

The Divinity School of Chung Chi College in the Chinese University of
Hong Kong
50th Anniversary Celebration, November 2, 2013

Memories and Hopes

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At the beginning in 1967 there were three major challenges:

1. to create a new curriculum acceptable to the Senate of the University and the members of the Theological Council.
2. to find new students who were qualified to enter the University and also qualified to become ministers and biblical teachers here in Hong Kong and elsewhere
3. to increase the number of Chinese professors to teach in the Theology Division.

These three challenges have obviously been achieved. In the present there are many good programs of study. Many many good students have graduated and done outstanding work in churches and society. And, the Chinese professors of the Divinity School are excellent professors.

What about the future?

In 1974 I asked the Holy Carpenter Anglican Church to make a wooden cross. I would now like to present this cross to the Divinity School, and I will refer to it for some comments about the present and the future of the school.

This cross is different from most crucifixes because it shows Jesus alive on the cross and saying his last words from the cross. The last words of Jesus on the cross are an important reminder to Christians of what Christianity is about.

Jesus last words remind us of what the Divinity school is doing and what we hope it will do in the future.

On the cross Jesus said “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” Jesus is about forgiveness. No community can exist or survive without forgiveness. We know this is true of the community of the Divinity School now and we hope that in the future the School will be a place of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Again Jesus said at one point “I thirst.” His thirsting on the cross was undoubtedly physical, but in the Beatitudes Jesus spoke of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Hunger and thirst are powers that shape our life. What the students and faculty and supporting churches thirst for determines what the Divinity School will be in the future. They can thirst for knowledge, for understanding, for peace and justice and as Jesus said, for righteousness. His promise is that they will be filled.

On the cross Jesus told his mother to go and live with John. Jesus was looking after his mother. The Divinity School is a place now where people look after each other. Here, the lost sheep, the lonely ones, are befriended, wounded ones are healed, the blind are helped to see, the deaf are encouraged to hear, the dumb are taught to speak, and many kinds of weaknesses receive compassionate looking after. The Divinity School is and will be a place of human kindness where people are looked after.

Jesus spoke to one of the thieves who were being crucified with him and said “This is the day you will be with me in paradise.” It was a message of good news and hope for that thief. For 50 years the Divinity School has been preparing students to carry the message of hope and gospel to the World. This will go on.

Jesus said at the end, “It is finished.” It was a sigh of thanksgiving. “Thank God it is done.” Today there are many things for which the Divinity School can say thank God it is done.

- Thank God the School has been established in the University.
- Thank God the students have studied hard and have graduated.

- Thank God the professors have done their work so well.
- Thank God the Churches have supported the Divinity School as they have.
- And we can also say Thank God it is not finished.

So much of what has been accomplished will go on. Thank God.

Finally, Jesus gave a great cry of distress. “My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?” It was the most difficult time of his life. And then, Jesus said his last words: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” There have been difficult times for the Divinity School in the past. Some of you will remember them. We never know when the most difficult times will happen to us but they can happen. And Jesus last words show us his way to be in those difficult times. He committed his spirit to God. He did not know for certain what would happen to him. But he trusted and he was raised to new life. We hope and pray that, regardless of the difficult times that the Divinity School or its students and faculty face in the future, there will be many times of new life;

- new life marked by forgiveness,
- healing,
- thirsting for the right things,
- proclaiming the gospel,
- caring for students,
- thanksgiving,
- trusting and
- commitment of the spirit to the providence of God.