

ATA Triennial General Assembly in Jakarta, Indonesia: A Testament of ATA Growth

By Dr. Joseph Shao, ATA General Secretary



On August 12 to 16, 2013, 235 delegates from 27 nations gathered at the South East Asia Bible Seminary (SEABS) Ministry Center, Jakarta, Indonesia for the Triennial General Assembly of Asia Theological Association. This General Assembly, convened by Dr. Theresa Lua, was a gathering of significant prime movers of theological education in Asia and beyond Asia. Aside from the presidents, deans, and faculty of key theological seminaries, we had a few ATA partners and friends who joined us. As this is a gathering of evangelical theologians, there were some old timers, and new participants.

With the theme "Communicating the Gospel Contextually in Contemporary

Asia," the General Assembly was designed to emphasize the centrality of the Gospel, address the issues of context, and understand the challenge of contemporary Asia. With a simple opening ceremony, a keynote address was given by Dr. Joseph Shao, on the first night. Dr. Bruce Nicholls presented four newly published Asia Bible Commentaries namely *Psalms 1-72*, *Psalms 73-150*, *Joel, Nahum & Malachi*, and *Romans*, and one book, *Light For Our Path*. He also introduced the authors of these books who were present during the opening night.

Various speakers were arranged to give devotional talk every morning. Three plenary sessions were scheduled each day with a speaker and a respondent for each session. To encourage participation,

all the participants received the papers prior to the General Assembly. The papers presented were *Contemporary Asia: Religio-Cultural Contexts* by Dr. Ashish Chrispal (International Regional Director of the Overseas Council); *Contemporary Asia: Socio-Political Contexts* by Dr. Joseph Tong (President Emeritus at International Theological Seminary and Director of Graduate Studies at Abdi Allah Seminary, Jatim, Indonesia); *Contemporary Asia: Socio-Cultural Context (focus on Women and Children)* by Dr. Elizabeth Leelavathi Manasseh (Global Chairperson of the Commission on Women's Concerns); *Contextual Biblical Interpretation and Preaching* by Dr. Federico Villanueva (Publications Secretary of ATA and General Editor of the Asia Bible Commentary

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The participants interacting with one another in open discussions

series); *Exploring Innovations, Impacts, and Implications of New Communications and Media Development* by Dr. Calvin Chong (Associate Professor in Educational Studies at Singapore Bible College, Council Member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore, member of the Asia Theological Association Value Added Services Team, and Graduate Christian Fellowship Theological Advisory Board); *Communicating to Oral Cultures* by Dr. Samuel Chiang (Executive Director of International Orality Network) and Dr. Grant Lovejoy (first Director of Orality Strategies for International Mission Board, SBC); *Opportunities and Challenges for Theological Education in the 3rd Christian Millennium* by Dr. Richard Pratt (Founder and President of Third Millennium Ministries); *Contextualized Innovation in Theological Education* by Dr. Riad Kassis (Director of International Council for Evangelical Theological Education and also the International Director of Langham Scholars Ministry). The paper respondents were Dr. Takanori Kobayashi (Provost and Professor of New Testament Studies at Tokyo Christian University and Graduate School of Theology and the new ATA Chairman); Dr. Ajoy Kumar Lama (General Secretary of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India); Dr. Jung-Sook Lee (Vice President of Academic Development and Professor of Church History at Torch Trinity Graduate University, Korea); Dr. Natee Tanchanpongs (Academic Dean of Bangkok Bible Seminary); Dr. Timoteo Gener

(President of Asian Theological Seminary, Philippines); Dr. Bong Rin Ro (Korean Program Director of the Hawaii Theological Seminary, Honolulu); Dr. Shirley Ho (Assistant Professor of the Old Testament at China Evangelical Seminary, Taiwan); Dr. Sunny Tan (Academic Dean of the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary and Chairman of the AGST Alliance).

After a short presentation by the speaker and respondent, the delegates were divided into groups, with two or three prepared questions for discussion. All the participants engaged in an open discussion which was followed by an interaction with the plenary speaker and respondent. This format enabled the participants to be actively engaged and learn from one another.

To encourage quality education, experts in the field presented the salient topics. We purposefully arranged key ATA leaders of different countries or regions to participate. We also made sure that young and mature scholars were involved in the presentation. There were scheduled workshops that focused on different contexts and issues of gospel presentation. Scholars from various areas gathered together for a meaningful fellowship. The goal was to encourage the forming of theological societies, so that younger evangelical can start to write articles, monographs and books for the benefits of the church and the academe.

To ensure that the vision and mission of ATA will continue to grow under God's grace,



The ATA Board and Leadership Team during the Business Meeting with Dr. Takanori Kobayashi, the new ATA Chairman, delivering a closing remark



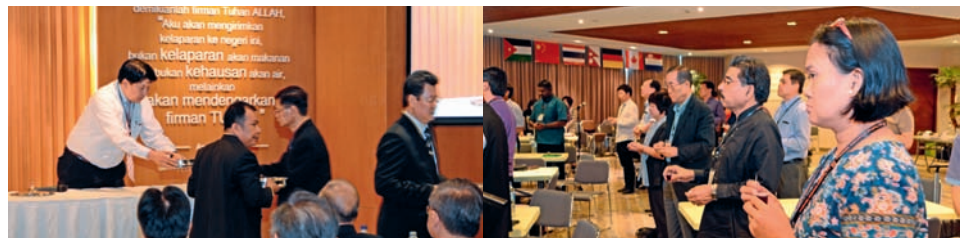
Some participants performing at the Cultural Night

a vision session was led by the incoming Chairperson, Dr. Takanori Kobayashi. In the Business Meeting, the agenda and reports were distributed to representatives of ATA members. Officers and members of the Executive Board, Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development (CAED), AGST Council and Publications were presented. They were unanimously accepted and approved.

A cultural night, started with a solemn time honoring Drs. Akio Hashimoto, Bruce Nicholls, Brian Wintle and Narendra John. These leaders have given their precious time and effort to help ATA grow to what it is today. Then, a fun night continued with interesting programs. Many participants came prepared with their national costumes while others came with their native songs. All of us had a God-honoring fun time together.

On the last day, a local pastor-evangelist reminded the participants on the importance of emphasizing the gospel in our presentation of the message. The General Assembly ended with a holy communion. Indonesian pastors distributed our cup and bread, as we celebrate Christ loving message through ATA family.

ATA is really growing. The strength of ATA is people and the passion to preach the uniqueness of the gospel in our message. We also can testify that many schools continue to excel in quality theological education for the glory of God.



The participants celebrating the Holy Communion

ATA HONORS FOUR KEY LEADERS DURING THE TRIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JAKARTA, INDONESIA



(L-R) Dr. Bruce Nicholls, Dr. Brian Wintle, Dr. Narendra John with his wife Jaya, and Dr. Akio Hashimoto

Four key leaders of Asia Theological Seminary were honored during the ATA Triennial General Assembly held last August 12, 2013 at the SEABS Ministry Center, Jakarta, Indonesia.

All of them were given plaque of appreciation in recognition of their faithful service to God and ATA family. Dr. Narendra John who has served for 20 years left tremendous impact on the accreditation work of ATA. Dr. Akio Hashimoto who served as Chairman of ATA for six years contributed significantly in the re-establishment of relationship with key theological educators and leaders in Asia. The untiring and

energetic work of Dr. Bruce Nicholls for several years as Senior Advisor and General Editor of Asia Bible Commentaries will continually inspire ATA to publish quality theological books for the church and theological institutions. Although Dr. Brian Wintle will retire on July 2014, the Board thought that it will be timely to honor him also in this historical event of ATA. Dr. Wintle has been the Regional Secretary for India since 1999. His leadership and dedication in serving ATA India brought rapid growth in its membership. The ATA family is very grateful to these men who found God's call in ATA and contributed to its work.

TCA College is an **accredited multi-disciplinary Christian college** founded by Trinity Christian Centre in 1979. The College trains and releases **all-round leaders** to make a fresh impact in the **church and marketplace**.



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Visit to Talua Ministry Centre, Vanuatu



Dr. Theresa Lua and Dr. Graham Simpson with Talua leaders and faculty



Dr. Theresa Lua and Dr. Graham Simpson with B.Min. students of TMTC

The Visiting Evaluation Team consisting of Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA Associate Accreditation Secretary and Dr. Graham Simpson, Australia, visited Talua Ministry Training Centre (TMTC) in Santo, Vanuatu on June 12-14, 2013. The VET members were warmly welcomed by the Talua community led by its principal, Pastor Fiama Rakau.

Talua Ministry Training Centre is owned by the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) and serves the denomination's mission and objectives. It has a strong partnership with the Anglican Church and also serves the other churches in Vanuatu. TMTC is an amalgamation of two previous schools: the Presbyterian Bible College, 1971- 1988 (after the closing of the Tangoa Training Institution, 1895 –1970) and the Aulua Theology Training Center (ATTC) set up in 1976 on the Island of Malekula. The Talua Ministry Training Centre opened on August 24, 1988. Currently it offers Foundation Studies, Diploma in Theology and Missiology, Bachelor in Ministry, and a Women's Program Certificate.

With 1,000 acres of land, TMTC enjoys a big and beautiful campus with faculty and student dormitories, a pre-school and a farm which provides food for the TMTC community as well as generates income for the school.

Visit to Yan Fook Bible Institute, Hong Kong



On June, 25-27, 2013, the Yan Fook Bible Institute (YFBI) was visited by ATA VET consisting of Dr. Ng Peh Cheng, Associate Secretary for Accreditation and Educational Development; Dr. Abraham Saggi, Director of D.Min. Program, South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore, India; and Professor Ronnie Poon, Chairman of CAED and Academic Dean, Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong.

Yan Fook Bible Institute was officially founded in 2000 by Rev. Dr. Patrick So, Senior Pastor of Yan Fook Church and President of YFBI. It began as a specific arm of The Evangelical Free Church of China – Yan Fook Church to equip lay leaders for church ministries. The uncompromising belief of the Institute is to train students to “sink deep” into the authority of the Bible and sound Theology for effective Christian service. It is an interdenominational school.

Today, the Institute has expanded its mission and vision to provide training for lay leaders (part-time students) and those who are called into full-time Christian ministries. YFBI offers the following programs: Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (M.A.B.S.), Associate of Arts in Biblical Studies (A.A.B.S.), Certificate in World Missions (C.M.), Bachelor of Theology (B. Th.), and Master of Divinity (M. Div.).

Visit to Tyrannus Bible Seminary, Bandung, Indonesia



The ATA VET consisting of Dr. Ng Peh Cheng, Associate Secretary for Accreditation and Educational Development; Dr. Takanori Kobayashi, Provost and Professor of New Testament Studies, Tokyo Christian University, Japan; and Dr. Andreas Himawan, President, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Amanat Agung, Jakarta, Indonesia visited Tyrannus Bible Seminary (TBS) on August 19-21, 2013.

Tyrannus Bible Seminary (TBS) is a nondenominational institution. It was founded by Dr. W. S. Heath and Mr. Ir. Gerrit Johan Tiendas in 1966. At first the purpose of the institution was to train evangelists but in 1972, the institution began to offer formal theological degree programs. Personal evangelism remains a core emphasis today.

TBS offers the following programs: Sarjana Teologi (S.Th.) in Pastoral and Theology, Christian Education, Christian Counseling, Mission and Evangelism, Christian Apologetics; Master of Arts (M.A.) in Pastoral Ministry, Christian Education, Christian Counseling, Mission and Evangelism, Christian Apologetics (formerly Apologetics and Christian Philosophy); Master of Theology (M.Th.) in Christian Apologetics (formerly Apologetics and Christian Philosophy), Pastoral and Theology, Christian Education, Christian Counseling, Christian Leadership. TBS moved to its present campus in 1988.

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ATA FEES CHARGED

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Application Fee	100*	100	100
Association Member Annual Fee	350	350	350
Association/Organization Institution	280	280	280
Accredited Member Annual Fee			
Undergraduate	620	480	280
Graduate	700	550	350
Post Graduate	750	620	420
Doctoral Level	800	680	480
VET Fee			
Under graduate	600	460	260 to 3 programs
Additional / Program	60	50	30 each program
Graduate	650	520	325 to 3 programs
Additional / Program	65	55	35 each program
Post Graduate	720	550	400 to 3 programs
Additional / Program	75	60	40 each program
Doctoral Level	800	650	460 to 3 programs
Additional / Program	80	65	50 each program

* US \$

NOTES:

Groupings:

Group A:

Australia, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, USA/Europe.

Group B:

Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Jordan

Group C:

Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

The new structure above was approved at the ATA Executive Board and endorsed at the ATA Triennial General Assembly in Jakarta, 2013.

ATA Publications Christmas Promo

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Future issues of the *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* will include lists of recent doctoral dissertations successfully defended by Asian evangelicals. If one of your faculty members or former students has recently completed his or her doctorate, please contact the editor, **Dr. George W. Harper** (gharper@alum.mit.edu), with that information.

ATA news

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