



Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | AUGUST 2010

'To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives.' – Richard Foster

New AGST Alliance members

We are delighted to welcome two colleges as new members of the AGST Alliance consortium.

- **Malaysia Evangelical College (MEC)**, in Sarawak (East Malaysia), is the higher level training college of Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) in Sarawak. SIB is the largest – and fastest growing – Christian denomination in Malaysia. Started in 1968, MEC has two campuses (in Miri and Lawas), and has a particularly strategic niche in training indigenous Christian leaders.
- **Chiang Mai Theological Seminary (CTS)**, established in 2001, is the main evangelical graduate training institution in Northern Thailand. It is strategically located close to one of the most concentrated areas of unreached people groups in the world, groups closed to traditional approaches to mission. CTS is a member of the Associated Churches of Thailand.

There are interesting commonalities between MEC and CTS. The early development of both owes much to the vision of OMF International missionaries.* Both have come into AGST Alliance as associate member colleges, while in the process of becoming members of the Asia Theological Association for their program accreditation. Both have one of their faculty members in the current MTh(Ed) program.

We look forward to a fruitful partnership with MEC and CTS – and anticipate their full membership in due course.

*AGST Alliance is grateful to OMF International for their willing continuing secondment of Dr Allan Harkness as our Dean and Education Programs Director.

- *Thank God for the strategic training ministries of CTS and MEC.*
- *Pray that their partnership in AGST Alliance will be mutually enriching and rewarding.*



Mr Sam Wunderli, chair of the CTS Board of Directors, signs the AGST Alliance consortium agreement.



Members of the Sarawak SIB Council witness the signing of the agreement for MEC to join AGST Alliance.

AGST Alliance (formerly known as AGST-MST) is a theological training venture offering specialised post-graduate theological programs for church leaders and theological/Bible college faculty in S E Asia, to equip them for more effective Christian ministry and mission.

AGST Alliance – part of the network of Asia Graduate School of Theology consortia – comprises these colleges:

- Bangkok Bible Seminary (Thailand)
- Bible College of Malaysia
- Chiang Mai Theological Seminary (Thailand)*
- East Asia School of Theology (Singapore)
- Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary
- Malaysia Bible Seminary
- Malaysia Evangelical College (East Malaysia)*
- Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
- Phnom Penh Bible School (Cambodia)*
- Thailand Pentecostal Bible Seminary

*Associate Members.

The Middle East Association for Theological Education Consortium (MEATE) is also an associate member of AGST Alliance.

AGST Alliance was established in 2004. Its programs are validated by the Asia Theological Association.

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IN OUR PROGRAMS

PhD programs

'Perseverance and encouragement in the routines'. This is clearly the slogan for our PhD candidates. Roger Senior is starting on his PhD(Theol) journey, Alex Tang is working on what he hopes will be the last revision of his PhD(Ed) dissertation prior to submission, and the other candidates are somewhere in between. But all need a wide range of resources if they are to 'finish well'.

- *Practical areas to pray for our PhD candidates include physical health, good time management as they juggle their many personal and ministry responsibilities, helpful and timely contact with their supervisors, access to key research material, finances, reliable technology... and more!*

'So what should my thesis be about?'

Meanwhile, students in the first cycle of the MTh(Theol) need to be shaping up the focus of their thesis research.

We encourage them to choose a topic that arises from their coursework to date and has significance for the Church in their context. A forum and thesis research skills training program for our MTh(Theol) and PhD(Theol) students is planned for 18-19 November (at MBS, Malaysia), to help them as they move along this research process.

- *Pray for our 6-8 MTh(Theol) students who are thinking about their thesis focus. We will need to find suitable – and accessible – supervisors for them.*
- *Pray that the research and writing skills sessions will be valuable for kick-starting the thesis process for our students.*



Education and Theology MTh students interact with Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan in their most enjoyable forum – over a meal!

Theology and Education MTh students interact

The separate timing of the on-campus sessions of MTh(Theol) and MTh(Ed) modules seldom allow for interaction between students in the two programs. However, in May the Education and Theology students were able to meet one another, as their module five day on-campus sessions were concurrent at MBTS, Penang. Some interesting discussion resulted on common themes being raised in their respective modules.



MTh(Ed) students discussing curriculum development issues with Dr Jeanie Shim.

MTh(Ed) in progress

The current cycle of the Master of Theology (Education) in Spiritual formation and Discipleship is well underway now, with the on-campus sessions of the third module being hosted by our new AGST Alliance member Malaysia Evangelical College (Miri, Sarawak).

- *Pray that church leaders who will benefit from participating in our MTh programs will hear about them in good time, so as to be able to make arrangements to attend.*

New cycle of MTh(Theol) – 2011

A new cycle of the MTh(Theology) program will commence in early 2011. Details of the module titles and dates will soon be on the AGST Alliance website.

MTh modules in early 2011

MTh(Theology)

Theology and Spirituality

- Jan-April 2011; on-campus 7-11 Feb, 2011
- Location: Kuala Lumpur
- Facilitator: Dr Glen Scorgie (USA)

Theology and Church

- May-August 2011; on-campus 25-29 July, 2011
- Location: to be confirmed
- Facilitator: Dr Sunny Tan (Malaysia)

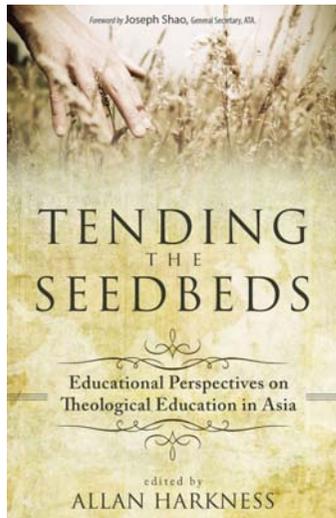
MTh(Education)

Approaches to Discipleship

- Dec 2010-Feb 2011; on-campus 6-11 Jan, 2011
- Campus: Malaysia Bible Seminary, Rawang, Malaysia
- Facilitator: Dr Sylvia Collinson (Australia)

Building Formative Faith Communities

- March-May 2011; on-campus 11-15 April 2011
- Campus: Bible College of Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
- Facilitator: Dr Perry Shaw (Lebanon)



'Tending the Seedbeds'

As part of the 40th anniversary of the Asia Theological Association this year, *Tending the Seedbeds: Educational Perspectives on Theological Education in Asia* has been published. What is notable

about this volume of twelve articles is that six of the contributors are closely linked to our AGST Alliance education programs: Perry Shaw and David Burke are members of the Education Programs Committee, Rosalind Lim-Tan and Kwai Lin Stephens are MTh(Ed) module facilitators, Alex Tang is one of our PhD(Ed) candidates, and Allan Harkness (who also edited the volume) is our Education Programs Director. Congratulations, team!

Theological educators in Asia and beyond will find plenty of stimulation in *Tending the Seedbeds*. Copies may be ordered from ataasia@gmail.com; or request details of the book from Allan Harkness (dean@agstalliance.org).

Governing Board to meet – 25 September

The annual meeting of the AGST Alliance Governing Board takes place on Saturday 25 September, on the campus of MBTS, Penang, Malaysia. This meeting is the one opportunity each year for the representatives of our member colleges to meet face to face, so the agenda is usually full. Apart from program reports, administrative updates and the (re-)election of Governing Board officers, the agenda this year includes:

- *New programs:* There are several new programs we could commence if we had the resources (finance and personnel). We will need to seek God's perspective to prioritise.
- *Administrative structures:* With our continuing growth, our current executive and administrative structures are struggling to cope. What is an appropriate way ahead?
- *Resource development:* We will need to make challenging financial decisions about how we enhance our student's and faculty' access to expensive electronic databases.

- *Thank God that he is ready to reveal his perspective for the development of AGST Alliance. Pray for a united sense of his direction among the Governing Board members.*
- *Pray that Governing Board members will be able to give adequate time for preparation for the meeting, to represent their college's views on the various agenda items.*
- *Pray for the (re-)appointment of the office-bearers (chairman, secretary, treasurer) for the coming year.*

PROJECTS FOR PRAYER & PROVISION

1. *Redeveloping our AGST Alliance website* (www.agstalliance.org)
2. *Establishing a centralised database*

A web designer in New Zealand is working with us on this integrated project, and a special financial gift has been received to cover most of the initial design cost.

- *Thank God for his provision, which came just when we needed to confirm the sizeable budget for this project. The donor didn't know who we were approaching for our web redesign, but they actually live reasonably close and know each other!*
- *Pray that we can get the redeveloped site 'up-and-running' this year. Delay lies mainly with us preparing the new text for the designer to build into the website.*

3. *On-line theological resources:* We have a quotation for a subscription for a major, key specialised internet-based database for theological research. The Governing Board needs to decide how to finance the considerable cost. Is there a generous sponsor who will partner with us by underwriting all or some of this?
4. *Research officer:* We continue to look for a suitable person to take up the role of Research Officer – to build a database of databases/resource facilities for our students and faculty to be able to access readily.
5. *Watch this space!* Following the Governing Board meeting on 25 Sept, there may well be other items for this section in our next *Attuned!*

- *Please keep praying with us for progress in these areas, in God's time – and for God's provision for the necessary finances.*

Ear-marked finance for any of these projects would encourage us greatly. If you are able to sponsor one or other of them, please contact AGST Alliance Dean, Dr Allan Harkness (dean@agstalliance.org).

Spot the makeover?

Following our registration as a company in Malaysia in 2008, we are using our registered name 'AGST Alliance' more frequently, and 'AGST-MST' less.

To reflect this change we have reworked our corporate identity – reflected in our logo, and in future applications like our website, stationary and diplomas.

We are grateful to Ms Tan Gek Lin (Singapore) for her identity design creativity and generosity; and to Mr Kok Chik Bu (Penang) who has designed our diplomas and student cards. Chik Bu is also the designer of *Attuned*.

FOR DONORS

- AGST Alliance bank account details for direct credit and telegraphic transfers are available from admin@agstalliance.org.
- Please make RM/SG\$/US\$ cheques payable to 'AGST Alliance Sdn Bhd'; and Thai Baht cheques payable to 'Bangkok Bible Seminary'.
- USA donors may send tax-deductible financial gifts for AGST Alliance to MEANS USA (<http://www.meansusa.org>).

Attuned is published three times per year in English. Please email admin@agstalliance.org to request to receive this update regularly. We appreciate your partnership.

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www.agstalliance.org