



# Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | JUNE 2014

'Listen, Lord, listen, Lord, not to our words but to our prayer. You alone, you alone understand and care.'  
(from a Celtic order for Holy Communion)

**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 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](http://www.agstalliance.org)

## Education technology for seminaries explored

**The potential of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for seminaries in our region was explored at a recent workshop in Kuala Lumpur, hosted by AGST Alliance.**

Thirty participants from fifteen seminaries met over two days to interact with Dr Walker Tzeng, the Executive Director of WETIA, a service organisation supporting seminaries globally with education technology resources to enable them to keep relevant and vital.

Dr Tzeng is (in the words of one participant) '*a passionate advocate on ICT and using available technology to enhance theological education*', and his overview of the technology available was an eye-opener, especially as he pointed us to so much that is free or low cost and easily accessible. Participants appreciated the dual focus of the workshop: ways ICT can be used to enhance learning methods in existing programs and for developing on-line courses.

Two participants commented, '*A most enlightening and insightful presentation...*'; and '*the networking opportunity let me see I am not alone in tackling this issue, and be further encouraged.*' All left the workshop encouraged to return to their seminaries with a commitment to move to the next stage in their use of ICT.

- *Thank God that we are able to tap into the resources of competent and generous professionals like Walker Tzeng.*
- *Pray for the workshop participants back in their seminaries, sharing their discoveries and encouraging appropriate ICT development.*
- *Pray as we explore possibilities for inter-seminary collaboration in the development of ICT resources.*



## AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

### New DMin in pastoral leadership

**AGST Alliance, with Bible College of Malaysia and Malaysia Bible Seminary as special partners, is preparing to commence a new Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral leadership, hopefully from the beginning of 2015.**

This DMin is being designed for senior church leaders, to enhance their ministry skills while recognising the distinctive contextual issues they face in our SE Asian region. The program director (part-time) will be Dr Tan Sooi Ling (Penang, Malaysia), whose intercultural ministry and training experiences regionally and further afield equip her well for her role.

Look for program details in due course on our AGST Alliance website.

### MTh(Bib. Studies) puzzle

**AGST Alliance is puzzled.** We can't work out why there seems to be quite limited interest in our MTh(Biblical Studies) program. We have a handful of accepted students, but do need more for the program to be viable.

The scheduled MTh(Bib. Studies) commencement date has been postponed twice, and we are now planning to commence coursework modules in September 2014. Who do you know who could be encouraged to apply for this program?

### Masters for Transformational Development growing

**The Masters program for transformational development which AGST Alliance has partnered with Tabor College (Victoria, Australia) and Malaysian Care to offer in SE Asia continues to thrive.**

Earlier this year eight new students joined the 15 from the first intake, and there is interest to consider launching a third intake from early 2015.

Pax Tan (Program Director, Asia) highlights that for the students from 11 countries *'the interactions with one another, with the teachings of various practitioners in the intensives, have greatly enriched all.'*

Steve Bradbury, the overall program director, says *'we strongly believe that this program is already making a difference.'* For example, one participant who attended the recent intensive in KL, says *'Forgive me for the cliché, but it has actually been life-changing!'* Another participant, a member of an underground church in West Asia, manages a program responding to the needs of 2000+ young refugee women. She recently shared one of her course assignments with her international director, and he requested her to make a presentation to the all country managers of their organisation. He has now asked for more information on the program.

See a 7-minute video on the program [here](#).



The insights of strategically placed 'thinking practitioners' are a highlight of the on-campus intensives: one sharing his experiences (left), and two others in critical interaction with the students (right).

## The doctoral dissertation journey

Our **AGST Alliance doctoral students face a particular challenge when they write up their thesis/dissertation research.** They come to recognise that it is not as straightforward as simply joining together the separate chapters which they have worked on over some time, and submitting the whole lot for examination. Two of our PhD candidates have expressed their writing journey this way:

*'We are truly thankful to God for enabling us to complete our first drafts as planned. However, what we thought would be the last lap of our dissertation writing was merely the last lap of the first long-distance race. After receiving feedback regarding our drafts, we now realise that there is a second race to run... We hope that the second race will be a 200 metre dash and not another marathon. We appreciate your prayers as we work on our revisions.'*

- *Thank God for the impetus to offer new programs and new intakes for existing programs.*
- *Pray that the right potential students will hear about them in good time, so that they can plan their schedules to participate, to apply, and to source finances.*
- *Pray for coursework module facilitators – they need to structure their courses 3-4 months in advance of the actual on-campus sessions. They also need special wisdom, as they know little specifically about the students in their module.*
- *Pray for AGST Alliance students at the thesis/dissertation stage of their programs, that they will be persevere through the often-tedious honing-up phase of their writing.*



The study space at the on-campus sessions of the recent MTh(Ed)/EdD module, *Space, Relationships and Learning*.

## AROUND OUR MEMBER SEMINARIES

**Notable events and milestones – recently and ahead – from our AGST Alliance member seminaries include:**

- The first batch of online blended course students at **BBS (Thailand)** are graduating. BBS has started a special weekend course for church leaders; and its new library and resource building is well underway (we prayed for this in the previous *Attuned*).
- **EAST (Singapore)** successfully completed its ATESEA Accreditation Team visit. EAST is further developing its night courses, one recent course attracting over 100 students from 'the marketplace'.
- **MBTS (Malaysia)** has appointed Choo Kien Wei as academic dean, taking over from Sunny Tan. Pray for Kien Wei as he adjusts to his role, and for Sunny, who remains responsible for the English track programs and the operation of the Klang Valley Branch School.
- Pastor Maurice Bilung has recently been appointed as the new principal of **MEC (E. Malaysia)**. Pray for Maurice as he finds his way into this strategic role.
- **MEGST (Myanmar)** also has a new principal – Dr San Cung Nung has taken over from founding principal Dr Aung Mung, who is now president and chairman of the board. Pray for the MEGST leadership as they explore options for their seminary premises.

- *Pray for continuing alignment to God's purposes for each of our AGST Alliance member seminaries – each with a distinctive niche for the Kingdom of God in their country and church scene.*

## APPLY FOR AGST ALLIANCE PROGRAMS

### ■ MTh(Bib. Studies)

Commencing September 2014.

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

Applicants may commence as soon as they are accepted for these programs.

### ■ Masters in Transformational Development (MAVP(Aid & Development))

Check the [MAVP\(A&D\) program details](#) on our website for confirmation of a new intake in early 2015.

### ■ EdD in Child & Family Development

Commencing in September 2014. Applications are now being received. [Program details here.](#)

### ■ Doctor of Ministry

Check our website [www.agstalliance.org](http://www.agstalliance.org) for confirmation of starting date.

## Coming MTh/EdD modules

### MTh(Theology)

#### ■ THEOLOGY & CONTEXTUALISATION

June–Sept 2014;  
on-campus 11–15 Aug

*Bible College of Malaysia,  
KL, Malaysia*

Facilitators: Dr David and  
Mrs Rosemary Harley  
(UK)

#### ■ THEOLOGY & HERMENEUTICS

Oct 2014–Jan 2015;  
on-campus 8–12 Dec  
2014

*Bangkok Bible Seminary,  
Thailand*

Facilitator: Dr Natee  
Tanchanpongs

### MTh(Bib.Studies)

#### ■ THE PENTATEUCH

Sept–Dec 2014

Facilitator: Dr Steven  
Guest (USA/India)

#### ■ PAULINE EPISTLES

Sept–Dec 2014

Facilitator: Dr Lim  
Kar Yong (Malaysia)

### EdD(Child & Family Development)

#### ■ CHRISTIAN THINKING & VOCATIONAL PRACTICE

Sept–Dec 2014;  
on-campus 27 Oct–  
1 Nov

*MBTS Klang Valley  
Branch, KL, Malaysia*

Facilitator: Dr Jennifer  
Turner (Australia)

These modules are open to both credit and audit students – suitable as refresher options for Christian leaders and seminary faculty.



## AGST ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS

### AGST Alliance celebrates 10 years

**AGST Alliance is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.**

Back in 2004, little did we imagine quite what AGST Alliance might look like 10 years later. Now in 2014 we are a testimony to God's grace as we continue to seek to 'prepare scholars and leaders for the Church and society in Asia', and doing so through a variety of programs.

The main 10th anniversary celebration event will be a dinner on **Sunday evening, 10 August**, in Kuala Lumpur – to coincide with our annual Governing Board and programs committees meetings.



### Governing Board annual meeting – 11 August

**Our Governing Board annual meeting on Monday 11 August will be hosted by the Bible College of Malaysia and attended by representatives from each of our consortium member seminaries.** Chaired by Dr Sunny Tan, the meeting agenda will include

- Confirming a new consortium agreement for the third 5-year term.
- Reviewing our current and proposed programs, and determining appropriate administrative structures for them to run efficiently.
- Continuing to plan for the leadership transition. (Founding dean, Dr Allan Harkness, is stepping down in late 2015.)

- *Thank God for his grace at work in and through AGST Alliance since its founding in 2004. Pray for a sense of deep gratitude as we celebrate our first decade. Numerous lives have been impacted.*
- *In late June/July Allan Harkness coordinates the preparation of the agenda items for the annual meeting. Pray for those preparing reports and discussion papers.*
- *Pray for Sunny Tan, Allan Harkness and the Governing Board members as they meet on 11 August. May there be clear listening – to each other and to the Spirit of God – and decisions made that are wise, creative and forward-looking.*



Participants in the MTh(Theol) module *Theology and Church* with facilitator Dr Sunny Tan (left photo – centre; right photo – 3rd from left)

## Trust grant for online databases

Join us in thanking God that AGST Alliance has been granted funding from the Ogle Trust (UK), to cover the cost of a one-year subscription to several major online databases. This generous gift comes after we have been praying for quite some time for ear-marked funding for this purpose.

AGST Alliance students and faculty now have direct access to the *ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials*, the *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, and *ERIC* (an education resource database). All three databases provide full-text facilities, and are a welcome resource addition.

Access was timely for our students: One PhD(Ed) candidate immediately located a resource she had been hunting for; and for another candidate, this access came just as he needed to review the most recent literature on his research topic.

The Ogle Trust's grant is for one year's subscription to these databases.

Individuals, churches and trusts may like to consider granting an amount to enable AGST Alliance to re-subscribe in 2015.

## EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR REQUIRED

Do you know of someone with experience in educational administration, preferably in theological education, who may be open to using their gifting and skills to serve God in AGST Alliance?

We'd like to make contact with that person!

Please contact  
Dr Allan Harkness,  
[dean@agstalliance.org](mailto:dean@agstalliance.org)

For details about other projects and our ongoing personnel needs, contact AGST Alliance Dean, Dr Allan Harkness  
[dean@agstalliance.org](mailto:dean@agstalliance.org).  
All 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 welcome, whether as occasional or regular gifts.

- *Thank God for his gracious provision for our financial needs to date.*
- *Pray with us to continue to trust that 'God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply' (Hudson Taylor)*
- *Especially, we are praying for financial support for incoming part-time program directors and executive administrator.*

- 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 ([www.meansusa.org](http://www.meansusa.org)).

**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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