

## The Future Church: A Theological Response



in terms of learning and even organized religion. Unfortunately, the same can be and will be said even of the generations after. It certainly seems that the aforementioned is and will be the ongoing reality faced by the post millennial generations.

The above reality has posed a number of challenges and questions to the church at large. *How can the church effectively reach a digital generation? How should we respond to a generation that clamours for more action and less talk? How can the church create a community the next generation is so desperate for? How can*

Assembly- *"The Future Church: A Theological Response"*.

More than being a setting wherein we can come together to learn, we hope that the 2019 Triennial General Assembly will likewise be an avenue for dialogue. In addition to having conversations on how we can together effectively engage the younger generation, we want this General Assembly to be a place where in they can voice out their apprehensions on the church and really be heard. One of the ways by which we hope to make that happen is by inviting younger leaders who are mature enough and have a global mindset to share doable ideas in the said event. Furthermore, with majority of the material on this generation from the West, we see it imperative to define the Millenials, along with the generation/s following suit- from an Asian sociologists' perspective.

We will be tackling six topics relevant to the younger generation during the plenary sessions and they are as follows:

First, *building communities*. The younger generation longs so deeply to connect to the world around them. They are a social generation that strongly desires deep conversations. Yet in a world full of the superficial

**M**illennials- one of the most talked about segments of society and the generation that grew up with and has been surrounded by modernity, technology and relative ease. Having access to the internet and thus the world wide web along with a plethora of information, the traditional ways of the generation before largely no longer appeal to them- and this is especially true

*theological institutions effectively equip the leaders emerging from a generally self-entitled generation and engage them in God's global mission?* This should most definitely cause theological institutions to rethink the ways by which they educate and reach this generation from which future church and seminary leaders will emerge; so thus, the theme for the 2019 Triennial General

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that is very difficult to come by. In an age where face to face interaction has become a rarity and on-line interaction the norm, what would it mean to make a true community happen?

Second is *authenticity*. According to a survey, 55% of millennials are "Bible- neutral" or "Bible- skeptical", with many uninterested in church and religious institutions but are looking for an authentic experience. The younger generation want to see the church walk its talk- engaging in social justice, peace and reconciliation, and community development.

Third is *evangelical diversity*. The younger generation does not see the need for barriers between denominations and in fact wants to navigate through this. They are natural collaborators, greatly valuing "togetherness" and "partnership".

Unfortunately, there have been many who have been tight fisted about their tradition and have repelled the younger generation from church- and with this, how should we respond?

Fourth is *digital Christianity*. The younger generation operates in an environment where having a (good) internet connection has been classified as a basic need. Technology is no longer a luxury, and has become a necessity. This most definitely has huge implications on how the younger generation lives out and understands Christianity. We need to look at spirituality in a digitalized world.

Fifth is *arts and spirituality*. The younger generation puts a premium on artistic excellence and are in fact a very creative generation. What a loss it is to the church to leave out the arts. The church does need to create a space for

creativity and to pay attention to the role of the arts in the life of its people.

Last but not the least is *theological education and the Millennials*. The younger generation generally has a very short attention span- 8 seconds to be precise; and because this is so, giving them lectures and preaching at them will not work. In fact, a number of the members of the younger generation have left the church because of the traditional preaching format. Theological institutions need to find ways in order to equip the next generation in more engaging ways.

*The 2019 Triennial General Assembly will be held on August 12-16 at TCA College, Singapore.* We hope that you and your younger leaders can come and join in this very relevant conversation so that we can together reach and engage the future church.

## ATA Triennial General Assembly

*FUTURE CHURCH: A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE*

**Dates:** 12-16 August 2019

**Venue:** TCA College

249 Paya Lebar Road, #03-11, Singapore

**Fees\*:**

(In USD) (Will vary depending on the accommodations)

**FOR INTERNATIONAL GUESTS**

**Aqueen Paya Lebar**

Single Room 675.00

Twin-sharing 490.00

**Aqueen Joo-Chiat**

Single Room 665.00

Twin Sharing 480.00

**Aqueen Lavender**

Twin Sharing 480.00

*\*Conference fee is inclusive of 4 nights room accommodation (12-15 August nights), daily transportation to and from the venue for those staying in the hotel starting 12 August at 9:00 pm to 16 August 2019 and the registration fee.*

*The website to Aqueen hotels is: <http://www.aqueenhotels.com/en/hotels/singapore/>*

**FOR LOCAL/ STAY OUT GUESTS**

245.00

*\*Inclusive of Meals from dinner on the 12th up until lunch on the 16th*

Deadline for registration is on the **30<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019.**

For more information, please visit [www.ataaasia.com](http://www.ataaasia.com)

# ICETE holds its Triennial General Assembly in Panama City

ICETE or the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education held its 2018 Triennial General Assembly last October 29 to November 2 in Panama City. This event was attended by 433 leaders from 75 countries, with about 60 from Asia. ICETE is a global body of nine regional accrediting agencies of which ATA is included.

The theme of this year's General Assembly was *The Sacred-Secular Divide in Theological Education*. The plenary sessions, followed by table group discussions, challenged theological educators to assess and address the problem of the sacred-secular divide (SSD) within their contexts. They likewise shared their collective wisdom on how to equip students with the right worldview and tools in order for them to truly equip their church members for an effective service in all areas of life.

The topics and presenters in the plenary sessions were as follows:

- Naming the Issue in our Churches and Context - Dr. Ian Shaw and Mr. Mark Greene
- Theological Education in a Secular Age - Dr. Gordon Smith
- Theology of Work - Dr. Dotun Reju and Dr. Fletcher Tink
- Living Vocation: Theological Formation from Life and for Life - Dr. Ruth Padilla DeBorst
- From Origins to Purpose: Bridging the SSD through Theology and Practice of Creation Care - Mr. Dave Bookless
- Naming the Issue in our Seminaries - Dr. Ian Shaw and Mr. Mark Greene
- Where are the Theologians? A Call from Across the Scholarly Divide - Prof. Terry Halliday



*The participants of the 2018 ICETE General Assembly*

It is worth noting that in preparation for this event, several regional consultations were held in collaboration with the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and Langham Partnerships led by Drs. Ian Shaw and Mark Greene to identify the SSD issues in churches and seminaries. Representatives from these regions presented their findings during the plenary presentations of Shaw and Greene. Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary, shared on the issue of the SSD in Asia.

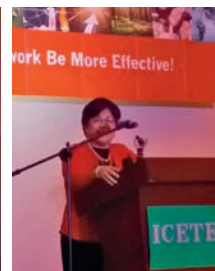
Apart from the abovementioned plenary sessions, ICETE also arranged for 27 workshops and seminars that the participants could choose from.

Furthermore, the ICETE Academy (IA) was formally launched by the ICETE International Director, Dr Riad Kassis, and Dr. Marvin Oxenham, IA Director. The IA will provide training for the ongoing professional development of educators and leaders in theological education using a variety of delivery approaches such as online, portfolio, and event related courses. As an IA partnering organization, ATA will participate in course production and delivery.

The participants considered the ICETE consultation to be a rich time of collective learning, fellowship, and networking.



*ICETE International Director, Dr. Riad Kassis, welcoming the participants.*



*Dr. Theresa Lua presenting the ministry of ATA.*



*The 2018 ICETE General Assembly was a rich time of collective learning, fellowship and networking.*

## Equipping the Equippers: moving forward and expanding

This year, ATA's "Equipping the Equippers" project moves forward and expands in India. Now on its second year, ATA conducted a year 2 workshop in South India and a year 1 workshop in North India using the four-year curriculum of the Global Associates for Transformational Education or GATE.

The North India workshop focused on the "Theological and Philosophical Foundations of Transformational Education" and it was held last September 27-29, 2018 at the campus of New Theological College in Dehradun. There were twenty-four participants from the following institutions:

1. Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Dehradun)
2. Doon Bible College (Dehradun)
3. New Theological College (Dehradun)
4. Caleb Institute of Theology (Delhi)
5. Filadelphia Bible College (Udaipur)

On the other hand, the South India workshop focused on "Teaching

Methods for Transformational Education" and was held at the SAIACS CEO Centre last October 4-6, 2018.

There were forty-five participants from the following institutions:

1. Logos College of Theology (Kerala)
2. Olive Theological Institute (Kerala)
3. South Asia Institute of Leadership and Cultural Studies (Coimbatore)
4. Jubilee Memorial Bible College (Tamilnadu)
5. ACTS Academy (Bangalore)
6. Southern Asia Bible College (Bangalore)
7. South India Baptist Bible College and Seminary (Coimbatore)
8. ATA India

Serving as facilitators for both workshops were GATE Global Coordinator, Dr. Gary Griffith and ATA General Secretary and GATE Associate, Dr. Theresa Lua. With them in the Year 1 workshop in North India were Drs. Paul Cornelius, ATA

India Regional Secretary and Manoj Korada, Faculty, Indian Pentecostal Church Theological Seminary. Drs. Cornelius and Korada are going through GATE's "Training the Trainers (T3) program", a program which aims to equip more people to become GATE facilitators in the region.

In addition to all that they had learned from the workshops, the participants thoroughly appreciated the opportunity for engagement with faculty from other institutions. Furthermore, the presence of Drs. Jaison Thomas, Magdi Gendi, and Mr. Percy Deng, all Overseas Council Regional Directors, added to the lively discussions and warm fellowship during the workshops. They are exploring the possibility of offering the GATE workshop for the OC partner schools in their regions.

We are indeed moving forward and expanding in our Equipping the equippers project- and we can definitely look forward to more exciting movements and expansions in the near future!



Participants and facilitators for the North India Year 1 GATE Workshop



Participants and facilitators for the South India Year 2 GATE Workshop

## Visiting Evaluation Teams in Malaysia

During the month of September, three Visiting Evaluation Teams (VET) were deployed to Malaysia in order to assess certain programs of the following institutions: Malaysia Evangelical College, Bible College of Malaysia, and Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary.

Bible College of Malaysia (BCM) was visited on 12th-14th of September. The VET was composed of Drs. Ng Peh Cheng, Associate Secretary of Accreditation and Educational Development, ATA; Tan Chiu Eng, Academic Dean, Biblical Seminary of the Philippines, Thomas Chin, Director of Pastoral Renewal and Research Center, Malaysia Baptist Seminary.

Born in the 1960's, BCM began as the Bible Institute of Malaysia (BIM) and is the national school of the Assemblies of God in Malaysia. Its mission is to equip men and women for transformational Spirit-filled ministry and leadership. Their training involves a blend of life-transforming service, visionary leadership, spiritual discernment, evangelistic zeal, missionary fervor, and the lifelong study of the Word. But more than just being a place of equipping, BCM aims to be a spirit filled

community that promotes growth in the spiritual life of its students.

Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) was visited from 15th-18th of September. The VET was composed of Drs. Ng Peh Cheng, Tan Chiu Eng, and Pastor Eva Wong, Teaching Faculty, Bible College of Malaysia.

MBTS embraces "Head, heart, hands" as its motto and aims at equipping its students with a solid biblical and theological foundation for life and ministry, nourish depth in their spiritual life, cultivate pertinent ministry skills in them, and bring them to a deeper gains and appreciation of their Christian and Baptist heritage. Established in 1954 by the Malaysia Baptist Convention and Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, the institution has seen a growing local Malaysian team of faculty and has already identified a number to be further equipped in order to build up the national team of lecturers. Furthermore, MBTS has expanded from its main campus to offering study programs in the Klang Valley Branch School, Kuala Lumpur.

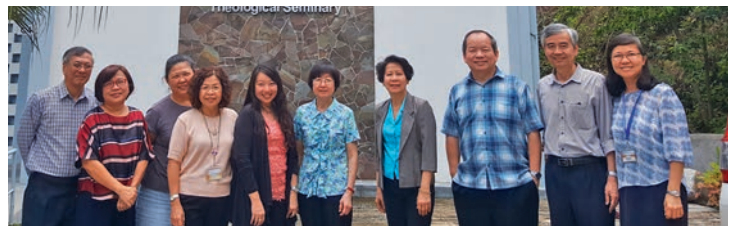
The third institution visited is the Malaysia Evangelical College both its Lawas and Miri Campuses. The institution was visited on the 24<sup>th</sup>—28<sup>th</sup> of September by Rev. Khee Vun Lin, Principal of the Anglican Training Institute, Drs. Madeline Vega, adjunct faculty for Old Testament at the Asian Theological Seminary and Dr. Teresa Chai, Academic Dean of the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Philippines.

Malaysia Evangelical College (MEC), even with its two campuses, is seen as one college with a vision to "fulfil the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and make disciples of all nations by providing balanced and holistic theological and ministry training." It was founded by the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) and is the denominational college of Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB). MEC has been serving in Sarawak for 90 years now.

God is doing many exciting things in Malaysia, as with the rest of the world—and it's such a joy to see these institutions participate in it. Let's continue to pray that God uses these institutions to equip workers to join God in what He is doing in Asia and beyond!



Visit to the Bible College of Malaysia.



Visit to the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary.



Visit to the Malaysia Evangelical College, Miri Campus.



Visit to the Malaysia Evangelical College, Lawas Campus.

## The Visit to Vanuatu



done in response to the institution's request to have their Bachelor of Ministry program reaccredited. This team was composed of Drs. Calvin Chong, associate professor in practical Theology at the Singapore Bible College, who likewise served as the VET convenor; and Graham Simpson, adjunct professor and occasional lecturer at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore.

Biblical and Theological studies that is likewise relevant to the changing conditions of the Vanuatu Culture and society, the Pacific region, and the world. The institute especially aims at training women in order to strengthen their role in modern Vanuatu. It is the hope of Talua Theological Training Institute to be the instrument through which unity among believers is strengthened and made evident in Vanuatu.

Last October 31 to November 3, a Visiting Evaluation Team went over to Talua Theological Training Institute (TTTI) in Santo, Vanuatu, a visit

TTTI aims to walk along side the Vanuatu churches by equipping leaders and ministers by providing them sound, careful, and committed training in

Let us pray that God indeed uses TTTI to bring unity among His children in Vanuatu and train and equip His people for His work and mission.

## A December Visit: Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary



Visit to the Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

Madeline Vega, and Tony Lim, Academic Dean, Malaysia Bible Seminary. The visit was on the 4th to the 6th of December.

across ethnic, cultural, gender, class, and geographical boundaries. But apart from equipping, APNTS aims at being a holistic faith community, a place where students are led to be, know, and do and transformation truly happens.

Before the close of the year, one more Visiting Evaluation Team was dispatched. The team visited the Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS), Philippines, and was composed of Drs. Ng Peh Cheng,

Established in 1983, APNTS is the first Master's level theological institution of the Church of the Nazarene outside the United States. Operating with a vision to bridge cultures for Christ, APNTS aims to equip each new generation of leaders to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia and the Pacific and beyond, empowering its alumni to reach

APNTS offers Graduate Diploma, MDiv, MA in Religious Education, MA in Communication, Master of Science in Theology, and Master of Ministry. It is likewise a member of the AGST Philippines consortium and offers the following PhD programs in collaboration with AGST: Holistic Child Development, Transformational Learning, and Transformational Development.

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