



Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | FEBRUARY 2015

'Prayer is a gift of God, and we shall never really pray, unless continually we ask God for his gift of prayer. We need to experience prayer, like love, as a gift every day, a fresh gift, a gift far beyond what we deserve.' - Mark Gibbard

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

AGST Alliance programs for transformational impact

'When I cannot do big things I do small things with a big heart.'

This gem is from a person serving oppressed and exploited tribal people in a remote part of his SE Asian country. He's not the sort of person who would enter a 'normal' seminary program, but as a participant in our **Masters in Transformational Development** program he is being equipped to make a big-hearted difference.

AGST Alliance has co-partnered with the Christian NGO Malaysian Care and Tabor College (Victoria, Australia) to offer this Asia-based program for professionals in the fields of advocacy, aid and development and social welfare. Fifteen started in 2013, joined by another eight in 2014 and a further 9-10 this February. Participants are from Norway in the north to Australia in the south, and from Cameroon (Africa) in the west to the Philippines in the east.

Meanwhile, five students from four countries are moving through the second module of our **EdD(Child & Family Development)** program. One of these students expressed appreciation for the recent *Christian Thinking and Vocational Practice* module: *'Learning to think theologically has been eye opening for so many things at my work place.'*

- *Thank God for these two niche transformational development programs.*
- *Pray for the students to be effective agents of transformation in their often incredibly challenging areas of service, with hearts and minds shaped by the Spirit of Truth as a result of their participation in our programs.*
- *Thank God for several generous financial sponsors, whose support enables the participation of some who probably otherwise would not be able to do so.*



Transformational Development program students interacting with 'thinking practitioner' Peter Vander Meulen.



EdD(C&FD) participants and facilitator Dr Jennifer Turner enjoying a change of pace in KL.

AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

Disruption averted

There was potential for major disruption for MTh(Theol) students arriving in Bangkok in early December for the planned Monday start to the on-campus sessions of their *Theology and Hermeneutics* module – on the Sunday afternoon the module facilitator Dr Natee Tanchanpongs was admitted to hospital with a potentially serious eye problem.

'It so happened' that Natee's colleague and facilitator of another MTh(Theol) module, Dr Steve Taylor, had a fairly clear week ahead, and so was able to step in to facilitate the sessions. He was joined for most of the week by Dr Sunny Tan. Additionally, Natee was able to participate in some sessions from his hospital room, via Skype.

One of the students commented on the dynamics: *'It has indeed been an interesting week, with the unexpected turn of events. I am privileged to see the Lord's hand at work through it all, especially in the collaboration among Drs Steve, Sunny and Natee.... So all in, it has been a fulfilling experience as I learn once again to trust God afresh.'*



Natee (in his hospital room) interacting with the students (at Bangkok Bible Seminary) via Skype.

- Turn amazement to gratitude for the way God provided for the on-campus sessions of the MTh(Theol) module.
- Thank God that Natee's eye condition has stabilised without need for surgery.
- Pray for MTh(Theol) student Neil Watkinson (UK), whose wife Debbie passed away in late January after a brave battle with cancer.
- Pray that information about our DMin program – and our other programs – will reach those who will benefit from participating as a ministry enhancing option.

New DMin in leadership to start in July

Applications for our new *Doctor of Ministry in Leadership* are now being received, prior to the program commencing in July.

The DMin is targeted at senior church leaders and Christian organisation staff who are seeking the next level of professional development to enhance their leadership skills.

The program is jointly offered by AGST Alliance, Bible College of Malaysia and Malaysia Bible Seminary. Students apply through one of the three partner seminaries, and will graduate with an award from that seminary.

Program details may be found [here](#) on our AGST Alliance website (also on the BCM and MBS websites).

EdD(C&FD) applications

Leaders in organisations focused on advocacy, development or social welfare with child and families who are seeking to be more effective are welcome to apply to join our EdD(C&FD) program.

See details [here](#) on our AGST Alliance website.

Coming MTh/EdD/DMin Coursework Modules

MTh(THEOLOGY)

- THEOLOGY & WORLDVIEWS
 Feb-May 2015;
 on-campus 7-11 Apr
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Facilitator: Dr Tan Kang San

- APPROACHES TO THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
 July-Sep 2015;
 on-campus 10-14 Aug
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Facilitator: Dr Brainerd Prince

- THEOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY
 Oct 2015-Jan 2016;
 on-campus 1-5 Dec
Bangkok, Thailand
 Facilitator: Dr Glen Scorgie

EdD(CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT)

- JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS & ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
 July-mid-Oct 2015;
 on-campus 24-29 Aug
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
 Facilitator: Dr Glenn Miles

- APPROACHES & PRACTICES FOR CHILD & FAMILY RESEARCH
 Mid-Oct 2015-Jan 2016;
 on-campus 16-21 Nov
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Facilitator: Dr Alistair Sim

DMin (LEADERSHIP)

- CHRISTIAN THINKING & MINISTRY PRACTICE
 July-Oct 2015;
 on-campus 20-25 Aug
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (TBC)
 Facilitator: Dr. Jennifer Turner

These modules may be suitable as refresher options for Christian leaders and seminary faculty – for audit or credit. They may also provide cross-credit options for students in programs of other seminaries.

At the MTh/EdD level of study of our AGST Alliance programs, the purpose of the on-campus sessions is not primarily for content transfer ('sit and soak') so much as helping participants process what they are acquiring. Student presentations are a key element in this participatory and active process.



AGST ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS

Gratitude for trust gift

In 2014 the Ogle Christian Trust (UK) provided AGST Alliance with a substantial one-off grant for a one-year subscription to online databases, available through EBSCO.

This database access has been valued by students and faculty: Over the first nine months about 2730 searches were made during 360 log-in sessions, around 200 journal titles were accessed, about 800 articles were downloaded and close to 950 abstracts reviewed.

The Ogle Trust has now agreed not simply to give us another one-off gift to renew our subscription, but rather has added AGST Alliance to its list of regular recipients for funding for database subscriptions.

- *Rejoice with us for God's goodness through this generous provision, and commitment to partnership on the part of the Ogle Trust.*
- *Pray that our students will learn to utilise such on-line resources competently for their research.*

Have you visited the Resources section on our AGST Alliance website?

Click [here](#) to see AGST Alliance dissertation/thesis abstracts, and a portal into a wide range of resources for your study and development.

ATA (re-)accreditation visit in April

During 20-21 April AGST Alliance will be hosting a three-member visiting evaluation team (VET) from the Asia Theological Association, to assess our programs for (re-)accreditation. This is a 5-yearly review and quality control process.

The VET will start in Singapore then move to Kuala Lumpur. Various AGST Alliance stakeholders – faculty, students, graduates and Governing Board members – will be interviewed.

We are seeking re-accreditation of the programs accredited in 2010, and first-time accreditation for our EdD programs.

- *Pray that the VET process will be worthwhile – with a favourable outcome.*
- *Pray for smooth logistics for the VET visit, in both Singapore and Malaysia over the two days.*

Leadership transition in progress

The Governing Board is close to adopting a revised leadership structure for AGST Alliance. The need for this is in response to our dean Allan Harkness preparing to step down by the end of this year.

Efforts continue to appoint suitable people to take up aspects of Allan's roles as soon as possible, so that there can be an adequate transition.

- *Thank God for helping us develop a revised leadership structure proposal, and its ready acceptance by our member seminaries.*
- *Ask God to point us to the people who may be available to take up leadership roles.*
- *Pray for Allan as he ensures a smooth transition of responsibilities over the next few months.*

Witness God's faithfulness... Watch our AGST Alliance AV Presentation

Have you seen our AV presentation on the history of our AGST Alliance venture, its impact, and how people can partner with us as we move into our second decade?

Download the 11 minute video presentation (.mov format) from this [DropBox link](#). The video is 14.4MB in size, and has an embedded music soundtrack – so connect your speakers.

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.

- 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 MYR/SGD/USD 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).

- *Thank God for his continuing gracious and faithful provision for our financial needs.*
- *The new AGST Alliance leadership structure will require increased financial support. Pray for generous donors – individuals, churches, and trusts/foundations.*



An invitation to participate...

AFCE2015

4th Asian Forum for Christian Educators

Theological education that impacts –
on what? for what?

Jakarta, Indonesia, 22-25 May 2015

This is a strategic opportunity for interaction and networking among faculty and leaders seeking to enhance the effectiveness of the theological education processes of their seminaries.

Download a brochure and registration form from www.agstalliance.org/AFCE2015. Registrations close on 31 March 2015.

[This is not an AGST Alliance event *per se*, but people closely linked to AGST Alliance are facilitating it.]

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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