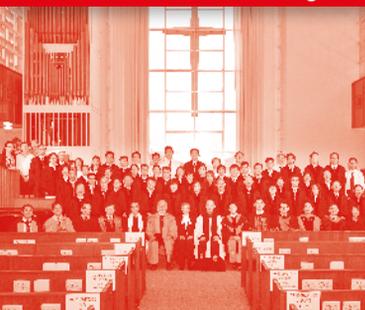




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# My Learning Experience in DISABILITY THEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

**Nancy Nam Hoon TAN**  
*Associate Professor*

I have begun recently on a journey of learning and thinking about Interpretation of the Bible for the Disabled. It started off at a very personal level and then, after following a year-long course in Special Needs, I started to read about Disability studies and theology and to ponder how Biblical studies are related and how they may contribute. Of course, there are already Biblical scholars who have been working in this arena since the 90s. In this article, I would like to give a brief introduction to the subject (which I will approach in a personal way) and to share why it is an issue of importance for all of us.

## From Special Needs to Disability Studies

First, how Special Needs (SN) become Disability Studies needs no explanation for those in the related academic fields but is necessary for the newcomer. My own starting point was to discover what is meant by SN. The classification or diagnosis of an individual with SN refers to one whose learning abilities do not fit with the general expectations of growth for her/his peers. These learning abilities include physical (e.g., learning to sit upright), social (e.g., learning to show acknowledgement when one's name is called), emotional (e.g., learning to process different feelings), and cognitive (e.g., learning and remembering names of things and writing) capacities. As such, SN covers a wide spectrum; further, the term relates not just to a deficiency in any of the areas above, but also an excess. Thus, e.g., a gifted child or a child prodigy is also a SN individual. For the most part, it is to the deficiency that the greatest attention is paid, and "learning disability" is sometimes used as a synonym. However, for many professionals, this is felt to be inaccurate terminology, and rightly so. This is because "learning" is usually taken to refer to cognitive faculties but while individuals may not have any problem learning cognitively, other physical or neurological conditions prevent them from the usual learning experience.

SN can therefore be congenital or acquired (e.g., after a serious accident, or stroke) and usually has long-term effects to adulthood. Extending the wide spectrum of SN as mentioned above, it should also be noted that some may have a physical impairment which causes learning in some areas impossible (e.g., the blind can only learn the written language through braille and not by sight). In addition, some difficulties are of a

neurological nature so that others can only discern them through their behaviors. Indeed, both these features could be present. For some SN conditions, individuals may be given external mechanisms to assist them to cope with learning life skills (e.g., special glasses and walking stick for the visually challenged) and in the case of others, they may be taught different ways to cope with learning skills necessary for survival. At the same time, there are also those whose cognitive ability is affected so that processing information even for learning simple life skills such as combing hair cannot be taken for granted. For most of these conditions, there is no cure, and in the majority of instances individuals discover alternative ways of doing things and learning new things.

The World Health Organisation (2008) defines disability as follows:

“Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.”<sup>1</sup>

In this definition, it is clear that disability is not just something that affects an individual, but also the society in which they live. Disability also can be temporary or permanent. For example, an individual may suffer temporary blindness due to a head injury, and becomes temporarily disabled until the nerve heals through rest, medication or surgery and the individual regains sight.

Therefore, SN can be understood as a subset of Disability, yet those gifted individuals with extreme IQ scores are not considered “disabled” unless they also suffer from one or more other conditions that qualify them to be so. As an academic discipline, Disability Studies takes account of SN individuals with deficient conditions.

## My Personal Introduction to SN

My own journey started by reading the books available in our library on Asperger’s Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder when my son was diagnosed with the condition. During the academic year 2013-2014, I took unpaid leave and returned to Singapore to rest and also to do an Advanced Diploma in Special Needs Education. My classmates on the course included those training to become SN teachers and counselors, but about half of us were parents, mainly mothers as well a few fathers, who shared similar reasons for doing the course in that our child/ren are SN. A most interesting feature was that for many of us our child/ren had already passed 18 years of age, and it was now that they had reached adulthood that we felt it was something we really wanted to do once we could manage the time and commitment for the course. This mutual understanding was a common bond and we greatly appreciated each other’s presence.

The course was an orientation to the wide spectrum of SN and in particular, the major conditions of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit/ Hyperactive Disorder (AD/HD), Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) and Sensory Integration (SI), all SN conditions which are common in Singapore. The purpose of the course was to train students to be allied educators, i.e., to support a SN individual cope in school and learning academic subjects as well as life skills. It included 30 hours of practicum where students were supervised in some of the SN schools in Singapore. I was deeply touched by the lives of the many SN individuals whom I observed and was assigned to assist, as well as by those of my supervisors, staff, my course lecturers, parents of SN and my classmates. They

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1. Cf. <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/> (accessed 17/08/15). It should also be noted here that definitions of the terms “impairment”, “disability”, and “handicap” continue to be under debate because of the political implications for the general welfare systems, etc. Cf., e.g., Steven D. Edwards, *Disability: Definitions, Value and Identity* (Oxford: Radcliffe, 2005).

reflected the diverse ethnic and religious population represented in Singapore, which underlined how all of us are affected by the suffering of humanity, albeit in different degrees of intensity. At the same time, we all shared the same compassion and hope.

### **The Aim: Quality of Life**

Because of the nature of the course, where most of the lecturers are practitioners in educational psychology, speech therapy, and occupational therapy, the emphasis on promoting the “quality of life” for SN individuals became primary. Quality of life here refers to the goal to attain independence in everyday living. However, I soon learned that this “independence” could also represent a different benchmark for different people. In the mainstream education system, it is the independence to thrive on the study materials that the teachers assign – because this is the everyday expectation for schooling children. But for the SN, it may just mean trying to cope with counting numbers correctly, or using the toilet facilities in the most hygienic way, or simply communicating appreciation to another human being. In general, it means SN individuals can improve their lives and attain a better state than where they are currently. I experience a profound hesitation in accepting this notion whole-heartedly, because it seems to me that somehow this definition of a “better state” is imposed on SN people by those of us who live in “able” bodies and minds, and or by a system (such as our education system); and it is our inherent rejection of their SN conditions which brings us back to the societal aspect of the definition of disability.

### **The Two Models of Disability**

My struggle with the notion of improving the lives of the disabled can perhaps best be explained by how disability has been viewed historically. There are two models: medical and social/minority. The medical model has been with us since time past, where societies perceive disability as impairment, like a disease and only medicine can cure or rectify the condition. The aim is to seek a cure through medication, rejecting the condition and viewing the individuals with disabilities as defective, a liability to society and community and unable to contribute to the greater good for the community. With the rise of “Disability justice” propagated by activists within the disabled community, the second model, the social or minority model, arose in the 1970s. Disability justice argues for the rights of the disabled to not be discriminated against so that they may share public space equally. They may go to school, work, take transportation and shop and do all activities like everyone else. They have the right to facilities in such a way that public resources may be equally accessible for them. This means infrastructures should take them into consideration and provide alternative structures of mobility and accessibility. The activists also fought for their rights to procreate, because in the nineteenth century, laws were made to castrate those who are disabled. The social model basically argues that it is society which is responsible for the stigmatization. If society does not treat the disabled in discriminative ways, there is no “disability”.

### **A Third Model: the Limit Model**

Recently, Deborah B. Creamer proposed a third approach, the Limit model.<sup>2</sup> She argues that all human beings have limits and each one of us, in our particular experiences, cope with our limits in different ways. Hence, “limit” per se, is not anything negative, but is a way of being realistic, accepting and appreciating the diversities and bringing creativity into our thinking about alternative means of coping with them. From a theological perspective, she argues that this third model takes into account the limitations of the two previous models, allowing, e.g., for individuals who have experienced the impairment of an organ to grieve and acknowledge the loss, yet at the same time to be able to live with the disability meaningfully and fully without marginalization from society.

2. D.B. Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities* (NC: Oxford University, 2008).

I believe that Creamer has articulated a helpful theological framework for Disabilities Theology and studies to work with, although current academia continues to reflect the struggle between the two older models. The Limit model is broad enough to accommodate the wide spectrum of disabilities and acknowledge the individual's experiences for becoming and being disabled. It emphasizes the humaneness of life and celebrates life as both fragile and resilient, which I feel are quintessential components for humanities subjects. And it is only through these factors that we can then articulate and appreciate the transcendent God.

At this point I would like to explain very briefly what Biblical Studies have contributed to the discourse on disability in the academia. There are a few landmarks: Saul Olyan's *Disability in the Hebrew Bible* which attempts to trace a scriptural description of all the disabilities from physical to cognitive and emotional; and the collected essays in these two books: *This Able Body* (eds. Avalos, et al) and *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* (eds. Moss and Schipper).<sup>3</sup> The authors of these writings examine passages in the Bible that mention and describe specific disabled conditions and reinterpret these texts in such a way as to reclaim dignity and respect for the disabled community rather than to stigmatize people as the early church did in using these texts as a means to deny them the right to be treated as a human being, or at best only as recipients of charity and compassion, otherwise to be ostracised. For example, the dumb are treated with contempt because the gospels depict the dumb as being in need of exorcism (Matt. 9:32; 12:22); and the blind and deaf as impervious to God's word (Deut. 28:29; Matt. 23:16-26); and those with skin diseases as barred from God's presence (Lev. 13-14). Some of these recent contributions also look into the extant regional literature, such as that of the ancient Near East and the Greek and Roman texts, to shed light on the biblical depictions. They are all illuminating and enlightening explorations, and most importantly they promote an openness to the possibility of readings from the point of view of the wide spectrum of "disabled" conditions that are generalized in the biblical texts. Hence, there is no one "final" interpretation – although each interpretation remains steadfast to the integrity of the language and contexts of the text. Most of the contributors to the volumes are names found at the forefront of such helpful interpretations, namely, Jeremy Schipper, Hector Avalos, Joel S. Baden, Sarah Melcher, among others. For my own part, I have recently begun working on a project to re-interpret "The Image of God in the Hebrew Bible for the Disabled" (Direct Grant, 2015-16).

### **Seminar for Institute of Disability and Theology (SITD) 2015**

Before concluding, I would like to share two experiences I had when I attended the SITD 2015 gathering, held in May at Atlanta, Georgia USA. It was my first time to attend this seminar. While most of the attendees were Christians, the committee had invited speakers who included non-religious, Christians, Jews and Muslims. Many of the speakers and attendees were disabled themselves, and some were activists; and like the classmates I had met on my course, we were all touched by disability in different ways.

In their sharing by the disabled present at the meeting, two things struck me: (1) **all** of them detest people telling them they must be or should be "healed" because it is part of their belief system and is necessary to testify to the greatness of their God/s; (2) whatever their condition is, it also makes them who they are and it is beyond their imagination that this should or must change when they "get to heaven". In other words, if they are deaf, they cannot imagine themselves in heaven not signing when talking to God, or if they are dependent on the wheelchair being without it. These factors made them who they

3. Saul Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Disabilities* (NC: Cambridge, 2008); Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher and Jeremy Schipper (eds.), *This Able Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Candida R. Moss and Jeremy Schipper (eds.), *Disabilities and Biblical Literature* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

are and what they have become. They do not deny that some want to be able to speak or walk or run again or have a “healed body”, and of course they may continue to hope for that; but there are those who think otherwise. To hear these two voices from their personal stories moved me and left a profound mark on me.

The second experience occurred when we all had to board the public transport that took us from the hostel to the site of the seminar. As mentioned, there were many participants who were disabled in different ways and with different types of assistive instruments to aid mobility. While some of us helped them to board the bus, the bus driver had to leave her/his driver's seat and personally ensure each safety belt was fastened correctly and safely before driving us to our destination. This inevitably took time, but all of us were patient and friendly. I pondered deeply about how some of our societies have distorted our reality by putting away people with disabilities so that they are not seen in the public, or they only have special transportation so that they are “discretely” dealt with and the rest of the world would not feel imposed upon by their presence with regards to time and space. Consequently, many of us do not know how to react, help or respond appropriately in a humane way when we see a disabled individual. We do not understand or appreciate when an individual has a meltdown, for instance, or what we can do to help because the general public at large has not observed the person since their childhood and throughout their daily lives.

Our society has blinded us to the reality of humanity, and we live in a constructed world where we do not have the time, energy and inevitably any heart to see, touch, or share our space, time and lives with those who have different abilities and who function differently from us. We become impatient and apathetic, dismissive and discriminative towards individuals with disabled conditions. We deem them an inconvenience and a liability to society at large.

### **Concluding words...**

Even if we would not take thought for Creamer's remark that “should we all live long enough we would all be disabled”, it is imperative for us to think about disabilities for the mere fact that we are all human beings. And if we believe in a transcendent God who suffers with, and also helps, us in our limitations, all the more do we need to re-think and re-articulate how our messages, our biblical interpretations and our theology can become such that they affirm the dignity of all humanity and cease to be discriminatory; how we can listen to the experiences and struggles of Christian identities and recognize how Church dogmas and traditions limit their expression; and how we can strive for justice where oppression and inequality towards God's creation are imposed.

What I have shared here has barely scratched the surface of the subject. Among the disabled groups, I find the most difficult group to understand are those who are severely intellectually challenged by virtue of the fact that many of them have limited expression of their thoughts in a way that we can comprehend. Thus, it is hard to speak for them and their needs. This profound silence speaks of the deep spirituality and creativity that God wills his creation to appreciate and embrace.

Finally, I hope all of you who have read this article can appreciate my learning journey in this area and be encouraged to join me, not only to study diligently, meditate and pray earnestly, but also to make the effort to understand and learn, to be actively present and share your time, space and lives with those who are differently abled than us.

Nancy Tan volunteers regularly at the Wai Ji Christian Service.

# A John the Baptist On a Wheelchair

– Cheng Hoi Kit( 07 MDiv)



Thanks to an accidental opportunity, Hoi Kit knew his wife, and they got married. Now they have a son.

September 1993, Cheng Hoi Kit, who was a sophomore in the U.S., met with a car accident in a church trip and his central nervous system was injured, resulting in paraplegia. Hence this 19-year-old young man could not live without his wheelchair and he lost his focus in his life immediately. "My faith saved my life!" exclaimed Hoi Kit resolutely. After treatment, he slowly recovered and adapted his life to all kinds of inconvenience caused by paraplegia. During the entire recovery period he had a more intimate relationship with God, and 10 years later, he did not expect he would respond to God's call and dedicated his whole life to serving the Lord. A deacon of his church recommended him to study in the program Master of Theology at our seminary and he graduated in 2007. Since then, he has worked as a preacher at Ma On Shan Chapel of Unity Church and Leung Faat Memorial Church under the Church of Christ in China (CCC).

## Strive for the Benefits of the Disabled

Now that his lower limbs were disabled, how should he carry on with the rest of his life? Should he develop his career in sports like Cheung Wai Leung who became a wheelchair fencer? Or should he continue his academic study? After returning to Hong Kong, he pondered a lot about his future. He finally completed his college and university programs in Hong Kong. Upon graduation he worked as a planner at the Social Welfare Department



Now, Hoi Kit is often invited by different institutions to share his own experience to witness God's Word.

helping the disabled to use computer and Internet so that they would not be marginalized by the Digital Divide in this ever changing information era. During his spare time he also sought out for the benefits of the disabled, e.g. adding lifts at subway stations, and introducing buses with lower steps and so on. When he had intended to stay in the status quo, he felt the call from God. After he received the confirmations he needed through prayers, he went to the Divinity School of Chung Chi College in 2004 to get equipped.

## John the Baptist on a Wheelchair

Having left the Social Welfare Department, Hoi Kit came to Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), to embark on his theological studies. The first thing he did was to look around the environment including the classrooms and other facilities of CUHK to see if it is suitable for his access with wheelchair and try to offer his opinions to CUHK. In the early period of the school year, Hoi Kit lived in the dorm of CUHK instead of the dorm of the seminary where lifts were not equipped, nor was there a slope for the disabled to access. Rev. Lo Lung Kwong, the former director, discussed with CUHK about how to make the campus more accessible for the disabled.



Before the traffic accident, Hoi Kit had already become a Christian and attended church activities regularly.

After overcoming some difficulties, the wheelchair slope access were finally installed at the seminary building so that Hoi Kit can access the lobby and enjoy being part of campus life, especially the Thursday worship and evening activities together with the seminary faculty and students.

"Hardware support is important. Here I would like to thank Rev. Lo for building a proper slope for me." For his convenience, a dorm on the groundfloor was arranged for him. Hoi Kit felt uneasy to such special arrangements and he felt embarrassed yet gratitude for all the trouble caused to the university, the seminary, the faculty, and the students. "Later on, during a devotional, I felt an inspiration that all these arrangements could be considered as paving a road for other disabled people who will come to Divinity School in



Friends lift Hoi Kit upstairs together and Hoi Kit put aside his own insistence. The two made a beautiful picture.

the future. Other disabled students will also benefit from my suggestions," said Hoi Kit with a smile. "Maybe in the future a famous theologian in a wheelchair will come out from this seminary, who can study without these inhibition of facilities at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, all because of the road I have paved for him like John the Baptist who paved the road for Jesus.

### Attention! Here comes the kind-hearted!

With hardware ready, software cannot be ignored either. "By software I mean the support from others and also myself." With such experience, Hoi Kit speaks out for the disabled. "We may encounter hardship, but sometimes we really don't need other's help!" claimed Hoi Kit with a wry smile. However, others are always very enthusiastic and eager to offer a helping hand. He learned how to roll down one step of the staircase in the rehabilitation centre, and the trick is to control the wheelchair with hand and have his gravity centered on the two rear wheels. When the front wheels rise slightly, he geared the rear wheels to roll down one stair, and then lean forward to put down the front wheel. But one time when he was rolling down, a kind-hearted soul saw the two front wheels of Hoi Kit's wheelchair rising up, was startled and rushed to hold down the armrest, resulting Hoi Kit falling off and hit the ground. Consequently, two persons had to help Hoi Kit to get back into his wheelchair. How embarrassing!

When asked how should schoolmates and neighbors help the disabled, Hoi Kit's answer is simple, "Ask them. Do you need a hand? Of course they themselves should also be open-minded, and let others help them when needed." Hoi Kit remembered not long after he just received his driving license for the disabled, one time while he was in the driver's seat preparing his wheelchair, suddenly a person on the road ran up and offered to help. He thought in his heart: "If I cannot handle my wheelchair myself, how can I drive out?" Then he waved his hand to indicate a refusal. Whenever he thought of this, he still cannot forgive himself: "If my behavior has caused, that person to refrain offering help to those in need, wouldn't that be a pity?" Therefore, He now believes that people should be encouraged to help others in an appropriate way, and the disabled should also adjust their mindset, to not discount the help they might need and accept others' offer when in need. "Now, if somebody comes to me offering help, I will smile and hand my bag to them and let them do me a little favor."

### A Beautiful Picture

Last summer, Hoi Kit has an opportunity to visit Taiwan together with the young people of Leung Faat Church as a missionary. Although he has informed his physical limitations in advance, one church in the itinerary is not accessible with wheelchair to the fifth floor. He decided to forego this activity and would wait outside for his friends. But the brothers and sisters would not leave him alone and they strongly encouraged him to go with them. They lifted Hoi Kit and his wheelchair separately upstairs. Hoi Kit's feeling was rather complicated after being lifted by the people to the meeting room. Besides gratitude, he was also full of complaint, remorse and guilt. "Pan Leilei, a fellow theological intern student comforted me, she said she only saw a beautiful picture, like the four friends who hanged down the paralytic from the roof to see Jesus." Such kind words opened Hoi Kit's mind and he deeply grasped at that moment, loving each other is mutual, when one side is willing to love, the other side has to be willing to be loved; only through this, there can be a testimony of love.

### Complete Ministry

Hoi Kit mentioned that last year he represented his district church to visit Malaysia to participate a meeting for the integration of the disabled into church life. In that meeting a speaker conveyed an important message: "If an inclusive society (church) does not provide facilities for both the healthy and the disabled, such society (church) is incomplete, or this is a disabled community, not that the disabled persons are incomplete." Hoi Kit pointed out that compared with other buildings, the church building and altar should be designed to be more public and inclusive. When our seminary was designing a new sanctuary, Hoi Kit took his initiative to express his opinion to the designer. Now the altar is only one step higher than the ground so that the wheelchair users are easier to access the altar.

"I believe when both hardware (suitable facility and equipment) and software (mindset of self and others) are ready in society (church), the disabled will become abled." Hoi Kit expects the moment when the healthy and the disabled are integrated — all children of God can praise and worship together.

Thanks to an unexpected opportunity, Hoi Kit got to know his wife, and they got married. Now they have a son.



Representing Hong Kong, Hoi Kit went to Malaysia to attend a meeting on the integration of the disabled into the church life organized by the World Mission, where he is benefited a lot.

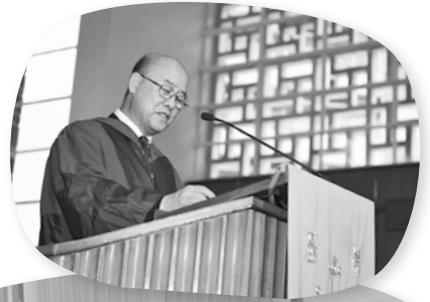
Interviewed and written by: Li Kwong Ping

## News on Divinity School

### Theology Day 2015

Theology Day Celebration 2015 for degree students was held on November 7, 2015 (Saturday) at Chung Chi College Chapel. More than 700 people including guests, friends, pastoral workers, faithful supporters, teachers, alumni, students and their family members participated in the Thanksgiving Service. It was our honor to have Elder Prof. Wong Fook Yee, President of Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong to deliver the sermon.

In the Service, we honored the 87 degree graduates and welcomed a total of 94 new students to the academic year 2015-2016. The Thanksgiving Dinner after the Service was held at Fo Tan Joy Cuisine Restaurant and a total of 30 tables were arranged for more than 360 participants to enjoy the dinner.



### Theology Day for Diploma Programmes 2015

Theology Day Celebration 2015 for Diploma Programmes was held on October 10, 2015 at Chung Chi College Chapel. Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang, Director of Divinity School of Chung Chi College delivered the sermon. More than 180 people including graduates, professors and guests joined the Thanksgiving Service. There were 74 graduates from Advanced Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies, Dip. Prog. in Christian Life Education, Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies and Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies (Mainland Clergy and Laity); and 106 new students from Advanced Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies, Dip. Prog. in Christian Life Education, Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies and Dip. Prog. in Biblical Studies (Mainland Clergy and Laity).



## An International Conference on JING JIAO

An International Conference on JINGJIAO co-organized by Divinity School of Chung Chi College, Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences and School of Chinese, The University of Hong Kong was held from June 10-12, 2015. Prof. Samuel Lieu of Macquarie University was invited as Keynote speaker on "From Rome (Daqin 大秦) to China (Zhongguo 中國)—the Xi'an (Nestorian) Monument as a Bilingual and Transcultural Document". It was sponsored by Louis Cha Fund, The University of Hong Kong; Mr. Steven Ho and Mrs. Yvonne Choi (In memory of Mr. Ambrose K.C. Choi). University of Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong was the co-event organizer.



## A Conference on

### "Christian Women in Chinese Society— The Anglican Story"

The conference was organized by the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong; Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Ming Hua Theological College; and the Divinity School of Chung Chi College was held from June 26-27, 2015 at Theology Building. About 100 people participated the event. The Keynote speakers were listed as follow:

- i) **Prof. Kwok Pui Lan** (The Episcopal Divinity School): The Study of Chinese Women and the Anglican Church in Cross-Cultural Perspective;
- ii) **Dr. Jane Lee** (HKSKH Social Welfare Council): Hong Kong Anglican Women and Social Service;
- iii) **Prof. Judith Liu** (University of San Diego): "A Nation Cannot Rise Above Its Women": The Social Gospel at St. Hilda's School for Girls, Wuchang, China, 1929-1937.



## News on Divinity School

### Summer Camp for Sacred Music and Worship

A Summer Camp for Sacred Music and Worship was held at our School's Chapel from July 20 to 24, 2015 and there were 150 participants. The camp was hosted by our School, and jointly organized by Hong Kong Church Music Association and the Chaplain's Office of Chung Chi College.



### Logos in Chung Chi Lecture Series

A Public Talk on "Localism: To Fear, or, To Feed It? A Historical and Theological Interrogation" delivered by Profs. Ying Fuk Tsang and Simon Kwan Shui-Man, was held on December 11, 2015 at the Chinese Methodist Church. There were about 230 participants.

### The OPEN week

The Open Week was held during October 26 to 31, 2015 to provide potential students a week of learning experience of classroom teaching. Participants can sign up to audit different lectures based on their own interest. About 81 people joined the Open Week.

## Ecumenical Seminar

"Reconciliation in Faith: Joint Seminary Ecumenical Seminar" (co-organized by Divinity School of Chung Chi Collge, Lutheran Theological Seminary and Holy Spirit Seminary College) was held on October 23, 2015 at the Chapel of Divinity School. Six Denominational church representatives shared their views on *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. About 200 people attended the event. The representatives were listed below:

- Rev. Wong Kam Man, Simon**  
(Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong);
- Rev. Tai Ho Fai, Nicholas**  
(The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong);
- Rev. Chan Tak Cheong, Wilson**  
(The Methodist Church, Hong Kong);
- Bishop Chan Au Ming, Andrew**  
(The Anglican Church, Hong Kong);
- Rev. Ng Shan Ho, Donavan**  
(International Pentecostal Holiness Church);
- Rev. Tang Tai Wing, Calvin**  
(The Church of Christ in China).



## News from the Centres



1. An international conference co-sponsored by Centre for Christian Studies and Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture and co-organized by the Department of Religion and Philosophy, Hong Kong Baptist University and Centre for Sino-Christian Studies on "Ultimate Concern: Paul Tillich, Buddhism, Confucianism Conference" was held from July 12 to 13, 2015 in Hong Kong Baptist University. About 50 scholars participated in the event.



2. Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang, Director of the Divinity School and Associate Director of the Centre for Christian Studies, delivered a public lecture on the topic "The Chinese Church under the Storm of the Demolition of Crosses: Forced Demolition, Guarding and Defending of Rights" on August 24, 2015 at Ward Memorial Methodist Church. Rev. Wu Chi Wai was the respondent. The lecture was co-organized by Centre for Christian Studies, CSCCRC, Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement and Christian Times. About 300 people joined the event.



3. Prof. Brian Stanley, Professor of World Christianity and Director, Centre for the Study of World Christianity, School of Divinity, The University of Edinburgh, delivered a public lecture on "Christianity and Nationalism: Friend or Foe? Reflections from East Asian Experience in the Twentieth Century" on October 6, 2015 at HSKKH All Saints' Cathedral. Prof. Francis Ching-Wah Yip, Director of Centre for Christian Studies was the respondent and Dr. Yam Chi Keung was the interpreter. The event was co-organized by Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CCS and CSCCRC. About 80 people attended the event.

4. A Public Lecture co-organized by the Society for the Study of History of Christianity in China and Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, CUHK on "The Politics of Cross Demolition: A Religio-political Analysis of the 'Three Transformations and One Demolition' Campaign in Zhejiang Province" was held on October 14, 2015 at Chung Chi College Administration Building. Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang, Divinity School presented and Dr. Lui Hing Hung, Otto, Christian Communication Limited responded. About 50 people joined the event.



## Centre for Quality-Life Education (CQLE)

1. "Hong Kong-Taiwan Citizenship Leadership Exchange Tour 2015" organized by United College (Kowloon East), Centre for Quality-Life Education and Stella Maris High School was led by Dr. Roger Cheng Hon Man from June 30 to July 9, 2015 to Hualien, Taiwan. About 38 students joined the tour. This tour aims to educate the concepts and dynamics of History, Culture and Citizenship.
2. The 5th Youth Conference on "The influence of Social Media to the Youth on Self Construction" was organized by Centre for Quality-Life Education and LPD Educational Foundation on August 1 in LT3 Yasumoto International Academic Park. The Youth Conference aims at improving the critical thinking and self-reflection on the societies for Form 4 to 6 students through public formal debate.
3. Life Co-walk Programme (1st phase) coordinated by Dr. Roger Cheng Hon Man began on August 29, 2015. Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang (Director, Divinity School of Chung Chi College) and Prof. Kung Lap Yan (Director, Centre for Quality-Life Education) were the keynote speakers in the opening Ceremony. The programme aims to carry out "Family, School and Church oriented Life Education" mainly for Form 6 students and their co-walkers. About 50 people joined the event.

# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

## (May 2015–January 2016)

### Office in News

Miss. Kristy Kwok Ka-Ki has been employed since August 24, 2015. Miss. Kwok is responsible for the operation of teaching programmes and administrative support for all alumni-related programmes and activities.

### Director in News

Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang went to Wenzhou, China for the period July 7 to 10, 2015 to conduct field investigation for his research project.

Prof. Ying was invited to Singapore from August 12-15, 2015 to be the speaker for two public lectures: "Already but Not Yet: The Churches in China at the Crossroads". The public lectures were organized by the Baptist Theological Seminary, Singapore.

He also went to Shanghai, China on September 16 to 17, 2015. He was invited to give two lectures at the Centre on Religion and Society of East China Normal University.

He then was invited to Shanghai, China to give a lecture at the Department of History, Shanghai University on September 18, 2015. After that, he went to Hangzhou during October 18 to 20, 2015 to conduct field investigation for his research project.

He was invited to attend "Christianity and China in the 21st Century: An International Conference" which was organized by Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto on October 22, 2015. Prof. Ying presented a paper on "The Politics of Cross Demolition: A Religio-political Analysis of the 'Three Transformation and One Demolition' Campaign in Zhejiang Province".

He was invited to be the keynote speaker of "The Eleventh Annual International Conference on the History of Cultural Exchange: Imperialism, Colonialism and Globalization" which was organized by Department of History, Fujen Catholic University on November 20-21. The topic of Prof. Ying's presentation is "From Cultural Invasion to Religious Infiltration: Rethinking the Relationship between Chinese Communist Movement and Christianity."

He was also invited to attend "International Conference on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the China Inland Mission" which was organized by the Graduate School of Religion, Research Centre for Chinese Christianity, Chung Yuan Christian University on November 20-21. Prof. Ying presented a paper on "The Mighty Men in the midst of Great Change: Yang Shaotang in the Early PRC, 1949-1951."

He as invited to attend "The 6<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Symposium on Sino-Christian Studies" which was organized by the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, Hong Kong and Shanghai Tongji University on November 29. Prof. Ying presented a paper on "Y. T. Wu's Reflection on the Reconciliation of Christianity and Communism in the Early PRC (1949-1954)"

### News on Professors

Prof. Grace Tsy En Wu has joined Our School as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the 1st term of 2015-2016 to offer Christian Counselling (THEO 5945).

#### Prof. Eric Kun-Chun Wong

Prof. Wong was appointed as Adjunct Professor for the University of Heidelberg and University of Cordoba.

From July 27 to August 1, 2015, Prof. Wong was invited to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of SNTS in Amsterdam. Prof. Wong presented a paper on "Opening the Greek World to All".

#### Prof. Kung Lap Yan

From July 31 to August 7, Prof. Kung visited the Department of Religions in Cape Town in South Africa. He delivered a public speech on "The Definition of 'Public' and 'Private': Religions in China".

From September 25 to 27, 2015, Prof. Kung was invited to the University of Durham to attend a conference "Ecclesiology and Ethnography" and presented paper on the topic "Practical Theology in The Chinese Reformed Tradition: Researches in 3 Churches."

#### Prof. Nancy Nam Hoon Tan

From November 20 to 24, 2016, Prof. Tan went to Atlanta to attend the SBL Annual Meeting. She presented a paper on the topic "Negotiating Interpretations of the 'Image of God' in the Hebrew Bible for the Disabled and Special Needs".

### **Rev. Prof. Tobias Brandner**

Rev. Prof. Tobias Brandner led the Accreditation Team from ATESEA to visit the Union Theological Seminary (Philippines) for the period August 16-19, 2015.

He was invited to Bad Boll, Germany from October 1-3, 2015 to attend the annual Congress of The German Society for Mission Studies. Rev. Prof. Brandner presented a paper on "Missionaries as Critics of the Home Committee".

### **Rev. Prof. Lo Lung Kwong**

Rev. Prof. Lo was invited to Sydney, Australia by Chinese Theological College Australia from July 24-26, 2015 to be the speaker for "2015 Dr. Hing Yiu Mok's Theological Lecture".

Rev. Prof. Lo was invited to New Zealand from July 31 to August 6, 2015 by Hong Kong Bible Society to promote the Revised Chinese Union Version (RCUV) Bible. Rev. Prof. Lo conducted lectures on bible and biblical studies at the Chinese Mission Church and preached at various local churches such as Life Christian Church — Spring of Grace, Chinese Baptist Church, Alliance Christian Church, Chinese Mission Church and AKL Taiwanese Presbyterian Church at New Zealand.

He was also invited to Changsha, Hunan, China by the Hong Kong Bible Society for the period September 20-22, 2015 to teach at Hunan Bible Institute. Then he was invited to Phnom Penh, Cambodia from October 18-21, 2015 to be the speaker for the Conference of Doulos Mission & Spirituality Academy, Tree of Life Missionary Network.

Rev. Prof. Lo was appointed as Adjunct Professor for School of Literature, Capital Normal University. He delivered a speech on "Biblical Studies and China" at the appointment ceremony on October 22, 2015.

He was also invited to attend "Bible and Literary Interpretation: The International Academic Conference 2015" which was organized by Capital Normal University and sponsored by our School during October 22-24, 2015. Rev. Prof. Lo presented a paper on "The Contribution of Robert Morrison's translation of Bible: Romans 3:20, 28".

He was invited by Trinity Theological College, Singapore for the period October 25-27, 2015 to be the examiner of a D.Theol (ATU) candidate.

### **Dr. Leo Kwan-Hung Li**

He was invited to attend "Bible and Literary Interpretation: The International Academic Conference 2015" which was organized by Capital Normal University and sponsored by our School from October 22-24, 2015. Dr. Li presented a paper titled "There was a certain man..." — The Literary Technique, Theme and *Leitwort* Translation in The Opening of the Book of Samuel".

### **Dr. Marina Xiaojing Wang**

She was invited to attend "2015 War and Peace International Colloquium : Religious Perspectives" which was organized by Alliance Bible Seminary on October 30-31, 2015. Dr. Wang presented a paper on "Church-Mission Relationships of the Church of Christ in China during the Sino-Japanese War: A Case Study of the Co-operative Missionary Projects in West China (1939-1945)".

From November 19 to 22, Marina was invited to present paper in a conference organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Science. The paper is titled "The London Missionary Society, Cheng Jingyi and the Course of the Independence of the Mishih Church in Beijing (1910-1920)".

### **Obituary**

Prof. I. Howard Marshall, a renowned New Testament scholar of University of Aberdeen, passed away on December 12, 2015, at the age of 81. We extend our deepest condolences to Marshall's family. May God bless them with comfort and peace.

Prof. Howard was the Chairperson/President of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research, the British New Testament Society and the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians. In 2006, he was invited to be the keynote speaker on the topic "Aspects of the Atonement" in the 2006 Chuen King Lecture by the Divinity School.

# Other News

## The Term Commencement Service

The service was held on September 10, 2015 at the Divinity School Chapel. Rev. Dr. Lam Sung Che, President of The Methodist Church Hong Kong was invited to deliver a sermon. More than 280 participants attended the service.

## Term Commencement Camp

This year the theme was "Awakening". It was held from September 3 to 5, 2015. There were a total of 123 students, lecturers and professors who participated (including 17 students joined the Day Camp). The camp took place at the Hong Kong Baptist Assembly.

## The 9th Annual Pastoral Conference

This year, the theme for the 9th Annual Pastoral Conference was "Preaching and Teaching in a Pluralistic Milieu". It was held on September 15-16, 2015. A total of 14 local pastors and theological scholars were invited to share with the participants their views and opinions in the conference. More than 250 pastors and church leaders joined the workshop.



## Church Visits

Church visit was arranged on November 29, 2015. Our professors and students visited The Hong Kong Council of Church of Christ in China Mandarin Church, Ma On Shan Methodist Church, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui The Church of The Epiphany, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Tsuen Kwai Church and Pentecostal Holiness Church Rousseau Memorial Church.

## Gospel fund-raising concert

A concert jointly organized by our School and Aineo Music, featured by Aineo Gospel Choir and a band called "takh-oo" was held on January 30, 2016 at Sir Run Run Shaw Hall, CUHK. Gospel Music is the music combined with European hymns and traditional African music which is originally created by native Africans who were brought to America as slaves during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Net proceeds of the concert will be donated to the "Chung Chi Theological Education Fund" of The Divinity School.

## Summer Intensive Course

A summer intensive course for the Diploma Programme in Biblical Studies was held during July 6-16, 2015 at the Theology Building for 89 pastors and lay leaders from China.

## Notice about establishment of

# **“The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited” for conferment of degrees**

With the support of the Board of Trustees of Chung Chi College and Theological Council, “The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited” (Company Number: 2274469) was officially established in August 2015 under the Companies Ordinance. The arrangement of incorporation had been noted by the Senate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). All the degree programmes which are offered by our School and conferred by “ATESEA Theological Union” (ATU)<sup>1</sup>, including Bachelor of Divinity (BD), Master of Theology (MTheol), Doctor of Theology (DTheol) as well as Master of Ministry (MMin, a newly-launched programme since 2014), are now conferred by “The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited” with immediate effect.

Degree programmes including BD, MTheol and DTheol offered by our School and conferred by ATU, have long been accredited by the “Association for Theological Education in South East Asia” (ATESEA). ATESEA is an internationally-renowned and broadly represented organization providing accreditation service to its member institutions. It is also well-recognized by the theological schools in the region. While all course content and educational quality of the aforementioned study programmes remain unchanged, the programmes will continue to be accredited by ATESEA in spite of the change in the degree awarding authority from ATU to “The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited”.

Since Master of Ministry (MMin) is a new programme, our School is applying accreditation for it with ATESEA.

We are going to submit an application to the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to seek accreditation for the Bachelor of Divinity (BD) programme.

Students who are pursuing non-CUHK degrees at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College have been registered as associate students of CUHK. Therefore, all degrees awarded by “The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited” will follow the same arrangement of student status in CUHK.

We are going to apply for a license to remove the word “Limited” in the name of “The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Limited” in accordance with the regulations of the Companies Registry.

**Divinity School of Chung Chi College  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
26 October, 2015

1. The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, SEAGST has conferred degrees on our graduates of Bachelor of Divinity (BD) since 1972. Starting from 2009, ATESEA has been restructured and renamed as ATESEA Theological Union (ATU).

## Tainan Study Tour

A study tour to Tainan, Taiwan for the course "THEO5952 Special Topics on Theological Studies I: Study tour to Taiwan" was conducted for the period January 4-10, 2015. The tour was led by Dr. Yam Chi Keung.



## Worship and Sacred Music Teaching Fund

Our School has received a donation of HK\$1,000,000 from Dr. Choi Lee Wai Lai Margaret in support of "Worship and Sacred Music Teaching Fund". A cheque presentation ceremony was held on November 7, 2015 during Theology Day.

## Other News

### The Divinity School of Chung Chi College Financial Report (2014–2015)

Income	HK\$ 000	Expenditure	HK\$ 000
Chung Chi College Board of Trustees	1,830	Staff Salary	9,935
Pommerenke Foundations		Visiting Scholars	2,427
		Furniture and Equipment	51
<b>Donations:</b>		<b>Administrations:</b>	
Alumni	170	Advertisement	132
Supporting Churches	5,848	Office Entertainment	44
(The Church of Christ in China, Hong Kong Council, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong, The Methodist Church, Hong Kong, The Anglican Church, Hong Kong Pentecostal Holiness Church)		Overseas Travel/ Conference Grant	9
Overseas Churches	8	Postage and Telegram	193
Individual Parish	586	Printing and Stationery	288
Sundry Donors	438	Student Activities	76
Associate Student's Fee	4,901	Theology Day	85
Administration Service	576	Administration Fee for the non-CUHK student fee	950
Others	45	Student Work Fund	76
		Miscellaneous	248
		Maintenance of Classrooms and Offices	259
	<b>14,402</b>		<b>14,697</b>
		<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(295)</b>