



# Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | JANUARY 2012

'Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down.' St Paul (Philippians 4:6-7a, The Message)

**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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## Into 2012, with thanksgiving and petition

**The strength of AGST Alliance lies very much in the strength of each of the seminaries which comprise our consortium. And each seminary has its own challenges as it heads through 2012. We invite you to take some time to pray for our member seminaries – thanking God, as well as interceding for specific aspects of their ministry.**



### BANGKOK BIBLE SEMINARY

- *Give thanks for ...* all going well and everyone kept safe in Nov. 2011 when BBS postponed classes to help with the flood relief and recovery operations.
- *Intercede for ...* the new TEE program using virtual classroom technology, that it will be used to effectively train workers for ministry.



### CHIANG MAI THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- *Give thanks for ...* the successful mission trip to central Thailand to help clean and paint houses affected by the worst flood in Thailand's history.
- *Intercede for ...* raising US\$140,000 for our seminary building project.



### MALAYSIA BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- *Give thanks for ...* the new batch of students for 2012, which includes an increase in the number at our KL branch campus.
- *Intercede for ...* the challenges arising from the steep increase in the cost of operating our seminary.



### MALAYSIA BIBLE SEMINARY

- *Give thanks for ...* a new lecturer in our team, who will teach NT and Missions as well as train and teach Bahasa speaking church leaders.
- *Intercede for ...* visas for about 27 students (both renewals and fresh applications).

Continue over.../



### MALAYSIA EVANGELICAL COLLEGE

- *Give thanks for ...* the enrolment this semester of 30 new students and 110 pre-school trainees.
- *Intercede for ...* the construction of a new classroom for MEC soon. (The cost has already been raised.)



### MEATE CONSORTIUM (MIDDLE EAST)

- *Give thanks for ...* the completion of the first courses in our MEATE *Teach/Learn* project (delivering leadership training through parallel satellite broadcast and on-line classes).
- *Intercede for ...* MEATE schools to adequately prepare leaders of Arab churches that face a probable future of increasing discrimination and persecution.



### MYANMAR EVANGELICAL GRAD. SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

- *Give thanks for ...* our 15th anniversary (16 Dec 2011); and God's blessing in meeting our needs and the gifts of friends.
- *Intercede for ...* our forthcoming graduation (18 Feb), the ESOL program for our new students; and to have a better year ahead financially.



### PHNOM PENH BIBLE SCHOOL

- *Give thanks for ...*our 20th anniversary (16 March) of educating students in God's Word; and for renovations (which include air-con and new electronics in the chapel).
- *Intercede for ...* the right choice to replace the outgoing vice-principal; and for the students and faculty being refreshed in preparation for their 2nd semester.



### THAILAND PENTECOSTAL BIBLE SEMINARY

- *Intercede for ...* at least two more full-time teachers.



Remember in your prayer also **BIBLE COLLEGE OF MALAYSIA** and **EAST ASIA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY** (Singapore).

## Coming MTh modules

### MTh(Theology)

#### Theology & Worldviews

- Jan-April 2012; On-campus 5-9 Mar 2012
- *Location:* Bible College of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur
- *Facilitator:* Dr Ng Kam Weng (Malaysia)

#### Theology & Anthropology

- May-Aug 2012; On-campus 23-27 July
- *Location:* Batam, Indonesia
- *Facilitator:* Dr Kwa Kiem Kiok (Singapore)

#### Theology & Hermeneutics

- Sept-Dec 2012; On-campus 22-26 Oct
- *Location:* Bangkok Bible Seminary, Thailand
- *Facilitator:* Dr Natee Tanchonpongs (Thailand)

### MTh(Education)/EdD

#### Education in Christian Faith Communities: Overview & Rationale

- Feb-May 2012; On-campus: 12-22 March (includes 2 days program orientation)
- *Location:* East Asia School of Theology, Singapore
- *Facilitator:* Dr Allan Harkness (Singapore)

#### Growing & Developing in CFCs

- Jun-Aug 2012; On-campus: 16-20 July
- *Location:* Bible College of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.
- *Facilitator:* Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan (Malaysia)

#### Curriculum Design & Development in CFCs

- Aug-Nov 2012; On-campus: 27 Sept-5 Oct
- *Location:* Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, Penang
- *Facilitator:* Dr Jeanie Shim (Malaysia)

Further details from our website, [www.agstalliance.org](http://www.agstalliance.org). These modules are open to both credit and audit students – suitable as refresher options for seminary faculty and church leaders.

## IN OUR PROGRAMS



## MTh modules in Penang

The on-campus sessions of two MTh modules were held consecutively last November, hosted by Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, in their scenic setting on Penang Island, overlooking the Malacca Straits.

- Dr David and Mrs Rosemary Harley facilitated the sessions of the MTh(Theol) module, *Theology and Contextualisation*.

One of the greatest challenges facing the church in Asia is how to communicate the gospel within a continent dominated by other world faiths. This module has enabled students to better evaluate, affirm and challenge their cultures in the light of Scripture, to read Scripture through other cultural eyes, and to communicate biblical truth using language and images that are cultural relevant and intelligible.

- MTh(Ed)/EdD students were exposed to the challenges and potential of research in education and the social sciences, in the sessions of their module *Research Methods in Christian Faith Communities*, facilitated by Drs Jeanie Shim and Allan Harkness.

A feature of this module is the major practical assignment: Each student plans and executes a piece of research that will benefit their ministry setting. The chosen research focus areas are wide-ranging: They include the effectiveness of family devotions in a Sarawak church, creating a seminary graduate student profile, the impact of silent retreats on spiritual formation, what makes genuinely multi-ethnic churches tick, and the relationships between freedom of the press, internet penetration and shortwave broadcasting.

- *Pray for the MTh(Ed)/EdD and MTh(Theol) students juggling their study with ministry and personal responsibilities. Effective time management continues to be the most crucial need for most of them if they are to finish well.*
- *Several MTh(Theol) and MTh(Ed) students are heading into the thesis phase of their programs. Pray that we will be able to link them up with suitable, competent and handy supervisors.*
- *Our PhD(Ed) and PhD(Theol) candidates miss out on the impetus of coursework sessions with peers. Pray that they will be encouraged in their interactions with their supervisors – mainly by email.*



## INNOVATIVE SUPPORT FOR AGST ALLIANCE



### Canadian *LoveGlobal* partnership

**AGST Alliance has recently developed a partnership with the Canadian-based mission-support organisation *LoveGlobal* ([www.loveglobal.com](http://www.loveglobal.com)).**

*Spreading love across the globe to missionaries on the fringe* is the by-line of this registered charity, and a scan through its website indicates a fascinating range of Christian workers and small-ish ministries that don't normally attract funding from large support agencies.

Because gifts may be made by bankcard, gifts channelled to AGST Alliance through LoveGlobal may come from donors worldwide. Canadian donors qualify for tax receipts.

### HUGs turn into books

**A number of our AGST Alliance students will soon receive a book grant valued at RM120 (~USD40), thanks to the HUGs of New Zealand Christians this Christmas.**

Global Connections in Mission, with which AGST Alliance Dean Allan Harkness has links, launched *Hands Up Gifts*, a creative Christmas gift catalogue scheme, and one of the items listed was a text book grant for AGST Alliance students.

One of the Kiwi HUG-givers wrote: 'We are pleased to be able to encourage others in their studies, knowing that the fruit will benefit many others in the future.... We live in Christchurch [where there have been numerous earthquakes, one in which more than 120 people died, over the past 15 months] and we have come to appreciate over the last year or so what really matters in life, what has value and what doesn't and we are happy to invest in the important things.'

- *Thank God for the initiative taken by these two organisations to link with AGST Alliance.*
- *Pray that our students who receive a HUG book grant will be encouraged, as they recognise who God uses – in this case distant caring Christians – in what he is building.*
- *Thank God for his continual provision for AGST Alliance's financial needs, from a variety of sources besides student fees.*

## GOVERNING BOARD AT WORK

**The AGST Alliance Governing Board held its annual meeting in late September, hosted in Yangon by our member seminary Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (MEGST).**

Not only was this a good opportunity to review and prayerfully make policy decisions, but also to understand the challenges MEGST faces in its Myanmar setting.

These key Governing Board office-holders were elected for 2011-12:

- Chair: (Dr) Sunny Tan (MBTS)
- Secretary: (Dr) May Yeow Beng (EAST)
- Treasurer: (Dr) Eddy Ho (MEC)



- *Decisions made by the Governing Board at its annual meeting were wide-ranging – and impact on our development focus this year.*
- *Pray for Dean Allan Harkness, the current program directors and committees, and others laying the groundwork for new program areas and resource acquisition.*

# PROJECTS/PERSONNEL

## KEY RESOURCE PEOPLE PROVIDED

For some months we have been praying for two people with specialised skills for our development. God has provided!



1. **Research officer:** Ms **Denise James**, recently retired as head librarian of Laidlaw College (formerly, Bible College of New Zealand) has been working with us for several months now, tasked with building up an internet-based database to enhance the research resource capacity available to our students. Already Denise has created a template, and is trawling through the internet for suitable sites/sources, as well as incorporating suggestions from our faculty, doctoral students and others. We applaud Denise's willing and competent partnership with us in her retirement.



2. **Administration Development Officer:** Ms **May Lim Seow Geok** has been appointed to the part-time position of Administration Development Officer. Formerly registrar and director of operations at a Singapore seminary, May brings just the right sort of experience to her project with us – to design, set up and initially administer a more effective administration/registration system. The special challenge facing May is to design a system which is pre-dominantly on-line and user-friendly by our faculty and staff around the region.

- *What more to say than simply, 'Thanks, God, for Denise and May's competent availability.'*

For details about further projects, contact AGST Alliance Dean, Dr Allan Harkness <dean@agstalliance.org>. These projects/personnel needs have financial implications. Ear-marked finance would encourage us greatly.

## ONGOING PROJECT/PERSONNEL NEEDS

**Theological resources:** We continue to look for an affordable way ahead to get ready access for our students to key specialised theological electronic databases which require subscriptions. Please keep praying with us.

## FOR DONORS

Typical of Asian theological institutions, student fees contribute only a proportion of the total operating cost of AGST Alliance. Further finance is needed for administrative and staff support, program development and to build up our research resource capacity. We welcome financial support as occasional or regular gifts.

- AGST Alliance bank account details for direct credit and telegraphic transfers are available from [admin@agstalliance.org](mailto:admin@agstalliance.org), or on our website (click Support us – Financial Support – How to give financial support).
- 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>).
- Canadian (and worldwide) donors may send financial gifts through LoveGlobal (<http://www.loveglobal.com>).

**Attuned** is published three times per year in English. Please email [admin@agstalliance.org](mailto:admin@agstalliance.org) to request to receive this update regularly. We appreciate your partnership.

### AGST Alliance

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