



Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | APRIL 2013

'God isn't a one-issue God. His desire is for our good and the world's good at every moment, and prayers for specific decisions and situations can't help but spill out in grace and hope in the lives of all those involved.' – Les Brighton

AGST Alliance is a theological training venture offering specialised post-graduate theological programs for church leaders and theological/Bible college faculty in SE 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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www.agstalliance.org

Transformational development program underway

SUNDAY 14 April marked the start of our new master's program in transformational development, a partnership with Malaysian Care and Tabor College, Victoria (Australia).

Attending the opening dinner of the first course's week-long intensive sessions were the heads of the three partner organisations, along with most of the students. This remarkably multi-cultural group of sixteen students, who serve in seven Asian countries, has considerable accumulated experience, which is bound to ensure rich interaction.

Hangzo, from India, has commented: "I do feel excited to be a part of this innovative program... [it] reflects God's wisdom and mighty hand working..."

The 3-year program is for practitioners in advocacy, aid and development, and social welfare organisations, helping them to integrate developmental practice and Christian theology. It is part-time and non-residential, blending on-line and week-long face-to-face campus learning. Graduates will be awarded a Tabor Victoria *Master of Arts in Vocational Practice (Aid & Development)*, an Australian government accredited degree.

- *Thank God for this program, the culmination of several years' planning, and for the warm collegiality between the three partner organisations.*
- *Thank God for generous sponsors who are subsidising the program costs, to ensure the participation of those who will benefit from it.*
- *Pray for Steve Bradbury (Program Director, Tabor) and Pax Tan (Program Director, Asia), responsible for the smooth running of the program.*
- *Pray that the students will ensure they have adequate time and energy for their studies; and for good internet connectivity – crucial for the program.*



Drs Wynand de Kock (Principal of Tabor College, left) and CB Samuel (former CEO of EFICOR in India, right) leading sessions on theological methods and leadership respectively.

AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

Middle East links enhanced



Ara (*second from right*) interacting with his peers.

The Middle East Association for Theological Education (MEATE) has been an associate member of AGST Alliance since 2009, when a MOU was signed for AGST Alliance to help MEATE move towards establishing its own postgraduate program.

This partnership has been strengthened through the participation of our first MEATE student – Ara, a pastor from Baghdad, Iraq. Ara is completing coursework in our MTh(Theol) program, with a view to moving later into our PhD(Theol) program.

The benefits for Ara's participation are not just one way: he contributes rich ministry and cultural experiences, to the mutual benefit of his peers in the program.

Location enhances learning

Malacca (Malaysia) was the venue for the recent on-campus sessions of our MTh(Theol) *Asian Theologies* module: a most suitable setting for the module focus. Malacca is an historical Portuguese, Dutch and Chinese trading port, part of which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. With its multi-racial population, Chinese, Buddhist and Hindu temples are located alongside mosques; and the MTh(Theol) class met in the offices of the historic Anglican 'red' Christ Church.

Opportunity to celebrate



Steve, his wife Flor (*on his left*), and module participants David and Jean celebrate.

Also in Malacca, Dr Steve Taylor, facilitator for the *Asian Theologies* module, was helped to celebrate his birthday over a relaxed meal with all the module participants. Steve, from the UK

and serving long-term in Thailand, is currently Director of Research and Development at Bangkok Bible Seminary, where he also served as Academic Dean for 4 years. Steve is a valued member of our Theology Programs Committee.

Grappling with research methods

Research Methods seldom achieves 'most-enjoyed course' status for any student. But the participants in the recent MTh(Ed)/EdD module on that topic found it (in the words of one of the students) "enlightening, insightful and helpful for my dissertation." Facilitated by Dr Jeff Pugh, formerly Dean of Postgraduate Studies at Melbourne School of Theology, the module surveyed approaches to human science research for churches, seminaries and organisations, and helped the students to develop their own research strategies.



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- *Thank God for his grace, enabling all to persevere in the ongoing, routine processes in our MTh(Theol) and MTh(Ed)/EdD programs: the students, facilitators, and administrators (especially Drs Sunny Tan and Allan Harkness, directors of the programs).*
- *Pray for more applicants for our planned MTh(Bib. Studies) program; and for Dr Keith Shubert and the members of the Biblical Studies Programs Committee working on the program logistics.*
- *A number of students in our MTh(Ed)/EdD program are preparing a 'focus of interest' for their forthcoming dissertation research. Pray that they will be able to discern an area strategic for their future ministry participation and effectiveness.*
- *Pray for our 6-8 PhD and EdD candidates who will be meeting with faculty at the annual doctoral colloquium (Bangkok, 20-22 May) – for encouragement, presenting their research progress, and research skills review and enhancement.*

Applications open for AGST Alliance programs

■ MTh(Bib. Studies) & PhD(Bib. Studies)

MTh(Bib. Studies) – commencing mid-2014

PhD(Bib. Studies) – candidates may commence as soon as they are accepted

■ MTh(Theol) & PhD(Theol) MTh(Ed)/EdD/PhD(Ed)

Accepted applicants for these on-going programs may commence anytime.

■ Masters in Transformational Development

Expressions of interest are invited for a new cohort of our **masters in transformational development program**, possibly commencing in 2014.

Visit our website www.agstalliance.org for program and application details

COMING MTH/EDD MODULES

MTh(THEOLOGY)

- **THEOLOGY & SOCIETY**
May-Aug 2013; on-campus 27-31 May
Penang, Malaysia
Dr Keith White (UK)
- **BIBLICAL THEOLOGY**
Sept-Dec 2013; on-campus 11-15 Nov
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Dr Peter Lau (Malaysia)

MTh(EDUCATION)/EdD

- **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN CFCs**
Apr-Jul 2013; on-campus 13-17 May
Bangkok, Thailand
Dr Pieter Theron (Mongolia)
- **FAITH DEVELOPMENT & EXPRESSION**
Aug-Nov 2013; on-campus 9-17 Sept
Singapore
Drs George Capaque & Allan Harkness
(Singapore)

All these modules are open to both credit and audit students – suitable as refresher options for seminary faculty and church leaders.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

We have made little progress on three key projects which will enhance our effectiveness, once they get in place. Unfortunately, their priority for development suffers from 'the tyranny of the urgent' from other concerns more routine program-related.

1. **Theological resources:** We continue to pursue an affordable way to get ready access for our students to key specialised theological electronic databases which require quite expensive subscriptions.
2. **Student management system:** Sourcing an internet-based student management system (for our student database) which is both suitable and affordable.
3. **Moodle for on-line learning possibilities:** Preparing a 'virtual learning environment' (VLE) on our website, using the common (and free) Moodle application software.

▪ *Our administration and student effectiveness will be enhanced as/when we can implement these projects. Please keep praying for discernment and clear direction for those exploring the options.*

For further details about our various projects, contact AGST Alliance Dean, Dr Allan Harkness <dean@agstalliance.org>.

These projects and our personnel needs have financial implications. Ear-marked finance would encourage us greatly.

FOR DONORS

Financial matters

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. Financial support is welcomed, whether as occasional or regular gifts.

Special need

Recent substantial rental increases mean that we have a specific current need for earmarked funds of SGD400 (~MYR1000; ~USD330) per month, to cover fully our AGST Alliance contribution to the support of our Dean, Dr Allan Harkness (seconded to us by OMF International).

- *Thank God for his gracious provision for our financial needs to date – especially through a small number of regular donors.*
- *Pray with us to continue to trust that 'God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply' (Hudson Taylor) – and for people who will respond to God's nudging to mediate his supply.*
- AGST Alliance bank account details for direct credit and telegraphic transfers are available from 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 (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.

AGST Alliance

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Visit our website

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