

A Glimpse of Theological Education in Korea

By Dr. Joseph Shao, ATA General Secretary



Participants in the joint consultation of the Society for the Reformed Life Theology (SRLT) and the Korea Evangelical Theological Society (KETS)

ATA is growing in Asia. With 219 members in 25 nations, it is beneficial for ATA leaders to join together in international theological conclaves. To do so recognizes that God has blessed the Asian church with so many theological institutions that are faithfully teaching the Word of God. The recent invitations of the Society for the Reformed Life Theology (SRLT) and the Korea Evangelical Theological Society (KETS) embodied the value of such theological interchange when Drs. Joseph Shao, Akio Hashimoto and Bruce Nicholls were invited to present academic papers to the International Joint Conference, commemorating the 35th Anniversary of Baekseok Schools of the two societies.

The Consultation, attended by more than 800 participants, was held at the Convention Hall of the Baekseok University, Cheonan Campus on October 28-29, 2011. The theme of the joint consultation was "Back to the Bible: Life, Gospel and Church." The ATA leadership team was not only happy to meet with key ATA Korean members, but also enjoyed the opportunity to engage other evangelical leaders in both SRLT and KETS. Indeed, outside of North America, the annual gathering of Korean evangelicals is a very impressive event, being the largest in Asia. God is alive in Asia, readily reflected by His provision of many qualified faculty in Korea.

Each of the invited ATA scholars took turns in presenting papers to their

respective nine interest groups. Dr. Shao, General Secretary of ATA, presented "Transforming Theological Message of Old Testament Narratives" to the Old Testament session. Dr. Hashimoto, Chair of ATA, explained "The Doctrine of Justification by Faith with its Actuality Today" to the Systematic Theology session. Lastly, Dr. Nicholls, Senior Adviser of ATA, expounded on "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Asian and Middle East Contexts in Response to Islamic Hermeneutics" to the Mission session. There was always a moderator with designated responder in each session, followed by group discussion. All three presenters received a warm welcome and response from the participants.

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Dr. Shao presenting a paper in the Old Testament session

Dr. Bong Ro, Senior Adviser of ATA, joined the Consultation to help the ATA representatives link with the Korean theological educators. In keeping with this purpose, we were able to present the vision and mission of ATA prior to closing ceremonies, including the introduction of ATA publications such as the *Asia Bible Commentaries* and other excellent books. Hopefully, the Korean theological educators will respond by contributing to the growing needs of theological education throughout Asia.

Dr. Jin Sup Kim, the Vice President of the Baekseok University and the President of the SRLT, chaired the Opening Worship Service. Dr. Kim, a member of ATA CAED, arranged for the ATA leadership team to have a closer fellowship with the KETS, along with Dr. Seock-Tae Sohn, former President of Reformed Theological Seminary and former Chair of KETS and a member of ATA Board. Drs. Kim and Shao visited a significant Chinese theological seminary in Seoul.

As this is the third visit of ATA leadership team to Korea, Dr. Jung-Sook Lee, had also graciously arranged a meeting with a few key representatives of ATA member schools such as Torch Trinity, Chongsin University, ACTS, and Reformed Theological Seminary. Some challenges and problems of Korean theological education were presented. We were able to report on the current growth of ATA and the needs for Korean theological educators to allot time and effort to partner with some schools in Asia.

In further reflection, we see that the growth of a church influences the role and importance of theological education. Theological education, on the other hand, also influences the growth of the church. This mutual effect is illustrated by the

Korean experience. With many participants at the joint Consultation, Korean theological education continues to be a blessing to the churches in Korea, Asia and the world. Since there are many theologians, Bible scholars, missiologists, Christian educators, and counselors who are trained in the West, most of the faculty if not all of them held earned doctorate degrees with English proficiency. As there are many schools that have such qualified faculty to teach Ph.D. students, there are also many students who can now benefit from using their own national language to learn and write. Furthermore, we observed that there were a few who grew up in the West and have also returned to serve in their country. This, too, would enhance more dialogue with other key evangelical theological educators in Asia.



Drs. Akio Hashimoto and Joseph Shao with Korean leaders



Dr. Joseph Shao signing his Nehemiah Commentary at a Chinese Seminary

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ATA Korea/Japan Conference Held in Seoul

The ATA Korea and Japan held their regular conference in Seoul, Korea on November 11-12. The participants from these regional ATA gather together for academic interest and fellowship. There were eight participants from Japan, 40 from Korea, and one Korean from the Philippines. The conference was made possible after several correspondences between Dr. Akio Hashimoto (General Secretary for ATA Japan and ATA Chairperson) and Dr. Jung-Sook Lee (General Secretary for ATA Korea and ATA board member).



Participants in the joint ATA Korea-Japan Conference

The program opened with a worship service and the day was made enjoyable by a "getting to know" activity led by Dr. Steve Chang (Torch Trinity Graduate University, formerly Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology). The first paper entitled "Theological Reflection on the 3/11 Great Earthquake and Tsunami" was presented by Dr. Yoshiyuki Nisioka (Tokyo Biblical Seminary).

The morning devotion on the second day was led by Dr. Jong Chun Won (ACTS/Asia United Theological University). Two short papers as responses to the 3/11 Earthquake and Tsunami were read by Dr. Eiko Takamizawa (Torch Trinity Graduate University) and Dr. Sandeog Kim (Reformed Theological University). A paper entitled "The Advancement of Gospel in Korea" by Dr. Hyung Yong Park provoked many questions and discussions not necessarily as direct response to his paper but as integrative response to the conference

theme, "Church and Mission in Japan and Korea."

The officers from both sides conducted a business meeting after the conference. In this meeting Dr. Takanori Kobayashi (Tokyo Christian University) read his proposals for the next five to ten years of ATA. This stimulated discussion on how ATA Korea and Japan can contribute to the advancement of ATA. The next regional conference will be held in Kobe, Japan in November 2012.

This conference was made possible through the generous provisions of many including Daehan Theological University (Dr. Hyo Je Chung, President), Torch Trinity Graduate University (Dr. David Sangbok Kim, President), Korea United Pharmaceutical Company (Dr. Duk Young Kang, President), and Baekseok Culture University (Dr. Young Min Ko, President).

Association for Postgraduate Theological Education in Asia Establishes Office in Jakarta, Indonesia

On November 2, 2011 the principals or rektors of five theological colleges, each of whom has postgraduate degree programs from M.A. to D.Th., met at the Transit Hotel at the Jakarta Airport to launch the Association for Postgraduate Theological Education in Asia (APTEI). This was the third meeting in 2011, and at least four other schools were expected to join. The function of APTEI is to help member seminaries to meet the standards set by the government-sponsored National Accreditation Agency (NAA) in order for them to be licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer postgraduate degrees. The NAA requires such colleges to have six full-time faculty with recognized Ph.D. by 2012.

APTEI recommends that faculty seeking Ph.D. studies enroll either at the NAA-approved AGST Philippines or with SAIACS Bangalore, India, which is now recognized by the state University of Mysore. To provide for their shorter-term needs, APTEI is recruiting qualified faculty on a contract basis. At present applications from Singapore, India and

soon Korea are being considered. APTEI is establishing an office at the Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Amanat Agung seminary in Jakarta to coordinate the needs and to liaise with government departments on behalf of member schools seeking accreditation. A foundation to assist faculty needing financial help for their advanced studies is being considered. Dr. Andreas Himawan of STT Amanat Agung was appointed as chairman, and Ariasa Supit of STT Rahmat Emmanuel as secretary.

APTEI will function as AGST Indonesia, fulfilling its wider functions but not offering degrees. As APTEI schools are accredited by the Indonesian government, they will be licensed to train future faculty for the 350 Bible schools and seminaries in Indonesia and give advanced training to pastors, missionaries and church workers. Members of APTEI are encouraged to seek ATA accreditation and to take part in all the ministries of ATA.



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ATA's VET Visits Various Theological Schools in Asia

Visit to Discipleship Training Centre, Singapore

The Visiting Evaluation team (VET) consisting of Dr. Narendra John, ATA Accreditation Secretary; Dr. Brian Wintle, Regional Secretary-ATA India; and Dr. Jeannette Shubert (EAST-Singapore) visited the Discipleship Training Centre (DTC) on March 23-26, 2011.



Faculty and students in Discipleship Training Center

Discipleship Training Centre was founded in August 1968 by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF). The mission and vision statements of the institution emphasize equipping graduates to serve the churches in Asia and the rest of the world through the formation and discipling of the whole person within a residential cross-cultural community under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, there is a strong emphasis on spiritual and personal formation and the programs offered are mission-oriented.

The DTC offers Graduate Diploma in Intercultural Studies, Master of Christian Ministry, and Master of Christian Studies under the leadership of Dr. George Capaque.

Visit to Singapore Bible College



Teacher's Day celebration at SBC

The VET consisting of Dr. Narendra John, CAED Secretary; Dr. Sunny Tan, Academic Dean of Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary; and Dr. Philip Satterthwaite, Principal, Biblical Graduate School of Theology, visited Singapore Bible College (SBC) on September 20-22, 2011.

The SBC was founded in 1952 to provide evangelical theological education to all denominations. The school moved to its present premise at Adam Road in 1958. The campus housed the two Schools of Theology (in English and in Chinese), the School of Music, and the School of Counseling. Currently, SBC has more than 500 students representing more than 20 denominations and 20 countries.

Dr. Albert Ting has been the principal of SBC since 2006. One significant change in the school in the last five years is the phasing out of its Bachelors program. SBC decided to be a "graduate school" offering only masters level and doctoral level programs (i.e., Graduate Diploma, M.A., M.Div., M.Th., and D.Min.).

Visit to Alpha Omega International College, Malaysia



The Visiting Evaluating Team with AOIC leaders and faculty

The VET consisting of Dr. Brian Wintle, Regional Secretary-ATA India; Rev. Peter Soh, Academic Dean, AGBC, Singapore; and Dr. Narendra John, ATA Accreditation Secretary, visited the Alpha Omega International College, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, on September 28-30, 2011.

The AOIC began in 1998 as a regional institution under the Theological Centre for Asia, Singapore. However, in 2007,

it became an independent entity with its own Chancellor and President. The vision behind its founding was the spread of the Gospel and leadership development for the church. It is an institution under the Grace Assembly, a congregation of the Assemblies of God. Dr. Teresa Chai Mei Lian serves as the school president.

AOIC is offering Certificate, Diploma, and Bachelor programs in English, Chinese and Tamil and M. A. and M. Div. programs in English.

Visit to Asian Christian Academy-Evangelical Theological Seminary, India

The VET consisting of Dr. Brian Wintle, Regional Secretary-ATA India; Dr. Theresa Lua, Dean, AGST Philippines; and Dr. Abraham Saggi, Academic Dean and Registrar, SAIACS, Bangalore, visited the Asian Christian Academy-Evangelical Theological Seminary (ACA-ETS) in Hosur, Tamilnadu, India on October 17-19, 2011.



The Visiting Evaluating Team with ACA-ETS leaders and faculty

ACA-ETS started in 1983 in rented facilities in Bangalore. ACA moved to the new campus in 1991. The facilities are located on a sprawling 22 acres campus, with an adjacent 18 acres farm land. Several other ministries run on the campus, including a High School, which is very popular in the locality.

The vision and mission statements of the institution lay emphasis on scholarship for mission and church planting. Accordingly, there is a dual focus—Bible and Systematics, on the one hand, and evangelism and mission, on the other. The school is offering Master of Biblical Studies and Master of Theology.

Visit to South East Asia Bible Seminary, Indonesia



The Visiting Evaluating Team with SEABS leaders and faculty

The VET consisting of Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA Asst. Accreditation Secretary and AGST Dean; Dr. Purnawan Tenibemas, Professor, Tiranus Bible Seminary; and Dr. Calvin Chong, Academic Dean, Singapore Bible College visited South East Asia Bible Seminary (SEABS) in Malang, Indonesia on November 7-9, 2011.

The SEABS, formerly known as Seminari Alkitab Asia Tenggara (SAAT), was founded in 1952. Originally, the seminary was focused on training ministers for the Chinese churches in Indonesia. But in 1967, SEABS started to accept students from various tribes and backgrounds. In 2004 SEABS started the Mandarin program and accepted students from China.

The beautiful campus of the SEABS covers 6.5 hectares. The excellent facilities are situated in the midst of well-landscaped surroundings. In addition to the main campus, there is also an off campus Counseling Center in Malang and the new Ministry Center on the 15th floor of the tower block at Central Park Mall in Jakarta.

The mission of SEABS is to produce theological scholars who can take the role as servants of God, and who can serve His people in ways that are pleasing to God. The seminary's motto is *For Christ, for the Church, for the World, for the glory of God!* SEABS is offering Diploma, Bachelor, M.A., M.Div., Th.M., and D.Min. programs.

“Scripture: Its Authority, Meaning and Mission” A Defining Theological Consultation

ATA invites teachers, pastors and marketplace workers to come to the Malaysia Bible Seminary, near Kuala Lumpur, on June 18-22, 2012, to help define our theological task of interpreting the place of Scriptures in the life of our Asian, Middle Eastern and South Pacific churches. This includes their authority in the context of other philosophical and religious claims, their interpretation in our postmodern religious and secular world of oppression and greed, and their call for us to take part in the five spheres of mission—evangelism, pastoral care and training, compassionate service, justice in society and the care of God’s creation. Some suggested themes include:

- Jesus’ and the apostles’ use of the Old Testament in the context of demonic power
- The role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the biblical writers and in illuminating the receivers of the text
- Interpreting God’s progressive revelation and the plain meaning of the Bible in the context of claims to revelation in other Asian religions
- Distinctives in methodology in interpreting the Bible in Asia and the Middle East
- The role of church dogmatics, tradition and reason in interpreting the Bible
- The use of the Bible in daily devotional life and in the preaching, teaching and counseling ministries of the church
- Biblical conversion among a generation seeking personal identity
- The biblical response to personal, social and national ethical issues in an age of tolerance and relativism in the church and in the marketplace
- The power of Scripture in overcoming temptation, suffering and the persecution of those who live by the Gospel

Is there a hermeneutical issue here—as with Jeremiah’s “burning fire shut up in my bones”—that you must share in a paper with all attending the Consultation?

Send your registration to Bubbles Lactaen at the ATA office, Manila, ataasia@gmail.com by May 15, 2012 to secure a place. Accommodation is limited.

Send your paper (c. 3000 words) to Dr. Bruce Nicholls, bknichol@ihug.co.nz by April 15, 2012.

You may cover the cost of your accommodation and registration (\$145) on arrival.

ICETE’s 2012 International Consultation

The keynote address for the 2012 ICETE International Consultation for Theological Educators will be delivered by Chris Wright, the principal architect of the Lausanne Movement’s historic 2010 Cape Town Commitment. ICETE’s fifteenth Consultation is taking place OCTOBER 15-19, 2012 in NAIROBI, KENYA.

Chris Wright, International Director of Langham Partnership International, will lead participants in exploring the Consultation’s theme “The Relevance of the Cape Town Commitment for Contemporary Theological Education.” Also addressing participants in plenary session will be two other global evangelical leaders: Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair of the Lausanne Movement (LCWE), speaking on “The Vision of Lausanne for Theological Education”; and Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), speaking on “Theological Education’s Role in Global Evangelicalism.”

ICETE’s triennial consultations are widely popular for offering evangelical theological educators, the only occasion of its kind for peer professional interaction at global level. The 2012 Consultation will provide participants with a range of seminars, panel discussions, workshops, and roundtable discussions in areas of common interest additional to the Consultation theme.

The triennial gathering is organized as an in-house family event. Participation is open to delegates from any theological school linked with one of ICETE’s member associations around the world (ATA, ACTEA, AETAL, ABHE, EEAA, E-AAA, CETA, SPAEC), or representatives from any other entity formally associated with ICETE. Guests or observers are accommodated on an invitation basis only.

The 2012 Consultation’s composite participation fee is US\$750 per individual (covering registration, accommodation, and meals). However, delegates from institutions that are formally linked to one of ICETE’s member associations, or from other ICETE-linked entities, are eligible for a 50% discount on the Consultation fee. Travel and related expenses are the responsibility of the sponsoring institution or individual. Since space at the Nairobi consultation will be limited, those interested in attending should begin inquiries at this time, by contacting the ICETE Consultation Directorate for registration instructions. Include indication of the institution or entity being represented and its ICETE connection. Address inquiries to: ICETE2012Nairobi@gmx.net.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The Journal of Asian Mission (JAM) seeks articles written by missionaries, scholars, and students of missions.

JAM seeks to provide a forum to assess theories and practices of mission applied in the past or proposed for the future, and to encourage reflective thinking among Christian leaders training Asians for the missionary task and those working toward the evangelization of Asia.

The journal is published twice yearly. Articles should be 5,000 to 7,500 words in length including footnotes and bibliography. Style should conform to guidelines found in the current edition of Kate Turabian, et al., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

They should be in electronic format that is compatible with Microsoft Word and may be submitted to: The Editor, Anne C. Harper, gharper@alum.mit.edu.

To All ATA Member Schools

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