

Charismatic Seminary Becomes University, Prepares to Expand Global Reach

The King's College and Seminary, one of the first charismatic seminaries founded on the West Coast, announced its university status Sunday during graduation ceremonies held at its main campus in suburban Los Angeles.

School officials said they met accreditation requirements to achieve university status several years ago, but proceeded with the name change this year to enable what is now known as The King's University to expand its international outreach.

"The increasing possibilities for international influence are flowering around us all the time," said Jack W. Hayford, ., a former president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and founding pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif. "In many nations, the term seminary is just not understood or known. ... The communications clarity that comes through the use of the term university is rather pivotal at the international level."

The King's University currently offers modules in Hong Kong and conferred its first degrees there this year. The school also has specialized programs in Messianic Jewish studies, and hosts a two-week summer session at England's Oxford University, with the next course scheduled for Aug. 9-21.

That international outreach could grow further with recent opportunities for the university to host courses in Israel and develop educational partnerships in South Africa. "There are increasing open doors, notably with the spread of Internet studies today," Hayford said.

Housing what may be the first Pentecostal-charismatic seminary

on the West Coast, The King's University exists to prepare leaders to make disciples who will "penetrate" the marketplace, their homes and their cities, Hayford said.

"If you don't shape new believers into disciples, then that's all you get is believers," he said. "The penetration of the church comes through disciples. Not just merely people who claim faith, but people who learn to live and to grow in the power of the Spirit and the stability of a disciplined life."

Since it was founded in 1997, nearly 1,000 students have graduated from The King's University, with roughly 800 students enrolled each year at one of its three U.S. campuses and online.

The university offers one-year certificates in biblical studies and Christian ministry, an associate's degree in Christian ministry, a bachelor's degree in theological studies, master's degrees in practical theology and divinity, and a doctoral degree in ministry. It also sponsors the School of Pastoral Nurture, a weeklong mentoring session Hayford leads nine times a year with 30 to 45 pastors.

With the name change, university leaders plan to expand the school's worship ministry offerings and develop business management, Christian counseling and communications programs.

"The King's exists to equip Spirit-filled, Spirit-formed and Spirit-empowered servant leaders," said Paul Chappell, Ph.D., executive vice president and chief academic officer of The King's University. "It obviously focuses on folks in vocational ministries but recognizing the vision, the dream was to reach out to include leaders going into whatever vocation God was calling them."Â

On Sunday, 86 students received degrees under the school's new moniker. Honorary doctorates were awarded to Robert Morris, pastor of Gateway Church near Dallas and the commencement speaker, and Jean Darnall, a veteran healing evangelist and

missionary who was mentored by Foursquare founder Aimee Semple McPherson.