



# Attuned

A NEWSLETTER OF AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER | JUNE 2015

*'Prayer is a way of life which is an adventure with God. It is one of our responses to God's initiative. Our concern for God's world comes from God himself. This concern starts to be expressed first in prayer.'* – Ann Mintram

**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)

## AGST Alliance programs (re-)accredited

**IN April AGST Alliance hosted 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.

We are delighted with the outcome: Our 'older' programs are re-accredited for 2015-2020 (see the box), and our Doctor of Education program has been granted first time accreditation.

Over three days in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the VET had a busy schedule of face to face interviews with key stakeholders in AGST Alliance – Governing Board members, faculty, students, alumni and others. Other interviews were conducted via Skype with similar stakeholders in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Lebanon, Thailand, UK and USA.

The VET comprised Drs Ng Peh Cheng (Associate Secretary of Accreditation & Educational Development, ATA), Purnawan Tenibemas (Director of Doctoral Program, Tyrannus Theological Seminary, Indonesia) and Fong Choon Sam (Dean of Academic Studies, Baptist Theological Seminary, Singapore).

The report commended our leaders *"for their sacrificial service to our Lord to accomplish the mission of AGST Alliance;"* and the faculty and staff *"for contributing their gifts and talents in the development and operation of AGST Alliance."*

- *Thank God for the worthwhile accreditation process, with its favourable outcome.*
- *Pray for our appropriate responses to the VET recommendations for enhancing our effectiveness.*

### Programs re-accredited:

- Doctor of Philosophy (Theology)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Education)
- Master of Theology (Theology)
- Master of Theology (Education) in Spiritual Formation and Discipleship
- Postgraduate Diploma in Theology
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education, Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

### Program accredited for the first time:

- Doctor of Education

## AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

### Further PhD(Theol) graduations

**We rejoice in two further graduations in our PhD(Theology) program.**

In England, **Roger Senior**'s achievement was recognised at a special dinner for family, friends and colleagues, and in a weekly community chapel event at All Nations Christian College (where Roger is a faculty member) at which his supervisor Dr David Harley preached. Roger and his wife Jane are members of OMF International, and have served in South Korea, Mongolia and Malaysia.

In Hong Kong, **Jeremiah Chai-sei Chu**'s achievement was announced in the graduation ceremony of the United Wesleyan Graduate Institute, where Jeremiah is an associate professor. Jeremiah's dissertation was written in Chinese – a first for AGST Alliance. His supervisor was Dr Jason Yeung (Principal, Chinese School of Theology, Ambrose University, Canada).



Dean Allan Harkness presents Roger Senior with his PhD(Theol) certificate.



Jeremiah Chu with a copy of his dissertation.

### PhD dissertations focus

Roger Senior's PhD(Theol) dissertation title is ***The contextualisation of leadership in Paul's ministry and writings: A study with application to English-speaking Methodist churches in Peninsular Malaysia.***

Roger's dissertation provides a distinctive, valuable and readable contribution to the contemporary discourse on the nature of Christian leadership. He examines Paul's ministry and writings to see how and why leadership in the early church was contextualised in a way that built on patterns of leadership prevalent in the first century and also prophetically challenged and transformed them. He demonstrates that while leadership structures and styles within New Testament churches varied according to their cultural context and their maturity, Paul's understanding of leadership was dependent on his theological convictions about Christ, the Trinity and the gospel. Roger suggests how these principles may shape the contextualisation of leadership in today's world, with particular reference to the English-speaking Methodist churches of Malaysia.

Jeremiah Chai-sei Chu's PhD(Theol) dissertation title is ***Hong Kong evangelical theology in the context of 1997: A study from 1982 to 1997 with critical theological reflections on its roots in the holiness-revival movement.***

[香港福音派「九七神學反省」的「本色 - 處境 - 社關」整合研究  
(1982年至1997年) – 結合香港福音派的「聖潔奮興運動」根源加深研思.]

Jeremiah's research is an exegetical, social and historical exploration of Hong Kong Evangelicals (HKEs) doing a "theology of 1997" during 1982–1997. Although HKEs had long been emphasising Biblical faith, they neglected its contextualisation. However, they were given a chance for a theological breakthrough while facing the crisis of 1997. Jeremiah's findings are significant for HKEs and global Chinese churches. First, he suggests HKEs should be historically defined as 'second phrase denominations' (compared with Mainline churches as first phrase), with the majority coming from the American Holiness-Revival Movement, which was originally a social holiness movement – and these churches are capable enough to revive this tradition. Second, the issues surrounding 1997 can facilitate a unique political theology for HKEs without necessarily adopting the political theologies of the West, and especially by bringing an evangelical dimension to post-1997 Christian witness in Hong Kong and China.

Further details of these dissertations – and others – may be found on our AGST Alliance website <[www.agstalliance.org](http://www.agstalliance.org)> at [Resources – Theses & Dissertations](#).

- *Thank God for giving Roger and Jeremiah (and their families) all the resources needed to bring their PhD(Theol) programs to a good outcome. Pray that they will now be able to use the fruit of their research to promote the Kingdom of God and advance the mission of the Church.*
- *Pray for our other doctoral candidates – especially three (two PhD(Ed) and one EdD) who are close to submitting their dissertations for examination. They need good health, perseverance and care in this final phase.*
- *11-13 August: our annual doctoral colloquium, for candidates further back in their research journey. Pray for a worthwhile time as they make presentations of their research process, review research skills, and are encouraged to persevere.*
- *Pray continually also for our students in the coursework phase of their programs – especially that they will be able to give adequate focus to pre- and post-campus study; and for mutually enriching interaction in the on-campus sessions:*
  - 16-21 July: EdD(C&FD) 'Children and Family Development Policy' (Facilitator: Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan).*
  - 10-14 Aug.: MTh(Theol) 'Approaches to Theological Research' (Facilitator: Dr Brainerd Prince).*
  - 20-25 Aug.: DMin 'Christian Thinking and Ministry Practice' (Facilitator: Dr Jennifer Turner).*
  - 20-25 Sept.: Masters in Transformation Development 'Doing Theology in Context' (Facilitator: Mr Steve Bradbury).*



Students in the MTh(Theol) *Theology and Worldviews* module take time out from their on-campus sessions at MBTS, Penang, facilitated by Dr Tan Kang San with his wife Lee Loun Ling.



Students in the EdD(Child & Family Development) module interacting with Dr Glenn Cupit on *Children, Family and Community: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*. Stimulating and challenging.

## Coming MTh/EdD/DMin Coursework Modules

### MTh(THEOLOGY)

#### ■ THEOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY

Oct 2015–Jan 2016; on-campus 1-5 Dec

Bangkok, Thailand

Facilitator: Dr Glen Scorgie

### EdD(CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT)

#### ■ 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)

#### ■ KINGDOM, CHURCH & SOCIETY

Feb–May 2016; on-campus mid-April

On-campus location: To be confirmed

Facilitator: To be confirmed

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.

## AGST ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS

### Governing board annual meeting – 10 August

**Our governing board annual meeting on 10 August will be hosted again by the Bible College of Malaysia and attended by representatives of our consortium member seminaries.**

This year's meeting is a significant one in the leadership transition process. A new academic dean will be commissioned as part of the gathering. The program directors will also meet prior to the annual meeting to discuss academic issues.

Preceding the annual meeting, on 9 August, governing board members will be joined by students, alumni and friends of AGST Alliance at a dinner to honour the contribution of our founding dean Dr Allan Harkness, prior to his stepping down at the end of 2015.

- *Thank God for his continuing grace in and through AGST Alliance.*
- *In July, program directors and Allan Harkness prepare the agenda items for the annual meeting. Pray for clarity in reporting.*
- *Pray for Dr Sunny Tan as he chairs the annual meeting on 10 Aug. May there be good listening – to each other and to God, gratitude for where God has been working through AGST Alliance, and a sense of creative vision for what lies ahead.*
- *Pray for Allan as he orientates the new academic dean and ensures a smooth transition of responsibilities over the next few months.*

## COLLABORATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION VENTURES

### AFCE2015 draws AGST Alliance participants

**A number of AGST Alliance faculty and doctoral candidates participated in the biennial *Asian Forum for Christian Educators*, held in Jakarta in May.**

Focusing on the theme *Theological education that impacts – on what? for what?* AFCE2015 was an enriching networking weekend for the 27 participants, drawn from theological (and other) education settings between the Middle East and New Zealand.

Typical of the feedback received after AFCE2015...

- *"It more than met my expectations in terms of networking; reminders of important things; new learnings and the welcome challenge of being outside my normal cocoon."*
- *"Very valuable for me... to see the passion, gender diversity and love for Jesus abroad in regional theological educators."*



"Caution: Minds at work". Rosalind Lim-Tan (EdD(Child & Family Development) Program Director), Kenn Iskov (EdD candidate) and Sunny Tan (Governing Board Chair and Theology Programs Director) during an AFCE2015 session.

### Biennial MATS meeting

**AGST Alliance leaders and faculty of our Malaysian consortium member seminaries also joined in the biennial meeting of the *Malaysian Association of Theological Schools*, held at *Malaysia Bible Seminary* in April.**

Opportunities like this, though short, are significant for mutual encouragement and for discussing informed responses to issues relating to worrying developments in Malaysian national affairs.



- *Thank God for opportunities like AFCE2015 and MATS for AGST Alliance personnel to collaborate in national and regional theological education ventures.*
- *Pray that AGST Alliance will continue to collaborate creatively, as demonstration of a key Kingdom value.*

## FOR DONORS

### Financial matters

We believe that "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply" (Hudson Taylor). 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.

Are you able to be an agent of God's supply? Financial support is welcome, whether as regular or occasional 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 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](http://www.meansusa.org)).

- *Thank God for his continuing gracious and faithful provision for AGST Alliance's financial needs.*
- *Pray that generous donors – individuals, churches, and trusts/foundations – will come forward, especially to support our revised leadership structure.*

## Apply for 2016 AGST Alliance programs

**Applications are invited from leaders looking for ministry (re-)equipping from early 2016 through one of our AGST Alliance programs:**

- **EdD(Child & Family Development)**

*For leaders-practitioners in organisations/institutions focusing on advocacy, development and/or social welfare with children and families.*

- **Masters in Transformational Development**

*For practitioners in advocacy, aid and development, and social welfare organisations.*

- **Masters in Theology**

*For leaders seeking to understand and present Christian truth in ways that are dynamically appropriate for Asian contexts.*

Who could you encourage to apply?

Check our AGST Alliance website for details and application papers.

**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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