

December 2022

Dear Prayer Partners,

Entering into December, we are reminded that the year 2022 will soon come to end. The old is leaving and the new is coming. With a grateful heart, let's count the Lord's blessings, and offer thanksgiving to God. Having experienced the past social upheaval in Hong Kong, the three-year pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine causing casualties and refugees to emerge everywhere, the further contraction of the economy, the immigration wave with hundreds of thousands leaving Hong Kong that impacted the church in Hong Kong, etc., all these have been testing whether our gratitude, like that of the world, is only subject to good circumstances. In fact, our attitude of gratitude often reflects our spiritual condition. In the past, Paul and Silas were able to sing praises to God at night when they were in prison (Acts 16:19-34). I sincerely hope that we embrace this kind of spirit today and know how to give thanks in all circumstances.

Let's give thanks for the seminary, including:

1. Results of Accreditation

The quinquennial review conducted by Asian Theological Association (ATA) from October 24 to 27 was smoothly completed. Thank you for your prayers. Seven of our degree-awarding programs have successfully gained accreditation, these include:

- (1) Doctor of Ministry*
 - (2) Master of Theology
 - (3) Master of Divinity
 - (4) Master of Arts in Biblical Studies
 - (5) Post-graduate Diploma in Biblical Studies*
 - (6) Master of Arts in Christian Education*
 - (7) Post-graduate Diploma in Christian Education*
- (*New program for first-time accreditation)

We are grateful for our board of directors, faculty, staff, students and alumni for their time and active participation. I would like to thank God for our faithful colleagues, especially our Academic Dean, Dr. Josaphat Tam who diligently devoted a lot of energy and time to coordinating and leading the entire accreditation process and meticulously prepared all the required documents. Representatives of

the Asian Theological Association appreciated the family-like atmosphere of our seminary, and also the close relationship between teachers, staff and students. For all these, we give great praise to the Lord.

2. The Situation under Epidemic

During these days, Hong Kong has over 10,000 confirmed COVID cases each day. With no exception, some of our teachers and students were also diagnosed during this period, and a family member of our student even passed away due to the diagnosis. In addition, some students face difficulties in family, internship, assignments, personal life growth and interpersonal relationship. It is really challenging to be a seminarian and church leader today. But I am grateful to learn that students were taking all these difficulties seriously, and the teachers trying hard to care for and shepherd the students. I am also grateful for the overall spiritual atmosphere of the seminary. And, with God's grace, we are still able to maintain face-to-face teaching this semester.

3. The Wonderful Grace under Financial Pressure

When we purchased the current campus in Mei Foo in 2018, almost concurrently the Sino-US trade war started, followed by the social upheaval in Hong Kong, the severe epidemic situation, and the recent rapid increase of interest rate together with other negative factors. The fact that we are not being able to sell our old campus in Kowloon Tong coupled with the necessity to repay hundreds of thousands of interest to the bank every month, have indeed caused great pressure on our financial situation. But thank God, in addition to the sale of No. 15 Cumberland Road, Kowloon Tong last year, which was then offered by the purchaser to Hong Kong Theological Seminary for use at no cost, we have also experienced many encouraging responses from Christians as well as other supports from churches and funds, etc. It is God's grace to us that we can continue to operate as usual today.

Please also pray for the needs of the Seminary, including:

1. The seminary has entered another wave of retirement of board of directors and faculty. I pray that the Lord will prepare us pious and intelligent directors, as well as teachers who can be role models of good pastors, possessing orthodox beliefs and academic accomplishments.

2. This year, we have more than 20 participants in our dedication fellowship. We



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will also hold a three-day two-night dedication camp in early January (please recommend this for us), and pray that the Lord will guide those He called to our seminary to receive theological training.

3. Please continue to pray for the sale of the old campus so that we can repay all bank loans and loans from our supporters as soon as possible.
4. I personally plan to retire in the near future. I ask the Lord to prepare a suitable successor, and also to guide me in the direction of service after retirement.

Thank you again for your faithful prayers for Evangel Seminary. I wish you all

Merry Christmas
Give thanks in all circumstances

Together we serve,

KWOK Man-chee
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