

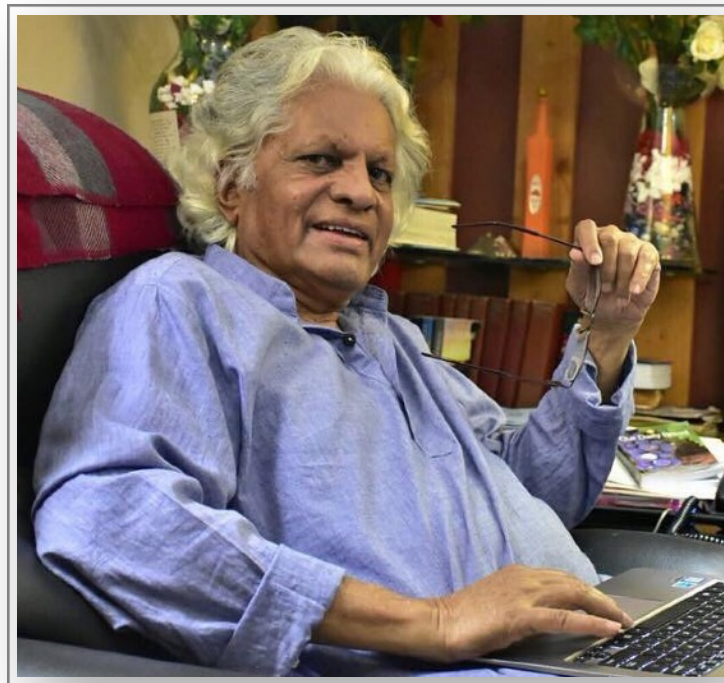


In Loving Memory of Dr. Ken Gnanakan

Last May 9, 2021, a much-cherished brother in the Lord, Dr. Ken Gnanakan, went into glory.

His son, Santosh, shares: "He had just finished preaching at our online church service. After the service was over, he said he had some pain behind his ears and in less than 30 minutes he was no more. It was a heart attack and not related to covid.

My father was very fit, both mentally and physically. He had shown no signs of slowing down or even passing away! But we trust God's plans and are thankful for so many things - a quick end, being busy serving God right till the end, a full life, impact across so many sectors and people... and of course, we know where he is and we know we will see him again, with Jesus. My mother and all of us are doing well, experiencing God's love, hope, peace, and joy. Praise God!"



Dr. Ken Gnanakan served as the General Secretary of ATA from the years 1990 to 2000. Under his leadership, the ministry of ATA expanded. He regionalized the organization into Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia for the accreditation and AGST programs.

Apart from his ministry with ATA, he has written several books, namely: *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective: Exploring the Contextual Nature of Theology and Mission*; *Kingdom Concerns: A Biblical Theology of Missions Today*; *Kingdom Concerns: A Biblical exploration towards a theology of Mission*; *Salvation: Some Asian Perspectives*; *God's World: A Biblical Theology of the Environment*; *Responsible Stewardship of God's creation*; *Integrated Learning*; *Managing Yourself: Practical Suggestions for Personal Success*; *Biblical Theology in Asia*; *Proclaiming Christ in a Pluralistic Context*; *Still learning: A Personal*

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Story; The Whole Gospel of God; Trees: Poems on the Environment; and his last book *Ephesians: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary (Asia Bible Commentary Series, co authored with Brian Wintle)* was published by ATA. Apart from all that, he was also an environmentalist, an accomplished musician, theologian, and educator. He also founded the ACTS Group of Institutions, a social organization with a focus on education.

But more than all that he had achieved, Dr. Ken Gnanakan was well loved. He had a beautiful impact on countless lives and the following testimonies are proof of that:

Ken Gnanakan: A visionary with an Asian heart

Dr. Bruce Nicholls, A Founding Leader, Asia Theological Association

I have known Ken as a colleague and friend since the 1970s and count it a privilege to write this brief tribute to him.

Last July I was one of three teachers in a ten-week zoom course on *Creation Care and Climate Change* in Nepal. I required the twelve MTh students to study Ken Gnanakan's revised edition of *Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation*. Written from an Asian perspective, it was the best book I knew which integrated biblical theology, compassionate thinking and experience with Asian cultures.

One of Ken's goals was the sustaining and renewal of God's created world. A visit to his home in Bangalore revealed his love of exotic plants, flowers and shrubs. Governments, the military and even the United Nations sought his advice. He prepared courses for the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Ken will be remembered for his insights into the integration of education with the whole of society. In his book *Learning in an Integrated Environment*, he explored education for living, with insights from Confucius, Gandhi, Tagore, John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead and Paulo Freire.

His identification with Asian cultural values was also seen in his love for music and the arts. As an accomplished musician, he led the singing in several of our ATA conferences. Before his conversion he was a noted member of the *Trojans*, also known as the Indian Beatles. I have often listened to his CD, *Jazz is Sacred*, a beautiful rendering of eight of our well-known evangelical hymns, with Handoyo Santoso on the piano.

Ken held a PhD in philosophy and education from the University of London, and could have become a professor in one of our theological colleges. Instead, he chose to dedicate his life to further the understanding and renewal of the evangelical faith across the whole of Asian life and culture.

His love and vision for education in Asia is seen in the many organisations he founded. He began by establishing the Theological Book Trust in Bangalore. This published most of his fifteen books, along with economy editions of books needed by students for their libraries.

In 1979 Ken and his wife Prema returned to India from London and founded the ACTS Institute. This began as a college which prepared evangelists and pastors to integrate biblical knowledge with vocational studies, so that its graduates could go into villages as self-supporting missionaries. ACTS became a multi-



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faceted ministry, with medical services, schools, colleges and environmental organisations. It also sponsored the William Carey University in Shillong, NE India.

Ken's passion for integrated learning was seen in his founding of the International Council for Higher Education (ICHE), with member colleges throughout India and now Africa. That Council meets each year in a different country.

In 1982 he began to take an interest in ATA, recognising its importance in raising the standard of theological education across Asia. During the ATA conference in Seoul, Korea, Saphir Athyal, the founder of ATA, asked Ken to give himself to Asia-wide leadership and to eventually take over the role of General Secretary of ATA.

This he did in 1990 and gave ten years to the work. During his term, Ken was influential in raising the financial resources of ATA, developing the AGST for post-graduate education, assisting in the development of the accreditation programme and guiding India to become a semi-autonomous arm of ATA under the leadership of Brian Wintle. In the year 2000 he handed on the ATA baton to Rev Derek Tan of Singapore.

In summary, we will remember Ken Gnanakan for his work in harmonising biblical theology with Asian cultural values. We will remember him for his vision in pioneering new evangelical agencies and for his work in integrating education with all of life. As a proverb from the Maori culture of New Zealand states, "A mighty kauri has fallen." (Kauri trees, which live for many hundreds of years, are considered to be lords of the forest.)

Above all, we will remember Ken as a humble man of God, called to be prophet to our times. We will hold with love and sympathy Prema, his wife of 50 years, their two adult children, Santosh and Anupa, and their six grandchildren.



A Wonderful Privilege

Dr. Brian Wintle, Regional Secretary, ATA (India), 2000-2014

I count it a real privilege to write a few lines to honour the memory of a beloved friend and colleague, Dr Ken Gnanakan. Ken and I were in the UK in the early 70's, pursuing further studies in London and Manchester respectively and we used to meet when Ken and family and I attended the annual BMMF Conference. In due course, we completed our respective programmes of study and returned to India to fulfill our calling to Christian ministry.

I returned to the Union Biblical Seminary as a Faculty member, and Ken established ACTS Ministries in Bangalore. The UBS was located in Yavatmal in eastern Maharashtra until 1983, but I used to spend my summer vacations in Bangalore. So Ken and I met frequently, and, gradually I got involved with more than one of the ministries related to ACTS, like, for example, the Theological Book Trust. In due course, Ken served as the General Secretary of the Asia Theological Association, and when I left UBS in 1995, it was Ken

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who encouraged me to join the ATA, first as the AGST Asia Dean, and then, when the ATA underwent some measure of de-centralisation in 1999, as the first Regional Secretary of the ATA (India).

Ken was a real all-rounder. He had a passion for the arts, was a talented musician, and a painter too. One of his paintings has taken pride of place in my office ever since he gifted it to me some years ago. We loved chatting, and talked about all that we held dear, including, of course, matters relating to our respective ministries. In due course, the ATA initiated the Asia Bible Commentary series, and Ken and I co-authored the volume on the Letter to the Ephesians.

It was a wonderful privilege to have known and been associated in a small way with this wonderful servant of God. His cheerful disposition inevitably lifted the spirits of all who came in contact with him. As I look back, I thank the Lord for the flood of happy memories of him and our times together. He has fought the good fight, he has finished the race, he has kept the faith. To God be the glory!!

In His Service Together...

Dr. Richard Hart, Former member, Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development

I was one of the fortunate people that came to know and work with Dr. Ken Gnanakan in the 1990s. We served together with the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, the Asia Theological Association, and the International Council for Higher Education. Early in our friendship I experienced Ken's deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Ken sang about Jesus, lived for Jesus, and saw the world through his relationship with Jesus. Ken treated Asians and non-Asians with equal magnanimity.

Once when we were talking together about a theological controversy that was ripe at the time, he said something I have never forgotten. "Dick, I am an evangelist. When I preach, I carry a heavy burden for those who are lost without Christ."

This awareness of the lostness of millions without Christ was part of what constrained him to do what he could do to make Christ known everywhere and with everyone. This singular passion was the main influencer of his singing, innovating, teaching, training, writing, managing, caring, and sharing.

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In February of 1996 I was in Bangalore doing field research for a Ph.D. dissertation in non-traditional higher education accreditation. Ken invited me to conduct a two day workshop for eight or so D.Min. candidates who had finished their course work but were stalled at the research project stage. Ken thought I could help these mature leaders create projects that fit their interests and callings. I found his request profoundly affirming. As Ken had hoped, our open-ended and focused discussions gave the candidates the opportunity to listen to one another and gain clarity for themselves and each other.

The Lord gave Ken a great sense of timing as he introduced new ideas for community development and higher education. He seemed to sense the right moment to introduce innovations. Those of us who were participants with him in these projects grew and became agents of encouragement to others.

Midway through last year I saw a Facebook video of Ken and his family gathered at home making music. I called him on Messenger, and we chatted and updated one another. Although it had been several years since we had seen one another, we were able to pick up our conversation as if we had never been apart.

Now, as we think about Ken, we will be sharing our sadness at his passing, while fondly remembering our service together. We will be praying for his family, too, as they mourn his loss. And we confidently expect that one day we will join him and forever be in the presence of the Lord. May God be praised.



Many Good Memories of Dr. Ken Gnanakan

Dr. Bong Rin Ro, ATA General Secretary (1970-90)

Dr. Gnanakan was one of the renowned evangelical contextual theologians in India, a talented musician (leading singing for ATA Consultations), and efficient administrator.

1. He consolidated the ministry of ATA (1990-2000).

As the first General Secretary of ATA (1970-1990), I laid the foundation of ATA from the beginning. Dr. Gnanakan further consolidated ATA by regionalizing the growing ATA ministry (ATA-India, ATA-Japan, ATA-Korea, etc.) and developing the ATA Accreditation program with Dr. Narendra John.

2. He strengthened Indian evangelical education through the Association of Evangelical Theological Education in India (AETEI). He also created ATA-India which Dr. Paul Conelius has been developing for the unity of evangelical seminaries in India in cooperation with ATA.

3. Gnanakan also developed contextual theological education by establishing ACTS (Agriculture, Crafts, Trades & Studies) in Bangalore, India in 1981. He raised funds from India, Europe, and America and purchased a large piece of land to build a new ACTS campus and Christian social concern ministry. Dr. Gnanakan showed me around the new campus ministry in 2009.

Dr. Gnanakan served on the ATA Executive Committee for a long period. I counted on his help to expand the ATA ministry in India. I'll miss him and am looking forward to seeing him in heaven.

Continued on page 6

Short Testimonies:

I [will] miss him so much. He was my mentor in my MTh studies with SAIACS (1982-1984).

His works "The Kingdom Concern" and "Pluralistic Predicament" are two significant books that have built up my understanding of the developing evangelical faith and mission in pluralistic society.

He then invited me to join ATA as a Board Member when he was the ATA's General Secretary. Several times he visited Indonesia and spoke at PASTI's events.

Samuel Sidjabat, Tyranus Bible Seminary

Christians in Kobe invited Ken sensei as the singing evangelist to be the revival preacher for the city wide campaign 40 years ago. That was the first time I was privileged to meet him. I remember so many people came to Christ. We all were touched by his love and joy just to be in Christ and the hope and richness that he had in Christ.

He was very active in the Lausanne movement and I served as the executive board for the Asia Lausanne from around ten years ago. He took me to his Indian friends, Christian business people's home whichever towns in which we had the meetings. We miss him so much.

Dr. Makito Masaki, Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary

When Dr. Gnanakan visited Japan and came to Tokyo Christian University, I still remember that he gave us a message with praising songs playing the guitar at the chapel. I could feel his enthusiasm and passion for theological education in Asia. I didn't know him much personally, but I am grateful for leading me to my subsequent involvement with ATA.

Dr. Masanori Kurasawa, President, Tokyo Christian University

Ken, as the 2nd General Secretary of ATA, has contributed much to the success of our organization.

He recruited me to serve in the ATA Board. We shall miss him.

Dr. Joseph Shao, former ATA General Secretary

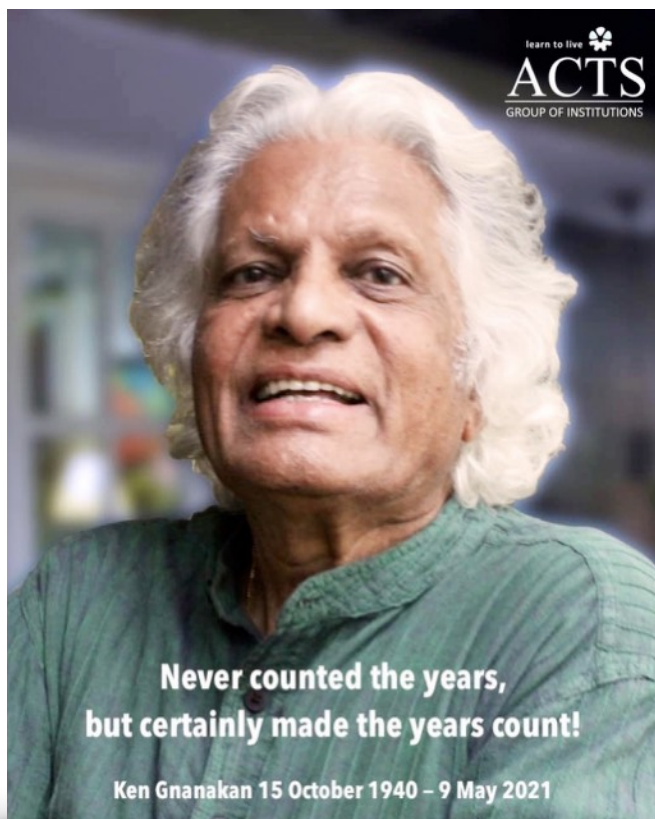
The ATA community remembers the late Dr Ken Ghanakan for his contribution in his leadership and vision for theological education in Asia.

Dr. Clement Chia, Principal, Singapore Bible College

I'm remembering Dr Ken's energy and enthusiasm as he led sessions at the Lausanne Asia sessions in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in 2011.

Dr. Graham Aylett, General Secretary, Increase Association

I had a privilege to meet him and enjoyed his generosity and humor. There was a time that ATA International and ATA India had to resolve some ongoing issues, and three board members (Drs Caver Yu, late Takanori Kobayashi, Jung-Sook Lee) with then general secretary Dr. Joseph Shao visited Bangalore, India, to have a meeting with ATA India. It was Dr.



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Ken Gnanaken who welcomed us first and treated us with a sumptuous Indian cuisine about which we representatives greatly appreciated.

Dr. Jung-Sook Lee, Professor of Church History, Torch Trinity Graduate University

I count it a privilege to have studied under Dr. Ken during my doctoral program in AGST Philippines. It was fascinating to sit at the feet of this Indian guru – a brilliant theologian, passionate educator, and articulate communicator who engaged us in stimulating reflections on theological issues in church and ministry in Asia!

One of my fond memories of him was singing a duet with him. We sang one of his favorite songs, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” at the ATA 40th anniversary celebration in 2010 in Hong Kong.

Dr. Ken has been an inspiration and example in so many ways. I have learned much from him and his writings.

Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary

Dr Ken Gnanakan was a man with many giftings and used them for the sake of the Gospel. He was a mentor and guide to many and carried a vision for wholistic, integrated theological education. His contribution to the Church in India is enormous, and he has deeply impacted the lives of the many who came into contact with him. Dr Ken has transitioned from his earthly home to his heavenly home, but his legacy will live on.

Dr. Paul Cornelius, Regional Secretary, ATA-India

Without a doubt, members of the ATA community have countless fond memories of Dr. Ken Gnanakan and certainly his influence upon the community will outlive him. We praise God for his life and legacy and we will certainly miss him! ♦



PRAYER CORNER



Let's remember to pray for

- India as they continue to battle the high number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Please pray for our member schools in that country as they continue to struggle in the different areas of their ministry.

- Myanmar as tensions and violence continue and even worsen. Please pray that there will be justice and that those hungry for power will let go of it.

To Stronger Ties and Better Collaboration

Last June 7, 2021, the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA), Asia Theological Association- Japan (ATA/J) and Japan Lausanne Committee (JLC) signed a Memorandum on Mutual Collaboration among themselves. The signatories were Toshinori Ishida, Chairperson of the Board of JEA, Atsuko Tateishi, Secretary of JLC, and Masanori Kurasawa, Chairperson of the Board of ATA/J. The signing was held in the Tsumagoi Resort Sai no Sato in Kakegawa City, Shizuoka Prefecture, on the occasion of JEA's Annual Meeting. But while that was so, the event was a hybrid one. Most attendees from Japan and those from abroad joined via zoom.

The three organizations have been serving the evangelical community in the spheres of Church, Theological Education, and Missions, while partnering with other evangelical organizations in Asia and the world. The purpose of this Memorandum is to specify the areas of collaboration, including information exchange, personnel networking, and fellowship. It is also expected to boost mutual understanding and trust among the three organizations which will further lead to deeper collaborative partnership in working on common issues.

The signing of this Memorandum of Collaboration has been anticipated both within Japan and overseas. It was planned for 2020, in celebration of the 50th



anniversary of Asia Theological Association, of which Japan is one of the three permanent member countries. In that original plan, the memorandum was to confirm the mutual collaboration between ATA/J and JEA. This was postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic- but that served to be providential. God, in His providence, used the delay to allow JLC to join in and make the memorandum tripartite.

The signing of the memorandum was a joyous event! Dr. Theresa Lua, General Secretary of ATA, gave a commemorative address while Drs. Andreas Himawan, Chairperson of ATA, and Paul Cornelius, Regional Secretary of ATA-India, gave congratulatory speeches.

To commemorate the signing, three pieces of artwork by Christian artist Misako Oba was purchased. These three paintings will be rotated among the three parties in order for each one to appreciate each symbol of collaboration.

We praise God for this exciting development in Japan! Let us pray that God will use the collaboration between JEA, JLC, and ATA/J to advance His Kingdom there. Let us pray that through this collaboration the church in Japan will grow, thrive, and be strengthened. ◆



ATA Strategic Planning in Partnership with SLI

We at ATA are constantly looking for ways to improve and grow as an organization. So, we will once again be engaging in Strategic Planning for the next five years and this process will be facilitated by Scholar Leaders International or SLI. SLI has been in partnership with ATA in facilitating the Vital Sustainability Initiative or VSI process for select member institutions. The Strategic Planning Process that ATA will undertake with SLI is similar to the VSI and will include getting feedback from our stakeholders- member institutions, ministry partners, and churches- through a survey. This survey will bring us to explore how and why ATA has been effective in what it does and how it creates a sense of unity among its member institutions. We hope that this process we will enhance the strength of the organization and better minister to its member institutions and serve the church.

Yet this process is not only for the benefit of ATA and its continued strengthening as an organization, but also to share our experience to other



regional agencies through the "Best Practices Report."

As ATA moves forward in the process, we would like to request that you join in this endeavor by praying. And these are the ways by which you can do so:

1. Pray for wisdom and creativity for the Planning Team as they go through the process with SLI. Also pray for God to lead the team to the right people/ institutions to engage with in the process.
2. Pray for God to lead ATA through the process and that we, as an organization, will continue to seek God's will for ATA.
3. Pray that God will use this not just to make ATA a better organization but more importantly to advance His Kingdom among the nations.

ATA greatly appreciates your prayers and your companionship on this journey! ♦

Welcome to the New Members!

We praise God for growing the ATA community! This month, we welcome the following new members:

- LeaderSource, USA
- ConnectAll Bible Institute Limited, Hong Kong
- Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky
- Chiang Mai Theological Seminary, Thailand
- Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Indonesia (STTI) Surabaya

Free material on nourishing virtuous character!

Dr. Marvin Oxenham, author of the book, *Character and Virtue in Theological Education*, has developed a practical, four-phase plan to nourish virtuous character. It is suited for both individuals, discipleship groups and formation activities in a theological college. It comes complete with a Group Leader Guide and an optional 30-week plan.

You can see it here:
<https://virtueducation.net/>

The Asia New Scholars Resources Webinar Series Has Taken Flight

Last March 30, 2021, the Webinar series organized and hosted by the AGST Council has finally taken flight! The first Asia New Scholars Resources Webinar was held last March 30 from 4:00 to 5:45 pm and involved the following AGST Schools: AGST Philippines and AGST Alliance.

Three new scholars presented their paper as follows:

Dr. Lau Ying Kheng, EdD, AGST Alliance

Encouraging Singaporean Seminary Students to use Reflexivity in their Ministry Practice.

Reflexivity practitioners enter a learning praxis armed with their knowledge and proficiency, but also ask: "What can I learn today?" And as they sense feedback within the social praxis, they are quick to engage in reflexive dialogues about assumptions and pre-decisions. Central to reflexivity posture is the determination to move from dependence on premeditated learning outcomes to discovery of fresh curriculum and dynamic learning.

Dr. Villo Naleo, PhD, Peace Studies, AGST Philippines, International Graduate School of Leadership

From Humiliation to Christlike Humility: A Phenomenological- Theological Study on the Naga Experiences of British Colonialism, American Western Christianity, and the Indian Political Statehood.

This phenomenological study is an attempt to understand the meaning of and the Naga experience of collective humiliation. These experiences have shaped their perception of themselves and others. This research shows that the forms of humiliation experienced by the participants had various facets like misrecognition, non-acceptance, and non-recognition. This dissertation proposes that the experience of humiliation be confronted with a



positive attitude and with Christ-like humility, in order to build healthy communities.

Dr. Jimmy Jiamah Jr. (Dmin, Intercultural Studies, AGST Philippines, Asian Theological Seminary)

World View, Aspirations, Folkways, and Perceptions of the Maguindanaons: Promising Pathways for the Christian Mission

The study explores doable ministry models to the Muslims. Using the ethnographic research approach in a Muslim community in Maguindanao Province, the data reveal that a large majority of the Maguindanaons are more on folk Islam. Moreover, the Maguindanaon worldview, felt needs, folkways, and perceptions could be promising pathways for the Christian mission. Such ministry model necessitates living with the Muslims,— which follows the incarnational ministry of Jesus Christ.

We are delighted that the Webinar Series organized and hosted by AGST has been well received. If you missed the webinar or would want to watch it again, please use the following links:

Facebook:

<https://fb.watch/5ZnKjIKJco/>.

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/AsiaTheologicalAssociation>

And of course, please do save the date for the next one which will be held on July 27. Please see page 11 for more details. ♦

Asia New Scholars Resources Webinar 2

July 27, 2021 | 4:00 - 5:40 pm
Hong Kong Time

LIVE



[/AsiaTheologicalAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/AsiaTheologicalAssociation)

Replay: youtube.com/AsiaTheologicalAssociation



Presenter 1:

**DR EVELYN RAMOS-PAJARON, PhD (Holistic Child Development)
AGST Philippines, APNTS**

A Mixed-Methods Filipino Parenting Education Towards Evidence-Based Practice.

Evelyn and her husband are missionaries with Cru and pioneered FamilyLife Philippines in 1996, conducting marriage and parenting seminars throughout the country and abroad. She co-authored "Parenting Teens: A Parent's Practical Guide for Raising Today's Teens," and has a weekly column at Mindanao Times.

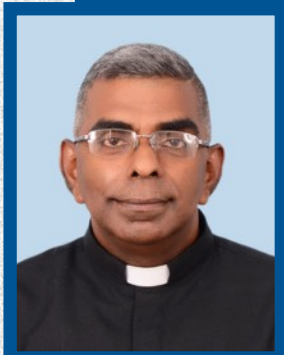


Presenter 2:

PASTOR BARBARA SUZUKI, MTH, AGST Japan

The First Things Jesus Chose to Say and Do in the Gospel of Matthew

Barbara Suzuki is co-pastor of Mizuba Community Church in Tokyo, with her husband. To receive the Degree of Master of Theology, she studied how to analyze the Greek text of the New Testament and applied this method to Matthew 3.15 to understand the meaning of Jesus' words in their literary co-text and their socio-cultural context.



Presenter 3:

**DR CHRISSE HANDY, PhD Peace Studies,
AGST Philippines, IGSL**

Proclivity Of Selected Communities Of Sri Lanka To Reconciliation

Rev Dr Chrisso Handy is a minister of the AG in Sri Lanka who has been personally affected by the conflict in Sri Lanka. His research investigates: "The current understanding towards reconciliation of Sri Lanka in light of unchanging actions. The outcome hoped to elucidate requirements that could catalyze reconciliation. A model derived using principles from Hosea 1-3 is its theoretical framework. Contextualised to Sri Lanka it is called the 'Jasmin Model for Reconciliation in Sri Lanka.'"

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