

# AGST-MST Update

For informed  
prayer

[www.agst-mst.org](http://www.agst-mst.org)

January  
2009



*The greatest thing anyone can do for God and [people] is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray.*  
(S. D. Gordon)

## 5<sup>th</sup> birthday to celebrate

AGST-MST celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. Along with rejoicing in the encouragements of our first half decade will come the opportunity for our member institutions to review the original consortium agreement signed in 2004, and to make a commitment to the next period.

- Praise God for AGST-MST's development since 2004 – and ask for God's clear perspectives and priorities for our future.
- Pray for our member institutions reviewing their ongoing participation in AGST-MST. (See the list of current members on our website [www.agst-mst.org](http://www.agst-mst.org))

## AGST-MST programs update

### Recent MTh modules...

In November, modules for both the MTh(Theology) and MTh(Education) programs were conducted.

*Theology and pastoral care* was conducted at Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary in Penang, with ten AGST-MST participants (joined by five MBTS students), facilitated by Dr Sunny Tan (who is also director of the AGST-MST theology programs).

*Educational leadership in Christian faith communities* was conducted at Bangkok Bible Seminary, with the cohort of seven AGST-MST participants, facilitated by Dr Pieter Theron (a South African serving in Mongolia). This was the final module for the current cycle of the MTh(Ed.).

Leaving Thailand was a challenge for the MTh(Ed.) participants, as the conclusion of their sessions coincided with the closure of Bangkok's international airport by protestors. A van was hired to get the participants to Phuket Airport (arriving at



2.30a.m. – see left). Several were then able to fly out to Malaysia/Singapore, while others took several days to undertake the l-o-n-g

bus ride to Singapore. Meanwhile Pieter and Haniki Theron had a harrowing few days in Bangkok, before finally leaving, and getting to S. Africa to start a delayed well-deserved holiday with their family. The prayers of many were greatly appreciated over these exhausting days.

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Please email [admin@agst-mst.org](mailto:admin@agst-mst.org) to request to receive this tri-annual AGST-MST update regularly. We will appreciate your partnership!

## 'Work in progress'

### ... MTh(Theol.) module in March

The on-campus sessions of the next MTh(Theol.) module, *Theology, philosophy and world views*, will be conducted at Bible College of Malaysia March 2-6, facilitated by Dr Ng Kam Weng.

### ... ongoing MTh(Ed.) work

After completing the assignments for the six modules, the MTh(Ed.) participants are moving into the thesis/project phase of their program. This is a special challenge, involving self-discipline and clear thinking to see their research through to a good conclusion. *Pray for them!*

► *Pray too for three students from the first cycle of the MTh(Ed.) program who have a deadline fast approaching to submit their thesis/project work.*

### ... and our PhD candidates too!

At one end of the doctoral study process, Rosalind Tan (Malaysia) has just received news that she has passed her dissertation examination, and is now working on the required revisions. At the other end of the process, Samuel, from Indonesia, has just been accepted into the PhD(Ed.) program, and we are actively looking for a supervisor(s) for him.

And at different places in the middle of the process are our PhD(Theol.) candidate and five other PhD(Ed.) candidates. They too need discipline, clear thinking, and the ability to find the necessary resources for their research.

► *A way to 'earth' your prayer for our students, in both the education and theology programs: Consider 'adopting' 1-2 of our students/candidates for the duration of their program, to pray specifically for them and encourage them through occasional contact. Dr Allan Harkness will willingly give you names. Email Allan at [dean@agst-mst.org](mailto:dean@agst-mst.org).*

## The wider AGST connection

AGST-MST is one of four entities which are part of the collective 'Asia Graduate School of Theology', the post-graduate 'arm' of the Asia Theological Association.

The annual meeting of the Asia-wide AGST Council takes place on 18 February in Manila, with AGST-MST represented by its dean, Dr Allan Harkness. One of the agenda items will be to discuss a name which reflects our AGST-MST regional membership, spanning countries beyond Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

► *Thank God for the opportunity for the collaborative ventures in post-graduate theological education expressed through the AGSTs in Japan, the Philippines, S. Asia, and us.*  
► *Pray for collegial discussions and good outcomes at the Asia-wide AGST Council meeting (18 Feb.)*

## Projects for prayer and provision



An answer to prayer from our previous update: We are delighted to have a well-qualified accountant from

Johor Bahru, Ms Chit Moi, to help us design and implement our financial systems.

► *Thank God for Chit Moi's willing partnership. Pray for clarity for her as she comes to understand our unique needs and sets up appropriate systems.*

### Website development

This year we would like to redevelop our website for the next phase of our ministry, to allow for students' interactive space and for secure on-line administrative and resource tasks.

► *Pray that we may locate a competent website developer, who could work with us on this; and dedicated support gifts for the development.*

### On-line theological resources

The ATLA Religion Database is a major resource for theological research – but it is prohibitively expensive for our individual colleges to subscribe to. So a subscription for the AGST-MST consortium would be a great value-added item for our research resources. We will need a sponsor(s) for this – US\$6000-9000p.a. (depending on the options included).

► *Ask God to provide a sponsor for a subscription to this ATLA database, if it is right to proceed with such a financial outlay at this time.*

If you know anyone we may be able to speak to about these projects, please contact Dr Allan Harkness ([dean@agst-mst.org](mailto:dean@agst-mst.org); tel. 65-6778-5141.)

## Money matters

We thank God for his provision for AGST-MST's financial needs in 2008 – and trust him to continue to do so into this year, especially as the impact of the global economic challenges kicks in for our support partners.

We are in the process of developing a partnership with a North American Christian organisation, to enable supporters to donate to AGST-MST with tax deductibility. Details will come later.

### For donors:

- AGST-MST bank account details for direct credit are available from [admin@agst-mst.org](mailto:admin@agst-mst.org).
- Please make RM/SG\$/US\$ cheques payable to: 'AGST Alliance Sdn Bhd'.
- Payee on Thai Baht cheques: 'Bangkok Bible Seminary'.
- AGST-MST postal address: VBox 886642, Singapore 919191.