

Our ATA Vision for Asia

By Dr. Bruce Nicholls, ATA Senior Advisor

When you share a need people will respond by giving as they are able, but when you share a vision that people can identify with they become part of it. Our theological task is to call our members to identify with Christ's vision for Asia and when we succeed to give God all the glory.

The speed of radical change across Asia is a call to identify with Christ's vision to train the whole people of God, using our theological institutions as his agent for establishing his kingdom on earth. This is an awesome challenge.

For 40 years we have focused on the training of servant leaders for Asian churches. We have accredited seminaries at the level of their competence, we have established post-graduate AGST consortiums, publishing commentaries, and sponsored conferences on issues our members face. All these goals must be continued with increasing intensity as our churches respond both to the escalating of human suffering and the amazing opportunities to herald the Gospel even in severely restricted nations.

Christ's vision goes beyond building the church to transforming the nations and their cultures. This is clear in the commission with which he began his ministry (Luke 4:16-21). His vision

was of the kingdom coming now and yet still to be fulfilled, a vision of redeeming and transforming the whole of creation. Our theology is never abstract but always encultured in our own culture and in our national history. Our vision is to integrate word and deed, to integrate our theological understanding in the plurality of cultures in the regions we serve.

Vision needs purpose and direction, it evokes emotion and motivates to action. Criticism and opposition always follow but where the Spirit guides and empowers our vision it will succeed. Winston Churchill the war-time Prime Minister of England had one message for his embattled nation, "Never, never give up!" If our vision is Christ's vision then we must persevere until it is fulfilled.

What is your vision for ATA for the next ten years, 2015-2025? Here are some possibilities for your consideration:

1. To establish a line of theological research centers and communities across Asia for the contextualizing of the Gospel and the revisioning of our task in theological education. The publishing of articles, monographs and books will flow from these centers, ebook publishing is the way of the future.



2. To use God's gift of the internet to provide continuing theological education for those in the professions, government service and in the market place, who from age, family or location are unable to take a campus based education. Online courses are the way of the future.

3. To sponsor national and regional workshops and conferences on the issues that are now reshaping our cultures. These might include climate change, the social media, the arts in worship and lifestyle, etc. Meeting in small groups is the way of the future.

To achieve any or all of these visions ATA will need to expand its infrastructure by creating new departments with their own staff and finance. I encourage you to share your vision for ATA in the next issue of ATA news. ■

ATA Annual Meetings Highlight Significant Accomplishments and Decisions



The ATA Board and leaders of Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development (CAED) and AGST Council

On January 20-23, 2015 more than 20 ATA leaders attended its annual meetings held at the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines. Dr. Joseph Shao, ATA General Secretary, reported on the quality assurance affiliation, literature partnership, international dialogue, and infrastructure development. Dr. Shao concluded his report by saying: "May God continue to use ATA for his glory and honor."

The reports of the newly-installed Regional Secretary of ATA India, Dr. Paul Cornelius, on the other hand, included its work on the accreditation visits, registration of students attending ATA accredited schools, database consolidation, discipleship seminars, and collaboration with Martin Luther Christian University.

Accreditation visits from other regional ATA such as Central Asia and West Asia were also reported. In addition to accreditation visits, the CAED Secretary highlighted the completion of the revision of CAED Manual. There were improvements and new policies for non-campus based and online programs with some implications for campus-based program. An edition for 2015 manual was approved by the members of CAED. Additional revisions will be included in the 2016 edition for the Triennial General Assembly.

The ATA Publications Committee reports focused on the partnership agreement between ATA and Langham Literature; writer's scholarship grant from Asbury Seminary, proposed mission and vision statements; Asia Bible Commentary series; non-commentary book projects; and ATLA (American Theological Library Association) registration for journals. ATA is grateful for the participation of Pieter Kwant, International Programme Director for Langham Literature and Luke Lewis, Publishing Operations in these annual meetings.

The need for revision of the Handbook and Policies of the AGST occurred during the discussions of deans from AGST Philippines, Japan, Alliance, and Korea.

The four-day annual meeting was concluded with the announcement that Dr. Theresa Lua will be the new full-time General Secretary of the ATA International. Dr. Lua is presently the Secretary of Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development (CAED). She will be installed at the Triennial General Assembly on August 2016 at the Chongshin University and Theological Seminary in Seoul, South Korea. The planning team for the next General Assembly composed of Dr. Takanori Kobayashi (Board Chairman),

Dr. Carver Yu (Senior Advisor), Dr. Andreas Himawan (Board Member), Dr. Jung-Sook Lee (Board Secretary), Dr. Jangmook Manoch (Board Member) and Dr. Theresa Lua (CAED Secretary) will meet on August 10-13, 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. In-Sub Ahn, Professor of Church History at Chongshin University, will join this meeting. The meeting ended with words of encouragement from the ATA International Chairman. ■

On February 28, 2015 the ATA-Korea had its General Assembly and renewed the offices for two years as follow:

Chairperson: **Dr. Kim, Young-Ook**
(President of ACTS)

Vice Chairpersons: **Dr. Gil, Ja-Youn**
(President of Chongshin University),

Dr. Kim, Jin-Sup
(Vice-President of Baekseok University)

General Secretary: **Dr. Chong, Hung-Ho**
(Dean of Graduate Schools of ACTS)

Scribe: **Dr. Lee, Jung-Sook**
(Vice-President of Torch Trinity)

Treasurer: **Dr. Cho, Sung-Hun**
(President of Reformed Theological Seminary)

Visits to Schools in Calcutta, India



Dr. Joseph Shao with some faculty members of Buntain Theological College

Dr. Takanori Kobayashi with the graduating students of Buntain Theological College

Dr. Takanori Kobayashi, ATA Chairman and Dr. Joseph Shao, ATA General Secretary visited the Buntain Theological College in Calcutta, India. They separately shared God's message during the

chapel services at Buntain's new campus on February 23 and 27, respectively. Under the leadership of Dr. Arun Sarkar, God is blessing the school. Dr. Shao also visited the church founded by William Carey called Carey Baptist

Church, and spoke at the chapel of Calcutta Bible College. Both schools are accredited members of ATA International. ■

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ATA and OC Hold Faculty Seminar in Myanmar



The ATA and Overseas Council (OC) collaborated on a faculty seminar held on February 16-17, 2015 at the Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (MEGST). There were 29 participants from 10 schools in Yangon, Chin State, and Kachin State. Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA Secretary of Accreditation and Educational Development, and Dr. Ashish Chrispal, Overseas Council Regional Director in Asia facilitated the seminar-workshop which focused on *Outcomes-Based Education, Integrated Learning, Designing Course Syllabus, Learning-Centered Approach to Teaching, and Assessment*. Group activities included designing a lesson plan with specific learning outcomes and learning tasks. The faculty expressed an *ah-ha moment*: “teaching that focuses on student learning is hard work!” They appreciated the efforts of ATA and OC in building their capacity as theological educators and pointed out the need for on-going faculty enhancement seminars specially for those outside Yangon. ■

A Step Toward Mutual Respect and Recognition of Degrees



Drs. Joseph Shao and Takanori Kobayashi (ATA International) and Drs. Shekar Singh and Paul Cornelius (ATA India) with the leaders of Senate of Serampore College

With a purpose to mutually respect and recognize graduate and post-graduate degrees, the Senate of Serampore College invited key representatives to a round table discussion on February 23-25, 2015 in Calcutta, India. ATA was represented by our Chair, Dr. Takanori Kobayashi, and our General Secretary, Dr. Joseph Shao. Dr. Shekar Singh, ATA-India Chair and Dr. Paul Cornelius, ATA Regional Secretary were also present. The Senate of Serampore College was represented by four leaders: the Master, Bishop John

S. Sadananda; the Registrar, Dr. Santanu Patro; the Secretary of Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC), Dr. Mohan Larbeer; the Dean of Sceptre Center, Dr. Wati Langchar. Asia Forum for Theological Education Coordinator, PekHo Ng, chaired the meeting. Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) Executive Director, Dr. Limuel Equina, Dr. H. S. Wilson, and Dr. Ekue Amele also participated in the discussion.

A trip to Serampore allowed the ATA representatives to appreciate the centralization of the Serampore College, founded by the Father of Modern Mission, William Carey. With interchange of ideas, the leaders of Serampore College appreciated the quality assurance and accreditation of ATA International. Though no formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed, a big step toward mutual respect and recognition was attempted. ■

ATA Publications in Progress



Some members of Publications Committee and ATA staff with Pieter Kwant and Luke Lewis during the 2015 ATA annual meetings held at the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines

The Lord has been good to our Publications Committee:

1. For our commentary, Langham Partnership is now publishing our Asia Bible Commentary series. The series will soon be available in both print and ebook. During the ATA board meeting last January, Pieter Kwant, International Programme Director for

Langham Literature and Luke Lewis, Publishing Operations came to the Philippines to discuss the plan. The goal is that in the next 10 years or less, we will be able to finish the remaining 37 volumes of the commentary series. This is a huge task and we ask for your prayers. We believe that the churches in Asia need a commentary for each book of the Bible which is written for the church and the different contexts of Asia. At present,

most of the commentaries are written from the West by western scholar. But since the church in Asia is growing, we need to address the growing needs here. Specifically, for this year, we are aiming to finish the manuscripts for the following books so that they will be out in time for the next ATA General Assembly in 2016:

a. Epistles of John by Gilbert Soo Hoo with Pervaiz Sultan as Contextualization Consultant

b. James by Luke Cheung and his wife, Helen
c. Judges by Athena Gorospe and Charles Ringma

Possibly, Lamentations and 1 Corinthians, too. Please pray for the authors of these books as they complete the manuscripts and make the necessary revisions. We acknowledge that this is also a spiritual ministry that we will have an impact in the lives of people both now and in the succeeding generations of Asian believers.

2. Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology and Journal of Asian Mission are now in the process of being reviewed by the committee from ATLA. We hope these journals will soon be available in ATLA so that scholars around the world will benefit from what we are writing. Please pray for George and Anne Harper, our editors.

3. We hope to publish next year two non-commentary books on Christology – The Faces of Christ in the Philippines and the Christology Consultation papers from Korea last year.

Thank you for your partnership with us. ■

We will be staying at the beautiful Antedon Garden Hotel (www.akkaantedon.com) in Antalya, Turkey. Enjoy the views on the hotel website, but there is no need to book a room--we will take of booking as part of your registration.

There is a 10% discount for those who register and complete payment by 30 April.

Please follow this link to register www.regonline.com/icetetriennial15

You may make a payment and update your registration at any time, including travel details and workshop selection, by returning to the registration site.

Please spread the word about this exciting event by sharing our poster. We look forward to seeing you in Antalya in November! Please contact Mrs. Stefani Ferenzi (sferenzi@icete-edu.org) with any questions.

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Email: asianeducatorsforum@gmail.com

We are delighted to announce that registration is now open for the 2015 ICETE C-15 consultation--*Engaged and Effective: the Impact of Theological Education*. The event will begin with **dinner on Friday 6 November** and conclude with **lunch on Wednesday 11 November**.

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