



Attuned

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

Boundless and Infinite

During the on-campus session in April at Malacca, Dr Rosalind Tan gently reminded us not to be “procrustean” when we design curriculum or approach education. With a wry smile I remembered the first time I heard about the proverbial rogue, Procrustes. It was while I was pursuing my Masters degree at Fuller Seminary. As a refresher, in Greek myth, Procrustes would lie in wait for unsuspecting travelers who traveled the sacred way between Athens and Eleusis. He would invite weary passers-by to spend the night in his home, rest and sleep in his “one-size-fits-all” bed. The issue was that every guest had to fit the bed. If the guests were too tall he would cut off their legs, or if too short he would stretch them on his rack.

Starting out on my studies then, all Greek names sounded the same to me. And with a huff and a puff I was adamant that I was not “procrustean” in any way. However this story (and image) continued to gently prick me. Slowly and grudgingly, I realized that I suffered a “fitting” tendency. I was encrusted in

my thinking. I was always out to “prove” something or other. Through the years till today, I have had to rehabitualize myself to approach issues in my learning not with a predetermined outcome, but with an investigative approach, allowing the Holy Spirit to continually lead and re-formulate my assumptions. Words like deconstruction, reconstruction, flexibility, dialogical, reflexivity, imagination drew me into a somewhat perilous journey. Today I must say that it has been a deeply formative one as I encountered a God who is infinite and boundless.

As we approach this second half of the year, and with many of us doing research and writing our dissertations, thesis and papers, let us be reminded about the boundless knowledge that rests with our infinite God. Let us approach our work with a posture of learning and openness, and let us walk closely with the Holy Spirit who convicts, changes and teaches in this adventure of learning and formation.

Sooi Ling

AROUND OUR PROGRAMS

DMin and Education Module

Education and Curriculum Development in Faith Communities



Students from the Education program and Doctor of Ministry program met together for their on-campus session with Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan to explore the areas of education in faith communities and curriculum development. As a learning community, we explored the vital role of teaching and learning in healthy formation and discipleship, as well as the systematic planning of that process.



Through lectures, group discussion and participatory learning activities, we also delved into the nature and process of developing a strong curriculum for our faith communities.



Interestingly, learning took place beyond the classroom and was present throughout conversations, meals, the spiritual formation day and even celebrating Daniel Leong's birthday on the last night. Another highlight was seeing relationships develop despite our differences. There was a broad diversity represented in this group in terms of ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, and denominations. The experience of listening, speaking, discussing, worshiping, choosing songs that everyone knows and can sing together, vulnerably sharing our psalm composition and simply enjoying each other's company, was a wonderful expression of togetherness in diversity. It was enriching in every way.

MTh(Theology) On-campus



Meeting in Bangkok to engage with issues regarding theology, contextualization and Asian theologies with Dr Steve Taylor.

What students say ...

Jong Seok

... One thing I appreciate most, besides the insight and encouragement I got from Dr. Steve, is the variety of students' national and career backgrounds. Our various experiences enriched the discussion and interactions during the module.

CT Lim

... Dr Steve is truly splendid from the organization of the notes, engaging lectures and discussion, to the administration of meals and other minute details. The warm hospitality from him and the staff is second to none. Finally, the sharing of insights and experiences in the ministry in relation to the module by my fellow course mates are so illuminating and encouraging even as I endeavor to find firm footing in my own journey of

faith and ministry.

David Sheahan

... I appreciated the comprehensive nature of the assigned readings, covering thought from around Asia, and covering a range of theological persuasions. I also appreciated having representatives in my fellow students from a wide swath of Asia who could interact with the views we were reading more knowledgeably than I could. I appreciated Dr. Taylor's guided approach. He knew what he wanted the group to cover, what he himself wanted to teach, but also left room for the conversation to flow naturally along lines arising spontaneously.

Sam Goh

... I appreciated the interaction with other students and the lecturer, hearing their Asian cultural experiences and reflecting together on various theological issues of concern to the Asian church and society.

COMING MODULES



Research
How do I begin?
Asking good questions?
Critical writing
Critical reading
Critical thinking?

INTERESTED?

Join us for a seminar with
Dr Brainerd Prince

13-16 August 2018 . CCM Ecumenical centre, PJ.
contact: registrar@agstalliance.org

**DML2-1 (DMin)
Christian Thinking and Ministry-
Vocational Practice**

Facilitator: Jennifer Turner
July-October 2018
On campus: Sep 6-11
@ Puri Hotel, Melaka

**CFD2-5, MED5-5 (Education)
Christian Thinking and Ministry-
Vocational Practice**

Facilitator: Jennifer Turner
July-October 2018
On campus: Sep 6-11
@ Puri Hotel, Melaka

**MTH4-7 (Theology)
Theology, Spirituality and Human
Development**

Facilitator: Sunny Tan
November 2018–January 2019
On-campus: 3-7 December 2018
@ Malaysia Baptist Theological
Seminary, Penang.

**Master of Transformational
Development:
Doing Theology in the Context of
Poverty and Injustice**

August – November 2018
On-campus: 23–28 September 2018
@ Menara Wesley (KL)

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING POINTS

Thanksgiving!

Praising God for our graduates. Congratulations Neil and Jean!



Neil Watkinson, MTh(Theology)

February 2018

Thesis title - Contextualised expository
preaching: A defence

Supervisor - Rev Dr Peter Adam



Jean Luah, MTh(Theology)

August 2017

Thesis title - Kevin J. Vanhoozer's Theological Hermeneutics: The place of the reader in sense-making in Christian Scriptures.

Supervisor - Dr Clement Chia

Interview with Jean Luah

From your coursework and thesis, share one insight that has changed the way you think theologically?

Jean: The exposure to theology in Asia showed me the urgency and need for contextually pertinent Christian reflection and practice. Without sound theological diagnosis of our own cultures (including our own church practices), it would be like trying to steer a car in a fog. One would be ineffective in challenging oneself and one's community to be renewed in Christ-conformity and be faithful testimony to Christ in our cultures.

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

Jean: AGST Alliance's curriculum challenged me to think more deeply about theological issues across a broad spectrum of topics, in the contexts of practice in our contexts. I can confidently say I have become better read in a range of subjects, and more confident for ministry in Asia.

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

Jean: Persevere in faith. Trust God in this mountain-climbing adventure. The going is tough. Some learning involves scaling sheer cliffs. You might even occasionally experience oxygen deprivation. But He who calls us and directs us in this path is faithful. Hold tightly on!

Prayer Points

- For our students as they press on in their thesis and dissertation writing. Pray that they will be able to set aside time from their ministry responsibilities to focus on writing.
- For financial aid and resources for students.
- Governing Board meeting on 27 August.
- Safe travels for our students and faculty as they meet for the

doctoral colloquium. Pray for a fruitful time together.

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, 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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