

January 2018

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Attuned

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



2018: Gardens

One of my favorite things to do in Japan is visiting their gardens. Though some may argue that these gardens can be too artificially cultivated, there is a beauty, harmony and order that helps me re-center. While visiting Bandoko garden in Wakayama (Japan) recently, I was impressed by how much care and thought is put into cultivating and maintaining the garden. Every plant is intentionally positioned, the grass patiently manicured, and the bonsai carefully pruned and refined. There is harmony within the garden, and also with the garden's immediate natural surroundings. Interestingly, if we look closely, not everything is humanly cultivated, as at Bandoko, beautiful wild flowers grew out of the crags of the rocks of the sea cliffs.

I am reminded of God's mandate in Genesis 2:15: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Human beings were given the responsibility to work (to serve or do hard work in the process of serving), and to take care (to keep something safe, with protection care and watchfulness). And that is still the mandate given to us today for the "gardens" God has

entrusted us with.

As we move on in 2018, perhaps we can step back and reflect on what specifically our gardens are: the areas of responsibilities given by God for us to cultivate, to protect and watch over. They can be – taking care of our families, our work and our ministry responsibilities, and yes ... even our studies! The papers, thesis and dissertations that we write are not merely for our own personal enrichment but for God's work and mission in the world.

As I listed out my own "gardens" at Bandoko, peace settled within me. The tasks that seemed too enormous for me became more manageable as I needed only to focus on these areas. I was assured that I only need to do my best and then rest, for God is the one who will provide the rain and the sun for growth.

2018? My encouragement to all of us is to identify our gardens, and thereafter to develop a healthy rhythm of first, working hard to serve, to care and to watch over, and second to rest. And when the tasks (or the readings, papers, dissertation or thesis) seem to be too enormous or too challenging, let us lean into God and experience God's grace that is sufficient for us, and God's strength when we are weak.

Wishing you a very joyous 2018!

Peace

Sooi Ling

AROUND OUR PROGRAMS



MODULE-SEMINAR ON APPROACHES AND PRACTICES OF RESEARCH (FEB-MAY 2017)

We had healthy, robust (and sometimes frustrating) engagement with the approaches and practices of research, during this combined module. The theology, doctor of ministry and education students combined to explore the possibilities of research in their respective areas and across disciplines.

It was a stimulating and enriching time together with the facilitators: Drs Brainerd Prince, Nam Chen Chan, Sooi Ling Tan & Rosalind Lim-Tan.



CFD2-1, MED5-2
Education in Christian Faith
Communities:
Interdisciplinary overview and rationale

DML1-5: Pastoral Theology
Issues and challenges in integrating our
beliefs and the practice of our faith.

COMING MODULES

DML1-6 (DMin)
Education for Christian
Formation

Facilitator: Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan
April-July 2018
On campus: April 19-24
@ Puri Hotel, Melaka

CFD2-4, MED5-4 (Education)
Curriculum Design & Development
in Christian Faith Communities

Facilitator: Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan
April-July 2018
On campus: April 19-24
@ Puri Hotel, Melaka

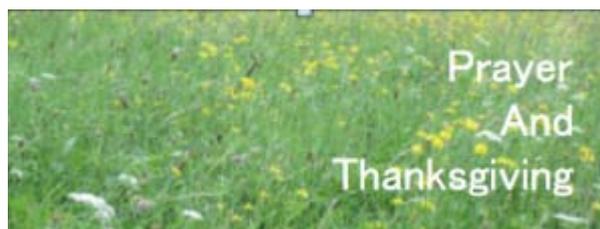
Masters of Transformational
Development
Economics, Development and
Human Flourishing

February – May 2018
On-campus: 8–13 April 2018
@ Bible College of Malaysia (PJ)

MTH4-6 (Theology)
Theologies, Contextualization,
Asian Theologies

Facilitator: Steve Taylor
February – May 2018
On-campus: 9–13 April 2018
@ Bangkok Bible Seminary

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING POINTS



We give thanks for those who have graduated!

Dr McLean Hawthorne

Doctor of Education

1. What is your dissertation about?

My dissertation is on Christian conversion and spiritual maturity from an attachment theory perspective—that is, having to do with believers' relationships with parents, closest Christian friend, and with God. The believers studied were from non-Christian family background. These "first generation" believers were from four people groups in South and Southeast Asia—in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Malaysia.



2. Share one insight that has changed the way you think theologically

My study has tempered my understanding of the paramount importance of loving people and loving God. Loving non-believers, as reflected in gaining attachment relationships with them, can have a profound impact on helping them become believers in Christ. Further, loving God, as reflected in gaining attachment relationships with Him, can have a profound impact on a believer growing in spiritual maturity.

3. How has your life changed as a result of this EDD journey?

I feel that I have grown personally, both spiritually and academically, as a result of my Ed.D. journey. I have gained discipline in working and pressing through in accomplishing tasks—even tasks that might seem insurmountable.

4. What will you say to encourage current students in the program?

To all students who are pursuing this degree, I would encourage you to press through and get the job done. I have found that the rewards, of

various types, are worth all the hard work required to finish the task!



Khanittha Panam

Master of Theology, Education

Khanittha teaches at Chiang Mai Theological Seminary, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Here are her reflections:

1. From your coursework content, share an insight that you have learned and that has changed the way you think theologically?

I have learned that in the Christian world we cannot divorce or separate the content of learning the Word of God apart from fulfilling a relational desire to be like Jesus. In other words, we cannot separate the academic aspect of learning biblical truths from the relational aspect of knowing God personally and to perfect discipleship in the manner of the way Jesus did.

2. How has your life changed as a result of this program?

This program has changed my life to bring clearly critical thinking skills as to a real relationship with Jesus Christ in my death with Him, and to be spirit-filled in fulfilling the Great Commission. My passion is to master the biblical way of forming a healthy community of discipleship in a Thai church context.



Binsen Samuel Sidjabat, PhD
Doctor of Philosophy, Education



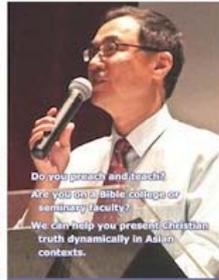
Jean Luah
Master of Theology, Theology

Trust grant for online databases

We are grateful that Ogle Trust (UK) has generously increased their funding to AGST Alliance, in order to cover the rising cost of a one-year subscription to several major online databases.

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

APPLY

   <p>Are you a leader in advocacy, development or social welfare with children and families and seeking to be more effective?</p> <p>Consider AGST Alliance's Doctor of Education in Child & Family Development</p>	   <p>Are you a senior trainer or leader in your church, denomination or organisation?</p> <p>Do you teach education or formation courses in a Bible college or seminary?</p> <p>Are you seeking a doctoral qualification to be more effective?</p> <p>Consider AGST Alliance's Doctor of Education Doctor of Philosophy in Education</p>	   <p>Do you have significant teaching leadership?</p> <p>Are you on a Bible college or seminary faculty?</p> <p>Do you read or write on Theological and biblical studies?</p> <p>Consider AGST Alliance's Doctor of Philosophy - Theology - Biblical Studies</p>	   <p>Do you preach and teach?</p> <p>Are you on a Bible college or seminary faculty?</p> <p>We can help you present Christian truth dynamically in Asian contexts.</p> <p>AGST Alliance's Master of Theology in Theology</p>	   <p>Professional development Theological education Reflective practice Ministry ministry</p> <p>Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Jointly offered by AGST Alliance - BCM - MBS</p>
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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, 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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