's structured pattern and its loud and lively shouts of "LTS" elicited a good atmosphere among the spectators. Then there was a series of genius performances, including a band show, first year students' recitations of the gracious love, feather-fan dance, international professors singing folk songs, and the international students performing a cultural show. The peak of this eventful program was the cutting of the birthday cake by the President Chow, to celebrate the theme of the day, "Happy Birthday to LTS!" Then, everyone enjoyed a tasteful buffet dinner, prepared by our chef, brother Fai.

At 8 pm, the thanksgiving worship of the 97th Founder's Day started, President Chow preached on Psalm 121, expressing his thankfulness to God who led and loved LTS throughout these years. The choir sang hymns and

a student shared with us how the Lord led her to LTS, on what she has learned at LTS, the sharing was filled with sweetness and genuineness. At the close of the worship, when the hymn "True Light Shines" was being sung, students presented guests with a crimson rose to show their gratitude for their support and encouragement. The 97th Founder's Day thanksgiving worship was concluded with joyous applause.

As students of LTS, we offer thanks to God for calling us to study in LTS, a seminary filled with love and grace. We sincerely believe and pray that LTS will continue on the path commissioned by God, training more servants of God.

Lo Suet Fun is former Chairman of Student Association

“unless *the Lord* **builds** the house...”

Dr. Wolfhart Schlichting has been revisiting LTS after 28 years. Back then, several of the professors that are now on the LTS faculty were among his students. Dr. Schlichting accepted the invitation to teach once more at LTS during the fall semester of 2010. He has now returned to his hometown Augsburg in the south of Germany, the place where Luther once stood and defended his obligation to abide by his conviction that salvation is by faith alone (sola fide). Dr. Schlichting leaves us with a reminder of the Lutheran heritage that brought back to the awareness of the Church worldwide that peace with God is not a bargain, but a gift, free and solely by grace.

by Wolfhart SCHLICHTING

Somebody who knows several Seminaries in Hong Kong told me: LTS is the most beautiful one among them. Indeed, if I compare LTS now with the Seminary facilities where I was teaching 28 years ago, I must say: In spite of feeling somehow nostalgic about the old campus, the new is an improvement.

28 years ago, I was only dreaming of buildings in traditional Chinese style that would show that Christianity has taken root in China, and indicate that it is no longer to be regarded as “just” a Western import. Antique temples in Athens or Rome were transformed into Christian churches since the 4th century after Christ, and now, we are teaching in rooms which resemble traditional Chinese Schools in order to witness that Christ is the one, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”(Col. 2:3).

At that time, somebody observed and told me that apparently the restless hustle and bustle of the business-minded great city somehow rubbed off on Hongkong pastors who seemed to be busy all the time. But now, the installation and the surroundings of the Seminary at Tao Fung Shan are inviting us to contemplation. Alongside their advanced studies, pastors may also be imbued with the calm and serene atmosphere on the ‘Lutheran Mountain’ in Shatin.

I appreciate very much the emphasis on spirituality, including the solemn opening and closing ceremonies in the Chapel, calligraphy, and the spiritual exercise of centered prayer. Likewise, I appreciate the emphasis on creativity stimulated by the international exchanging of traditions and experiences in Hong Kong.

But as the one who was in charge of teaching “Theology of Martin Luther,” I feel obliged to remind LTS of Luther’s warning about spiritual “works.” Spirituality is always on the ridge between receptivity and activity. Luther emphasized the passivity. We are dependent on God’s work.

Hiking on the Mac Lehos Trail one day, I reached the dam of the large water reservoir above Tsuen Wan and read the Latin inscription which is a confession of faith: “Nisi Deus, frustra.” It is taken from Psalm 127:1, “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” We should always have in mind that all our efforts in study, spirituality, counseling, and evangelism would be in vain without Him, and that in the end it is up to us to pray, “Your will be done,” and, please, make use of us, your servants.

Wolfhart Schlichting was Visiting Professor for Systematic Theology

LTS Annual Journal *Theology & Life*

The theme of the 33rd issue of the LTS Annual Journal *Theology & Life* is On Commentary, Its History, Writing and Reception.

Six contributions address the theme

Birger Olsson: What's in a Commentary? Some Analytical Reflections

Dieter Mitternacht: Jewish Bible Commentary: A Brief Introduction to Talmud and Midrash

Terence Fretheim: Old Testament Commentaries: Their Selection and Use

Jack R. Lundbom: Writing an Anchor Bible Jeremiah Commentary

Sam Tsang: Reading a Commentary from the Writer's Point of View: How understanding the writing process helps the reader

Jan Martin Depner: Questions for Those Who Preach ... : A Criterion for Biblical Commentary in the 21st Century from the Perspective of "End-users"

Two additional articles

Eberhard Jüngel: Belief in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (Chinese Translation by Josephine Leung)

Kin-ming Au: Enquiry on the Relationship between Man and the Nature from Buddhism and Christianity: A Religious-Ecological Dialogue between Nishida Kitaro and Sallie McFague (Abstract)

Forum for Contextual Theology

Karl-Hermann Mühlhaus: Christian Faith in Indian Clothes. A "Hindu Christian": Brahmobandhav Upadhyaya

Karl-Hermann Mühlhaus & Peter K.H. LEE: Sundar Singh: A Wandering Christian Sadhu

Open Forum

Raymond T.T. Chan: A Rhetorical Study of Compositional Structure of Jeremiah

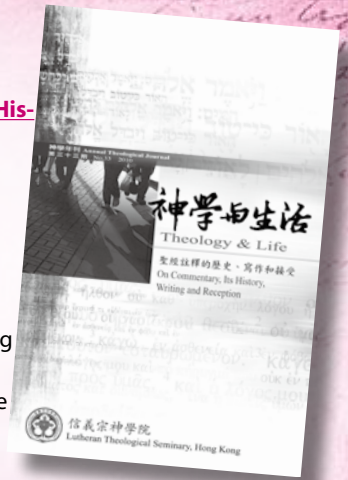
Yu-ho Chan: Renewal of Worship Liturgy: The Contribution of Hermeneutics (Abstract)

Ching-yung Kwok: "Putting oneself in another's position": the comparison between "loving your neighbor as yourself" and "helping others to take their stand as oneself wishing to take his stand" (Abstract)

Yat-Keung Mak: The Christian Tradition of Anointing: Theological Significance for the Elderly Ministry in Hong Kong (Abstract)

Gabriele Hoerschelmann: "... as if I were in his shoes": Biblio-Log: A New Way of Discovering the Bible Together

All articles are either written in English or in Chinese with an English abstract if written in Chinese. To place an order, please email to info@lts.edu



Editorial (continued)

recognize the quality of Hong Kong's hundreds of Christian schools and cue up to get their kids into one of them. Hong Kong has 16 Christian publishing houses, 57 Christian bookshops, and at least 15 seminaries and Bible institutes that are accredited by ATESEA (Association for Theological Education in South East Asia). Among these institutions for higher education, LTS stands out as one that attracts students from all kinds of denominational or non-denominational backgrounds, especially for the advanced level of studies.

In tune with the competitive environment and aware of LTS's special calling and qualities, the board and faculty are determined to continuously develop and improve the academic, practical and spiritual quality of the seminary. Beginning in the fall of 2011, LTS is expanding its degree programs with a Master of Arts in Diakonia, in order to respond to the need of theological and biblical, as well as professional training for social and community workers. LTS is also in the process of establishing closer ties of support

and cooperation with theological seminaries in Mainland China. The need for faculty development and the training of ministers who can nurture the rapidly growing church in China is immense.

One of the great pleasures of working at LTS is meeting young and enthusiastic women and men who train for ministry in a world hungry for knowledge and the meaning of life. Besides campus studies, our students participate in cultural and mission exploration trips in order to boost their awareness of opportunities and the challenges for ministry. As awareness grows, so also does the determination to analyze and compare. "Christianity in Europe appears to have run into a cul-de-sac," one of our students puts it bluntly in this issue of LTS News. Similarly, an observer from the "fading" Christian continent may find that the emerging Church in the East should focus less on the splinter in the brother's eye and more on concord between Christians. But then meekness may not encourage numerical church growth as much as competitiveness and fervor. **DM**

News and Dates

- Since the beginning of this year, LTS has two new teachers. Rev. Dr. Bas Plaisier has joined us as visiting professor of missiology and ecumenical theology. He is born in the Netherlands and has been a missionary in Indonesia for 7 years. Mrs J.J. Johnson Leese has joined us to teach NT Greek. She is from the US and is a doctoral student in New Testament Studies at Durham University, England. We warmly welcome our new colleagues.
- Rev. Christa von Zychlin, wife of our Professor Dr. Wayne L. Nieminen, is back to teaching pastoral theology. She has been a parish pastor and Christian educator for 25 years, and is now volunteering in prison ministry at Stanley Prison. We warmly welcome our returning colleague.
- On November 13, The Hong Kong Lutheran Women's Union invited President Dr. Chow, to deliver a sermon. The Union uses this event to raise scholarship funds for LTS each year. This year, the Union was also active in participating in the walk-a-thon fund raising event, which we are grateful for.
- On November 26, the 97th Founder's Day cum family day of LTS, family members and friends of students were welcomed and entertained on that day while visiting the seminary. They also participated in our meals so as to enable them to get to know that aspect of student life at the Seminary.
- On December 1, the Student Association convened a general meeting during which the chairman and vice-chairman for the year 2011 were elected. They are respectively Mr. Joel Wong Chi Tung, a 2nd year B.Th. student, and Mr. Matthew Kwok Hung Lung, a 2nd year M.Div. student.
- On December 15, president Dr. Chow hosted a farewell lunch for three departing visiting professors, Dr. Jack Lundbom, Dr. Jonas Jonson and Dr. Wolfhart Schlichting. We remember their teaching time and contribution in LTS with gratitude.
- On December 17, eight of our overseas students, together with some students from the Hong Kong International School, were invited by Church of All Nations to visit Jiangmen, Mainland China. The purpose was to experience the country and its culture. They have visited a local church, a girls school and interviewed a writer.

News Feed on Professors

- On November 8-12, president Dr. Chow visited the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and gave an intensive course on the Book of Revelation to a total of 81 students. Besides, Dr. Chow participated in discussions on matters related to the launch of the doctorate programmes.
- On November 10-15, lecturer Ms. Cheung Po Chu, participated in a triennial international youth camp which was jointly organized by LTS, Lutheran Norwegian Mission, the Hong Kong Lutheran Church, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong, and the Chinese Rhenish Church. The purpose of the camp was to train young Christian leaders, and enable them to know their counterparts from different countries and to support each other. The camp took place in the Duke of Edinburgh Training Camp at Tai Po and the theme of this year was, "Facing Storm, You Make Me Strong." There were a total of 29 participants and 5 of them were sent by LTS representing Laos, Indonesia and Cambodia.
- On December 25-29, Dr. Patrick Chan represented LTS at the annual general meeting of the Areopagos Council Meeting in Oslo, Norway.

Visiting Guests

- On November 3, a total of nine people from CCC/TSPM Shanghai visited LTS. This visit was organized by the HK Chinese Christian Churches Union with the objective of learning, view sharing, and promoting the linkage between Shanghai and Hong Kong Church organizations.
- On November 5, the archbishop of the Church of Sweden, Anders Wejryd, and 8 church VIPs have visited LTS.
- On November 15, a group of 40 teachers and students of the Norwegian School of Theology visited the Seminary and participated in the Morning Worship.
- On November 16, Rev. Peter Chow of the Lutheran Church of Canada visited the seminary and discussed with the President, Dr. Chow, and the Dean of Studies, Dr. Li, on matters of cooperation between LTS and the Canadian Lutheran Church.
- On November 18, Rev. Heikko Hiloo, the regional executive officer for Asia of the Finland Mission, and Ms. Elisa Nousiainen, chairlady of the Local Mission, visited LTS and

discussed matters of cooperation.

- On November 23, Klaus Koschorke, German professor of Church History at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) of Germany, visited LTS and delivered a lecture on The Reformation and its Global Expansion of Christianity in the 16th century. Professor Koschorke is one of the editors of the book, "History of Christianity in Asia, Africa and Latin America, 1450-1990: A Documentary History."
- On November 29, twelve people from CCC/ TSPM of Chongqing visited LTS. The visit was arranged by the Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union with the purpose of learning, view sharing.
- On December 4, chairman Dr. Raag Rolfsen and finance officer, Dr. H.Tune of Areopagos Mission visited LTS for discussion on cooperative matters.

Thinking of You

- On September 25, Ms. Joyce Chue, elder sister of English lecturer Ms. Rose Chue, passed away. May the Lord give peace and consolation to Ms. Chue and her family.
- On December 5, B.Th student Chenyi Roy Njuabe's elder brother, Ndefunjah Johnson Njuabe passed away. A memorial service was held on December 16 at Kowloon Union Church. May the Lord give peace and consolation to Roy and his family.

Leaving LTS

- Our library assistant Ms. Jennifer Chiu, left LTS in August. We thank Ms. Chiu for her long service and wish her good health in the years ahead.

Annual Sacred Music Worship

- The LTS Annual Sacred Music Worship will be held on **Friday, April 15, 2011, 8:00pm, at the Shamshui Po Tsung Tsin Church** (58 Tai Po Road, Shamshui Po, Kowloon). The theme of the worship is "**For His Love, we are Healed.**" The LTS Choir, under the direction of our faculty Ms. Mabel Wu, will perform different musical interpretations of "Love and Healing." The preacher will be our professor Dr. John LeMond. The sermon will be translated by our alumnus, Evangelist Mr. Cheung Chun-Ying. All friends of LTS and interested persons are welcome to join this special evening program.

New Publication

- The 33rd volume of the LTS annual journal "Theology and Life" has been published. (see p. 14)

Graduation

- If you want to mark down another important date in the year of LTS, please note that this year's Graduation Service will be held on Sunday, 5th June 2011.

Register for E-News

- LTS News is available at www.lts.edu. If you prefer to receive an electronic instead of a printed version of our quarterly newsletter, please email your NAME, CONTACT and EMAIL ADDRESS to development@lts.edu with the heading: "Register for E-News".

Scholarship Support Needed

- LTS will be able to welcome more students as financial resources become available. If you are interested in supporting a student, contact Rev. Hanns HOERSCHELMANN at LTS (intlstuco@lts.edu) or LTS, 50 To Fung Shan Road, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong (info@lts.edu). You may also contribute through "Friends of LTS – USA and Canada" by contacting Dr. Jerry SCHMALENBERGER (JLSchmalen@aol.com) 162 Pelican Loop, Pittsburgh, CA 94565 USA. Donation may be deposited in Dah Sing Bank, Account Number 040-645-701-23889 and return deposit slip to LTS.

Come and Visit LTS

- You are always welcome to visit us at Lutheran Theological Seminary, see the campus, meet students and faculty, and participate in campus life. If you or a group from your congregation would like to come, please contact us. Why not join our daily chapel service at 10:00am, stay for a tour of the campus and then have lunch with us at 12:30pm. Let us know what date works best for you.

A NOTE FOR READERS

Dear Reader of LTS News,

Please share your thoughts and ideas about LTS News with us.

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Please send any suggestions to assistant editor, Grace Luk,

50 To Fung Shan, Shatin, NT, Hong Kong,

or email to publication@lts.edu.

Thank you!