



## Attuned

AN E-NEWSLETTER OF THE AGST ALLIANCE FOR INFORMED PRAYER AND ACTION



### **Better than New**

*" ... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."  
(Philippians 1:6)*

I accidentally broke my favorite glass the other day. My immediate response was to quickly sweep up the broken pieces, carefully wrap the pieces in a newspaper and throw everything out. After all the broken glass could no longer be used. However Makoto Fujimura, the director of the Brehm Center at Fuller Seminary introduced me to the Japanese art of *kintsugi*. Responding to a paper I presented at the Fuller Theological Seminary Missiology lectures in November 2018, he held up a *kintsugi* bowl and pointed out the beauty of this art where broken pieces are seamed together using gold.

*Kintsugi* is an ancient practice in Japan meaning "golden joinery" or "to patch with gold." When pots, bowls or glass break, artisans will repair cracked pottery with real gold, not only sealing and mending it

together, but once finished, increases the value of the bowl.

Two points caught my attention: First, the flaws/cracks/scars are not hidden but displayed. Kintsugi artistes highlight and create new designs with them, thus bringing a unique beauty to the original piece. The pottery actually becomes more beautiful and valuable in the restoration process because, though it was once broken, it not only has history, but a new story.

Second, ordinarily whenever we studiously fix broken pottery with the usual super glue, the hopeful intent is to simply make it "as good as new." After all it can never be better than the original. However, the art of *kintsugi* reinforces a profound belief that this work of artful seaming can make things not only as good as they originally were, but "better than new."

"Better than new!" This is the promise that we can carry with us in 2019. Despite the challenges we face, may we experience the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit moving to gently mend, to deftly create new designs and to faithfully complete the good work that God has started in us and in our communities.

Finally, for those of us working on our research papers, educational projects, theses and dissertations, may we rest confidently in the hope that God's strength and inspiration will lead us to a good conclusion.

Resting in the hope of God,  
Sooi Ling

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## AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

**Modules afford us this wonderful opportunity**

**to learn, discuss, eat, pray and share  
TOGETHER**

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**Christian Thinking and Ministry and Vocational Practice  
September 2018 at Melaka**



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**Theology, Spirituality and Human Development**

A module that integrates Christian spirituality and human development and

explores the area of "growing up" or "maturing" in Christ.



## **Doctoral Colloquium 2018**

The doctoral colloquium can be both invigorating and challenging for our doctoral candidates. In August 2018, 25 doctoral candidates from the DMin, PhD Theology, EdD, PhD(Education) and PhD(Biblical Studies) programs met to present their current research progress to their peers and 7 facilitators. This was a time of strong feedback-discussion, reflection, engagement and encouragement.

Let us all press on to FINISH WELL!

**FEATURING OUR STUDENTS' WORK**



## **“Contextualised Expository Preaching: A Defence”**

A MTh(Theology) Thesis

by

Neil Watkinson, MTh(Theology),

February 2018

### ABSTRACT

Evangelicals believe in the authority of Christian Scripture for both belief and behaviour. Is the practice of preaching, however, an area in which Scripture’s authority is overlooked? The predominant model of preaching in the Majority world is ‘topical’ or ‘textual’ rather than expository. This thesis is in part a response to a critique of expository preaching as culturally-determined. But it is also a reaction to the notion that preaching is no more than ‘teaching the Bible’.

Drawing on the results of evangelical scholars in the areas of biblical theology, systematic theology and contextual theology within Scripture, this thesis proposes that responsible Christian preaching should be both expository and contextualised. Beginning with the central place of the words of God in both God’s creation and God’s covenant with his people, it traces how the giving, recording, preserving, learning, passing on and contextualisation of these vital words of God has been an essential part of biblical faith throughout the OT and NT. It is observed in the ministries of Moses, the faithful priests and the writing prophets within the OT; then in the NT when the OT is applied to Jews, within the NT when the OT is applied to Gentiles and Jews, and within the creation of the NT itself.

Examining the way in which these words of God have been ‘re-preached’ to subsequent generations within the OT era shows that a foundation is laid for the exhortation to “preach the Word” in the post-apostolic age. Yet the contextualisation of God’s words, particularly evident in the NT epistles addressed to churches in various cultural contexts, demonstrates that teaching the Bible without regard for the cultural context is deficient preaching. This thesis defends the contextualised expository preaching of the words of God, showing how Scripture itself demonstrates that contextualised expository preaching can be defended on biblical grounds.

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## COMING MODULES

**Church and Society**  
With Dr Peter Rowan  
March to June 2019  
On-campus: 2-7 May, Melaka

A theological and missiological exploration on "church in social-political context."

*Note: This is a combined and integrated module for the Master of Theology, Doctor of Education and Doctor of Ministry programs*

**MTH5-2: Theological Interpretation of Scripture**  
With Dr Vincent Ooi  
July to September 2019  
On-campus: 5-9 August, MBTS Penang.

Introducing students to the themes of "Theological interpretation of Scripture" (TIS) –an approach that seeks to combine endeavours and fruits of biblical scholarship with concerns for the worship, life and mission of the church by situating the former within the wider contexts of Christian thoughts and practices past and present.

**DML2-3: Ministry Leadership**  
Dr Jeff Pugh  
July to October 2019  
On-campus: 5-10 September, Melaka

This module is designed to provide the ministry leader with a greater systemic awareness of their part in the construction of an ethical, affirming and effective organizational culture

**MED6-1: Approaches and Practices for Education- based Research**  
Dr Rosalind Tan and team  
July to September 2019  
On-campus: 22-27 August

### **Other upcoming modules and dates to note:**

#### **Doctoral Colloquium 2019**

Aug 26-28, 2019, 9am - 4pm, Kuala Lumpur

#### **MTH5-3: History and Doctrines with Dr Ong Meng Chai**

Nov 2019 to January 2020, on-campus Dec 2-6

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## PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

### **With sincere appreciation to Ogle Christian Trust**

We are very grateful to Ogle Christian Trust for their generous gift that funds AGST Alliance's subscription of several major online databases.

AGST Alliance students and faculty within the consortium continue to have 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 for our students who are working on their thesis, dissertation and research papers.

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## APPLY

- Christian Education
  - [Master of Theology \(Education\) in Spiritual Formation and Discipleship](#)
  - [Doctor of Education in Spiritual Formation and Discipleship](#)
- Theology
  - [Master of Theology](#)
- Transformational Development
  - [Master of Transformational Development](#)
  - [Graduate Diploma in Transformational Development](#)
- [Doctor of Ministry in Leadership](#)
- [Doctor of Education in Child and Family Development](#)

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Since 2004, AGST Alliance has been offering quality post-graduate programs for church leaders and seminary or Bible college faculty in mainland South East Asia, to equip them for more effective Christian ministry and mission. See <http://www.agstalliance.org> for more information.

### **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. 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'.
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