

Unity and Collaboration: Moving Forward in Nepal

By Dr. Abraham Saggi, Dean, AGST Nepal



Over the course of several centuries, countless missionaries and Christian tourists have dreamt, prayed for, and toiled to see the church planted in Nepal. Finally, with the dedicated efforts of Western mission agencies, individual missionaries from India, and the Nepali Christian diaspora, a vibrant and growing church emerged in the late nineties. The church grew exponentially and with that so did the challenges and problems. It is worth noting in such situations that the sustainability of a

growing church depends on quality training programs for evangelists, pastors, and leaders be it formal or informal. Unfortunately, the ongoing theological training programs available did not match the expansion of the church. There was definitely the need to train next generation leaders for Nepal—and this was not a job for just one man—or institution, for that matter. To meet this need, theological institutions needed to work and venture together and create a consortium. This consortium came

to be known as the Nepal Theological Academy, now Asia Graduate School of Theology, Nepal (AGSTNP).

AGST Nepal was conceived as a response to the need to train next generation leaders for Nepal—and is a reflection of the desire of our Master that his children be united and together engage in his mission, as seen in John 17. It was four years ago that five theological institutions—Nepal Theological College (NTC), Satobato; Nepal Ebenezer Bible College (NEBC),

Continued on page 2



Inauguration of AGST Nepal

Jorpati; Nepal Presbyterian Theological Seminary (NPTS), Sunakoti; Nepal Baptist Bible College (NBBC), Immadole; and Evangelical Presbyterian Theological Seminary(EPTS), Baisapati—united, with the encouragement of Dr. Bruce Nicholls, to make quality training possible. With the birth of this consortium, several committees were likewise organized for purposes of curriculum development, research, publication, short term training programs, and holistic developmental activities for students. And just recently, ATA has accredited its M.Div. program for which we are deeply grateful. This consortium hopes to equip leaders across the nation for and from the next generation, and we hope to do so in

the following three ways: i) through formal programs such as M.Div., M.Th. and, in the near future, doctoral studies; ii) capacity building programs such as seminars, lectures, training programs; and iii) holistic development programs such as seminars, inter-seminary sports, essay competitions, community events, and personal mentoring.

Furthermore, with the approval of the leaders of ATA, AGST Nepal will be offering an M.Th. program beginning July 2017. We have already granted admission to 11 M.Th. students, six of which are taking Practical Theology while five are taking Intercultural studies. But we do not stop here. We go on dreaming further

and hope to start M.Th. and doctoral programs in several disciplines and develop faculty for existing seminaries where qualified residential teachers are scarce. Our goal is to see at least two member institutions of the consortium starting their own M.Div. program, allowing the consortium to concentrate on the M.Th.

We are definitely moving forward and as we do so we remain sensitive to the various needs of the theological community, the church, and society; and we pray that we will stay together, learn together, grow together, and witness to our Lord together.

AGST Pacific Reports Recent Development During ATA Korea Board Meeting

During the ATA Korea meeting on May 13, 2017, Dr. Bong Rin Ro reported that the number of AGST Pacific students has been steadily growing in different countries for the

last two years. He also informed the Board of the plan to start AGST Pacific in other countries such as Thailand (Bangkok), Myanmar (Yangon), and Indonesia (Jakarta). He was delighted

to report also that there are more than 27,000 Korean missionaries working in 170 nations, in which many of them are interested to know about AGST Pacific.



AGST Pacific Board members and area coordinators



Representatives of ATA Korea members

ATA Theological Consultation 2017

The Calling of an Asian Biblical Scholar/Theologian: Challenges Facing Asian Evangelicals Today

Date:
July 18-20, 2017
Place:
South East Asia Bible Seminary
Malang, Indonesia

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Time	Tuesday, July 18	Wednesday, July 19	Thursday, July 20
7:00am-8:00am		Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00am-8:30am		Devotion One <i>Rick Weymouth</i>	Devotion Two <i>Rahmiati Tanudjaja</i>
8:45am-10:15am		Plenary Session One The Role of Asian Biblical Scholars as Prophets <i>by Koowon Kim</i> A New Reading of the Parable of Talents and its Implication in Asian Contexts <i>by Takanori Kobayashi</i>	Plenary Session Two Doing Contextual Systematic Theology in Asia: Challenges and Prospects <i>by Tim Gener</i> A Call to Taking a Multi-disciplinary Approach to Doing Theology <i>by Clive Chin</i>
10:15am-10:45am		Break	Break
10:45am-11:45am		Group Meetings <i>Facilitator: Theresa Lua</i>	Group Meetings <i>Facilitator: Theresa Lua</i>
12:00pm-1:00pm		Lunch	Lunch
1:00pm-2:00pm			
2:00pm-3:30pm	Registration (1:00-3:30)	Parallel Sessions (2:00-5:00) <i>Rolex Cailing, Dwi Maria Handayani, Sang Hwa Han, Varughese John, Ferry Y. Mamahit (Facilitator: Daniel Owens)</i>	Panel Discussion and Meeting (2:00-3:30)
3:30pm-4:00pm	Welcome Afternoon Session (4:00-5:30)		Emerging Insights from the Consultation and Action Plans (3:30-4:00) <i>by Steve Chang</i>
4:00pm-4:30pm	Discussion on Saphir F. Athyal's "Toward an Asian Christian Theology" <i>Facilitator: Samuel Sidjabat</i>		Break (4:00-4:30)
4:30pm-5:00pm			Holy Communion (5pm-6pm) <i>Adonis Gorospe and Tony Lim</i>
5:00pm-5:30pm			
6:00pm-7:30pm	Dinner	Dinner	
7:30pm-9:00pm	Opening Evening Session The Calling of an Asian Evangelical Scholar: A Biblical Scholar's Perspective <i>Rico Villanueva</i>	Book Launching and Cultural Presentation	Dinner Departure

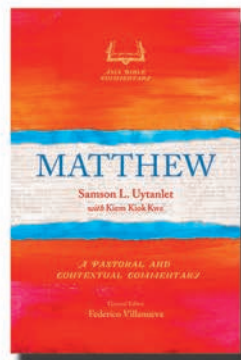
New Books

Matthew

A Pastoral & Contextual Commentary

Authors:

Samson L. Uytanlet
Kiem-Kiok Kwa



The Asia Bible Commentary series empowers Christian believers in Asia to read the Bible from within their respective contexts. Holistic in its approach to the text, each exposition of the biblical books combines exegesis and application. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the Body of Christ in Asia by providing pastoral and contextual exposition of every book of the Bible.

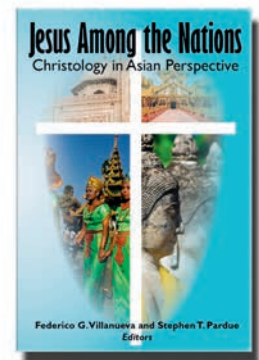
The Great Commission is yet to be fulfilled. Asian churches, like Matthew's original audience are encountering various challenges as they obey Jesus' last command in the First Gospel. The promise of the presence of God accompanies Jesus command and in Matthew's narrative God's presence is seen powerfully in Jesus' life. Believers today can hold to the same promise and this should be an encouragement to continue preaching God's kingdom.

Jesus Among the Nations:

Christology in Asian Perspective

Editors:

Federico Villanueva and
Stephen T. Pardue



For the last two millennia, Christians have proclaimed that in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, God has come to dwell among us. And as this good news has reached peoples in different parts of the globe over the last century, our understanding of this reality and its implications has become deeper and richer.

In *Jesus Among the Nations: Christology in Asian Perspective*, thirteen authors offer fresh perspective on what it means for Asian Christians that "Jesus is Lord." The essays examine traditional debates and biblical texts from contemporary Asian perspectives and address Christological concerns unique to the Asian context. As the global church continues to plumb the depths of God's revelation in Christ, these essays offer an unusual glimpse into the Christology of Asian believers.

Visit: www.ataasia.com/atapublications

ATA VET Officers Visit Several Schools in Nepal



Nepal Theological Academy



Nepal Ebenezer Bible College



Nepal Evangelical Holiness Theological Seminary



Nepal Presbyterian Theological Seminary



Kathmandu Institute of Theology



Nepal Methodist Theological Seminary

Six schools in Nepal were visited by the ATA Visiting Evaluation Team from April 17-27, 2017 for accreditation of various degrees and programs. One of these schools was Nepal Theological Academy (NTA), a consortium of five ATA accredited Bible colleges in Kathmandu. The consortium came into existence as a result of consultations with heads of theological institutions and ATA leaders. It was launched on April 6, 2015, however, due to the strong earthquake in Nepal, classes started in October. This consortium serves as a common platform for the institutions. It promotes togetherness and connectedness, pooling of resources, and exemplifies unity which serves as an excellent example to the church in Nepal.

It was during official and social persecutions before 1990 that churches in Nepal grew rapidly. In those years, more than 95% of church leaders were lay leaders with no biblical training. Thus, Nepal Ebenezer Bible College (NEBC) was established with a vision to equip leaders for Nepali churches. It was one of the first colleges to offer a B.Th. degree. NEBC is also offering a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership (MAOL)

in partnership with the Development Associates International (DAI).

Nepal Evangelical Holiness Theological Seminary (NEHTS) was another school which felt a great need for well-trained leaders in Nepalese context. It was established in 2005 in partnership with Rev. Abraham Kim (first president), a missionary of Korea Evangelical Holiness Churches (KEHC). NEHT has been reaching out to various strata of Nepalese society for over 25 years.

In 1986 another school, the Nepal Presbyterian Theological Seminary (NPTS), formerly known as Nepal Theological Seminary, was established by Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Sungho Lee who had a deep desire and burden to train young people in Nepal. A handful of students formed the first batch to be trained. NPTS takes pride in the fact that some of the first students to enroll are now serving as heads of institutions and are leaders in other ministries and organizations. In 1988, a new phase commenced with the purchase of the current property in Sunakothi, Lalitpur in the Kathmandu Valley.

It was also in Kathmandu that a study center offering M.Div. level training under

the administration of the Carey Centre in Calcutta started. The Kathmandu Institute of Theology (KIT) began in 2000 with Rev. John Thomas and Dr. CL Hminga from India and Rev. Kap Enga from Kathmandu as its first leaders. Then for 11 years, Rev. Albert Yanger was assigned to be in-charge of the training project and continued to provide leadership. In 2003, it became an affiliate member of the ACTS Academy of Higher Education (AAHE) in Bangalore, India. It then became the first institution to offer an ATA accredited M.Div. through the Distance Education program of AAHE. Recently, KIT felt the need to be directly associated with ATA and have its own M.Div. program evaluated and accredited apart from AAHE.

In the same year, the Nepal Methodist Theological Seminary (NMTS) functions under the auspices of the Nepal Methodist Council (NMC) which has over 300 churches. Started as a training center for pastors and leaders, NMTS held its first commencement in 2012. The NMTS aims to be an educational institution committed to teach, train, equip, and empower men and women to become leaders in the work of the ministry and to go and impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Visit to China Baptist Theological College, Hong Kong



Academic Dean, Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong on April 5-7, 2017.

China Baptist Theological College (CBTC) began as Hong Kong Baptist Bible Institute in 1966 with the mission: "To equip the Lord's servants to shepherd the Lord's flock." It was established by the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE), an American-based mission. Initially, the institution offered part-time studies to working professionals but in 1982, a full-time study program was added to train full-time ministry workers. In 1993, CBTC became independent of ABWE and established its own local governing board. The Board of Directors appointed the first local Chinese President and recruited national faculty members in 1996. CBTC moved to its present location in 1996. The school offers High Certificate in Biblical Studies, Diploma and Bachelor of Theology, Master in Ministry, and Master of Divinity. ■

Visit to Logos Evangelical Seminary, Taiwan



On May 2-4, 2017, Logos Evangelical Seminary (LES) was visited by VET consisting of Dr. Ng Peh Cheng, Associate Secretary of CAED; Dr. Chiu Eng Tan, Academic Dean, Biblical Seminary of the Philippines; and Dr. James Pan, Professor Emeritus, China Lutheran Seminary, Taiwan.

Logos Evangelical Seminary in Taiwan was established in 2007 as a satellite center of Logos Evangelical Seminary in El Monte, California, USA. The institution is established under the umbrella of Evangelical Formosan Churches General Assembly (EFCGA) to train mainly pastors and church planters for the EFC denomination. In 2015, LES brought its own property and the institution moved to its own present campus in the Xinzhuang district of the New Taipei City. LES offers Diploma of Christian Studies, Master of Arts in Christian Studies, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry. ■

China Baptist Theological College was visited by Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) consisting of Dr. Ng Peh Cheng, Associate Secretary of Accreditation and Educational Development, ATA; Dr. Madeline Vega, Faculty, Asian Theological Seminary, Philippines; and Shikai Ronnie Poon,

Visit to Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary, Japan



The VET consisting of Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary; Dr. Masanori Kurasawa, Professor, Tokyo Christian University; and Dr. Takashi Manabe, Lecturer, Evangelical Biblical Seminary visited Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary (KLTS) in Kobe, Japan on May 30-31, 2017.

KLTS emphasizes the development of 3Cs in the lives of students:

- Confessional - to be rooted in right confessions/doctrines
- Constructive - to build up the congregation and grow the church

- Cooperative - to relate well with people inside and outside the church

Being the only Lutheran seminary in the Osaka-Kobe area, KLTS is the Center of Lutheran Scholarship in West Japan. It has a good collection of the basic and classic literatures of Martin Luther and Lutheranism.

KLTS is an active member of the Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST) Japan serving as the West Center of the consortium. Dr. Makito Masaki has been serving as president since 2009. ■

ATA Theological Consultations Offer Resources for Asian Evangelical and Biblical Scholars

This year marks the 500th year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Incidentally, ATA is launching a book entitled, *Jesus Among the Nations: Christology in Asian Perspective*. This will be launched during the ATA Theological Consultation in Malang, Indonesia this July. The essays that form the book were first presented during the ATA Theological Consultation in Korea in 2014. The book addresses two questions: "What does it mean to follow Jesus in Asia today? What does Jesus mean to evangelical Christians around our region 500 years after the Reformation?"

The book has three parts. The first one (Historical Considerations) looks back on the first Reformation and reflects on what this means for Asian evangelicals today, especially in the light of the challenges confronting us. The second part (Biblical Reflections) deals with relevant biblical passages which provide a background for Christology and at the same time wrestle with the implications of Christology in Asian contexts today. The third (Contextual Engagements) engages with the realities of religious pluralism and the brokenness

of our world, providing guidance for how Christology can dialogue with Islam and Buddhism as well as models for how to minister with the suffering and the marginalized in our midst.

This year, ATA continues its task of reflecting and engaging with the Asian context in the light of the Word of God during its Theological Consultation in Malang. Like in the previous consultation, we hope to be able to come up with another publication. This time the focus is on our "calling" as Asian evangelical scholars/educators/practitioners. What is God calling us to do in the light of his Word and the needs confronting us in Asia today? This is the question we will try to answer during the consultation. Speakers coming from different regions and fields of expertise such as cultural studies, biblical studies, theology, and others will present their views on the theme, "The Calling of an Asian Biblical Scholar/Theologian: Challenges Facing Asian Evangelicals Today." There will also be group discussions within the different regions to identify some of the challenges in Asia and to think of ways of addressing these. Although we are basically covering the same Bible, our own contexts play

an important role in shaping the kind of theology and practice we will take. As one of the founders of ATA, Dr. Saphir Athyal, has remarked: "Christian theologies of different times and different places while covering essentially the same general subject matter one way or another, should let their particular contexts decide what particular area of faith should receive special emphasis and perhaps serve as the point which leads to the exposition of the full scope of the field." Dr. Athyal uttered these words during the inaugural meeting of the Asia Theological Association in Hong Kong in 1974. The presentation, entitled, "Toward an Asian Christian Theology" was later published in the book, *What Asian Christians Are Thinking*. This article will be featured during the opening of this year's ATA Theological Consultation. It will be good for us to reflect on this article as we try to discern how to live out God's calling for us as Asian evangelicals today. Indeed, it is remarkable that what Dr. Athyal said forty years ago is still relevant during our time today.

May our Lord, through his Holy Spirit, move in our midst as we continue to seek ways of being who God has called us to be! ■

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