



INTEGRATING THE ARTS INTO OUR CONTEXTS: RE-ENVISIONING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

It was one for the books- a week filled with stories, music, song, dance, and every form of art! It was the 2024 ATA Theological Consultation with theme "Sights, Sounds, and Stories" held from the 12th to the 15th of November in the Furama Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

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During that week, a little over a hundred theological educators, pastors, missionaries, and artists gathered to converse on and experience the intersection of theology and art- and they were all in for a treat! From compelling messages and presentations to world class performances, the participants were immersed, in the words of Dr. Michael Ortiz, in "how sights, sounds, and stories share how we develop, frame, and practice Christian Theology."

There is no doubt that the sessions, the presentations, and the workshops made a deep impact upon each one present. But the real impact of this year's consultation will only be seen and felt several years down the road. Dr. Michael Ortiz, in his closing, put it very well when he said, "What will they see several years down the road? What will be the stories following our gathering... What will be seen will depend on the story you begin to write starting this afternoon, in this month, [and in the] years ahead. What does the future hold for the arts in Asia in shaping theological development- its framing [and] theological practice within Asian Context?"

Indeed, after a remarkable week, several stories could surface and be told- yet there is no better story to shape each of our stories than the story of God's global mission. His mission is the common thread that should run through each of our stories. In this grand scheme of things, theological education serves as God's instrument- regardless of its sector, it has one goal. That goal is "to strengthen the church's missional purpose... to come alongside our Lord God in fulfilling

His redemptive plan. That's what we're about and that is what brings us together."

Yet in returning to our respective contexts, it's easy also to slide back into the same old story. Real impact will be the result when and if we integrate the arts into theological education, into our training programs- and do it efficiently! Of course, there are no simple answers to that especially, with a structure that compartmentalizes everything into neat boxes and categories. With that, real integration of the arts into theological education will require everyone of us to re-envision theological education and it will ask nothing short of a reform. Dr. Wageeh Mikhail, one of the plenary speakers and panelists, powerfully attested to that when he said: "[We need a] structure... to match the needs of our own contexts... There is no room for [the] arts in that structure. If we stick to that inherited structure, I don't think things will go forward because we will go back to our own contexts following the same style of teaching we have done for years and years... we need to make room for the arts in theological education... This structure actually influences the way we see theology." This was immediately supported by fellow panelist, Dr. Varghese John, when he said, "What we don't want to happen is to teach another course on theological aesthetics in seminary. That's not what we are talking about. We are talking about how this integration can happen properly."

Perhaps, it is about time we start writing new stories! ♦

Quotable quotes from Sights, Sounds, and Stories:

Why I use Thai art to convey the Christian message? I believe that Christ appears in every nation.

– **Sawai Chinnawong**

Is there such a thing as godly music or godly instrument? My answer is that there are only godly musicians. The earth is the Lord's.

– **Dr. Eudence Palaruan**

Westerners sing with their mind and their heart; Asians sing with their bodies.

– **Dr. Joel Navarro**

At its heart, research is storytelling with data.

– **Dr. Marie Joy Faraz**

Theological education, regardless of its form, ought to start within a missional- ecclesial framework. That is to say it cannot operate on its own, within a silo, apart from its role as an instrument of God's mission... a mission to be carried out through the church, God's missionary people.

– **Dr. Michael Ortiz**



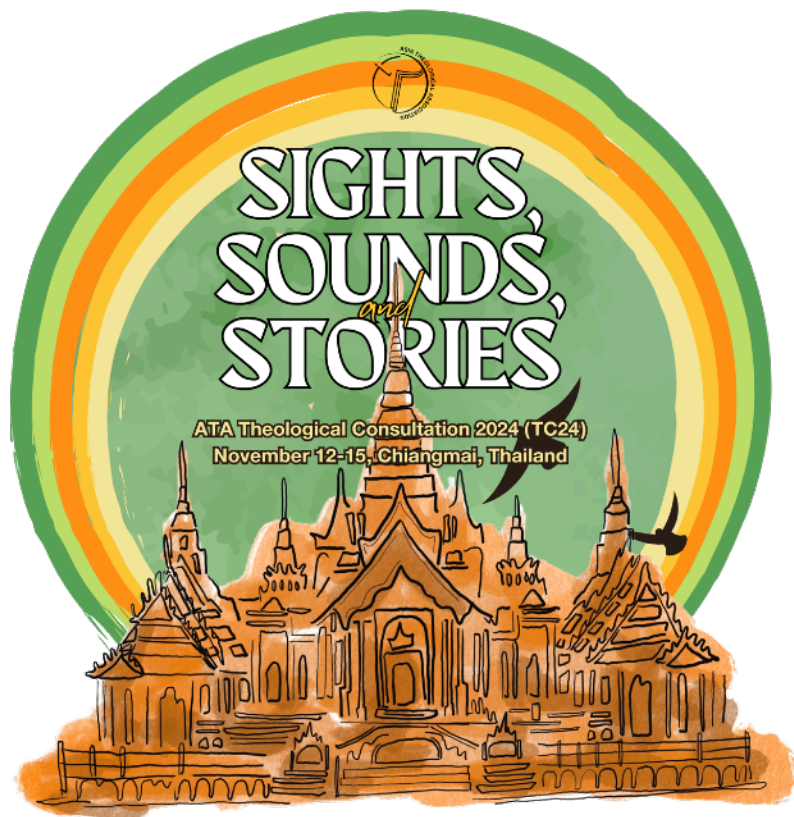
Uncovering the Story and Meaning Behind the 2024 Theological Consultation Logo

It could perhaps be said that this consultation was just once a dream... an idea conceived during the 2019 General Assembly. So, each element of this year's consultation was given much thought- and that is no less true of the logo used.

This year's consultation logo was inspired by "Genesis 9:13" (2004), one of the paintings of Thai artist Sawai Chinnawong. It was set in the context of the aftermath of the flood- and it is from this same narrative that the meaning behind the logo was drawn. The major elements of the above logo reflect that meaning and were explained by Mr. Rei Lemuel Crizaldo during the closing session of the consultation- and it is as follows:

- **Temple:** a space where sights, sounds, and stories all come together, unlocking the collective memory of a people seeking fresh recollection from across hundreds of years, right into our contemporary times. You step into a temple and you know you are stepping into a moment in time far beyond what we can see, hear, and know. And such, I would like to believe is the power of arts forms -"the deep calling to the deep" as the Psalmist put it, stirring awe in the deepest corners of our being.
- **Rainbow:** a sign of hope, founded on God's covenant to cover all of His creation with grace, never again to send waters to destroy it but fire to refine it and make everything pure, whole, and beautiful. A conviction that invites us to make every brush stroke, every musical note, every combination of words, we put together, to be an act of worship.
- **Dove:** a messenger of the Good News that all the world is coming back to life, that the flood of death and destruction is no more and instead, a land full of promise is waiting, for God's people to inhabit, cultivate, and dwell in mutual dependence, and shared aspiration expressed in groaning, for the beauty of new creation coming.

The logo was designed by two artists: Dandin Espina, an illustrator, and Kit Cabullo, a graphic designer. ◆





THE 2024 ATA THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND STORIES

It was nothing short of remarkable! The 2024 ATA Theological Consultation definitely lived up to its theme with a week filled with sights, sounds, and stories.



Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary, welcoming all the participants to the 2024 consultation. She also shared how the consultation began as a dream that was ignited during the 2019 General Assembly.



Dr. Sooi Ling Tan served as the Convenor of this year's consultation. She likewise welcomed the participants to this year's consultation and explained the theme.



Dr. Michael Ortiz, Executive Director of ICETE, gave the opening remarks and in that asked the participants these thought-provoking questions: "What is the role of the arts in keeping theological education on track in mission?" and "How do you really know [that] you are doing what you're supposed to be doing?" Dr. Ortiz likewise spoke on integrating theology and the arts in one of the plenary sessions during the last day of the consultation and facilitated the final panel discussion.



Dr. Havilah Dharamraj who not only spoke on "Elements of Biblical Storytelling" in one of the plenary sessions, but also led the devotions on days 2, 3, & 4 demonstrated the power of narrative in preaching.

The first evening was one filled with story and music as world class pianist Dr. Esther Shin Chuang held a mini-concert entitled *Beauty out of Brokenness*.



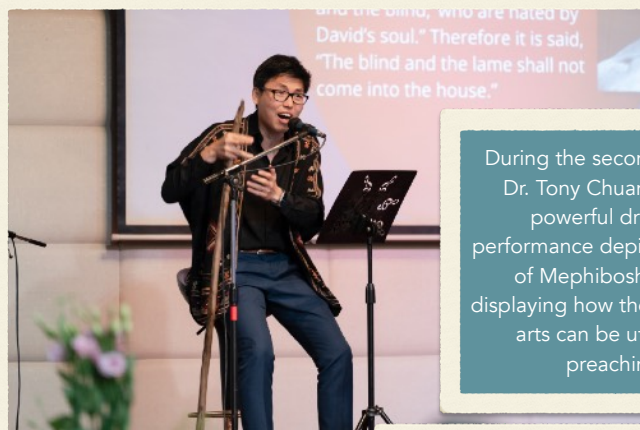
Sawaii Chinnawong (With translator Dr. Wipawee Panjinda James, faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University, in the far right), Arnan Moontrakorn, and Thannit Lokeswaree (L-R) each allowed us a closer glimpse into the elaborate layers of Thai art: form, self, and symbol. Each of them also shared their paintings along with the stories behind each of them.



Dr. Joel Navarro spoke on how the participants can inspire their congregations to sing a more profound hallelujah.



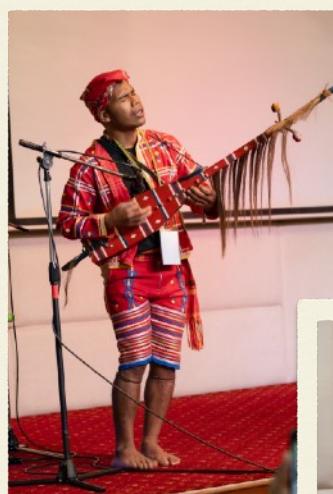
One cannot fully learn about music without experiencing it. So, the participants engaged in community singing- and dancing! For Asians also sing with their bodies!



During the second evening, Dr. Tony Chuang gave a powerful dramatic performance depicting the life of Mephibosheth and displaying how the performing arts can be utilized in preaching.

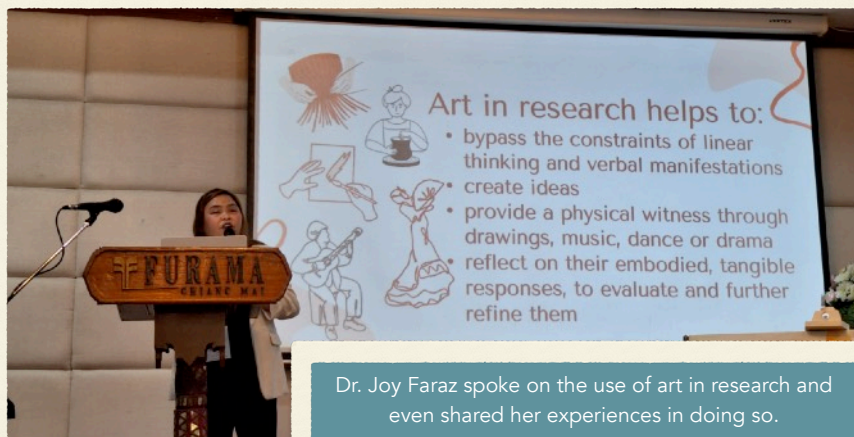


Joshua Chang along with Drs. Eudencie Palaruan and Bea Yap, faculty of Singapore Bible College School of Church music not only spoke powerfully on the reforms made in the School of Church music but also on forming a theology of church music.



Several other artists performed and shared their work during the consultation. A special shout out to Mr. Michael Veerapen, who composed the music of Asia Puts Its Hope in You. He played several roles in this year's consultation.





Dr. Joy Faraz spoke on the use of art in research and even shared her experiences in doing so.



Rev. Erwin Cabalang bore his heart as he shared his story as a digital artist.



Dr. Wageeh Mikhail spoke of the intriguing history of Arabic calligraphy.



The participants were treated to some poetry reading as Michael Stalcup read some of his published poems.



Aside from the rich plenary sessions, there were a number of paper presentations, each showcasing the use of the arts in various areas of life and ministry.



The participants were likewise given the opportunity to immerse themselves in a variety of art forms through various workshops.



Thai artists Sawai Chinnawong, Thannit Lokeswaree, and Arnan Moontrakorn with some of their masterpieces and Dr. Sooi Ling, TC 2024 convenor, and Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary.



Art is meant to be experienced- and so the organizers of the consultation opened an art experience room where participants not only displayed some of their artworks but also created art!



2025 ATA GA AND GREETINGS

Save the date! Christ-like Leadership Formation for Our Turbulent World

The 2025 ATA General Assembly

NOVOTEL Hotels and Resorts,
Taipei, Taoyuan International Airport
11-15 August 2025

*The world has been turbulent.
We have seen disasters,
calamities, along with unending
conflicts and wars.
But amid all that, we rejoice
because we have hope.
God with us.
Immanuel.
He is our hope.*

Have a meaningful Christmas
and a blessed New Year
2025!



Celebrating the Official Launch of the Center for Theological Inquiry in Asia

Several months ago, the Center for Theological Inquiry or CTIA was formally launched through the signing of a Memorandum of agreement between the Asia Theological Association (ATA) and the International Graduate School of Leadership (IGSL). From that moment, CTIA launched softly as it released its website along with content written by several thought leaders from across Asia.

But last November 14, CTIA was officially launched, and it was done in partnership with Café Theo, a ministry of IGSL. It was held in the campus of IGSL and was also made available via zoom for those who cannot attend onsite. During the said event, Dr. Steve Pardue, former CTIA Director and now CTIA Global Ambassador, introduced CTIA, sharing not just its background but also its vision and recognizing the fellows and the team behind it. Of course, part of that recognition is the installation of the new director of CTIA, Dr. Beatrice Ang. To cap off the CTIA launch was a special lecture with title “Speaking of God in Asia: A Philippine Reflection” delivered by CTIA Senior Fellow, Dr. Timoteo Gener. The lecture was not only insightful and intellectually stimulating, but also prepared the ground for more Asian theologies to surface!

With CTIA now officially launched, we can definitely expect many more articles, projects, and partnerships that will be made available to the Asian church! Stay tuned as they are already underway! ♦



Guests eagerly register to participate in the official launch of CTIA!



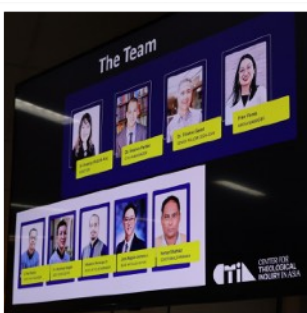
Of course, the launch began with worship and prayer led by Tim Tabada.



Rev. Nimrod Tica, IGSL Executive Director, gave the opening remarks.



Dr. Steve Pardue shared the background and vision of CTIA



The team behind CTIA was introduced and recognized.



The new director of CTIA, Dr. Beatrice Ang, was installed. The leaders of IGSL along with guests prayed for and over her.



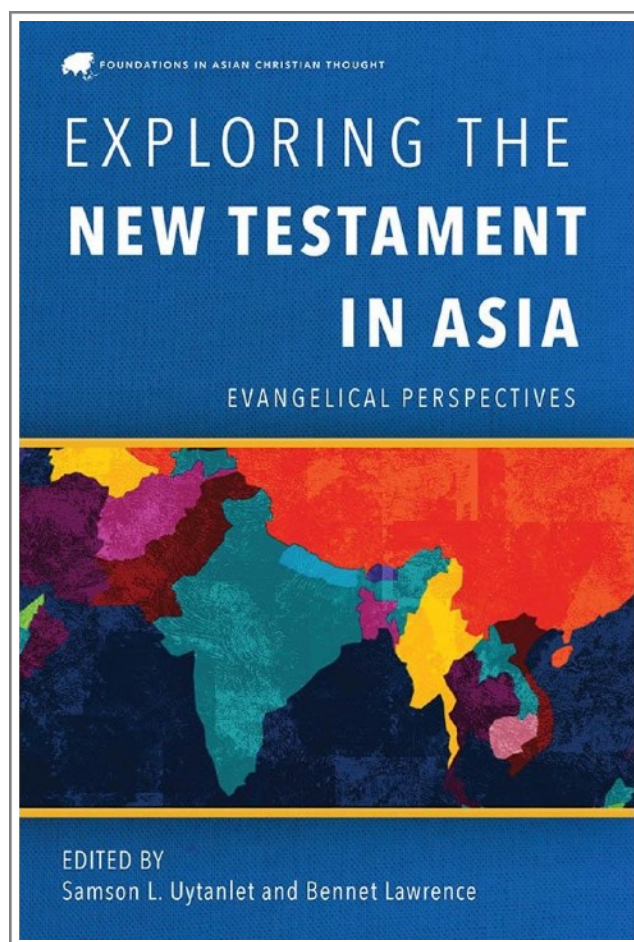
Dr. Timoteo Gener, CTIA Senior fellow, gave a special lecture during the event.

Exploring the New Testament in Asia Launched!

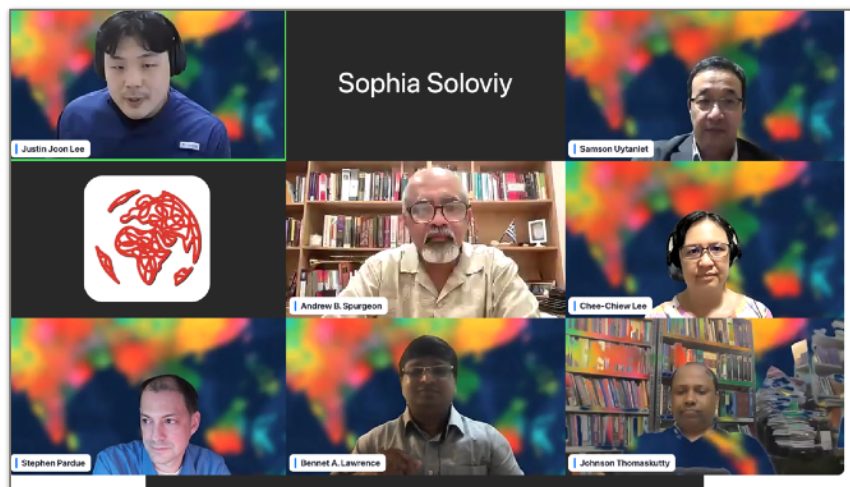
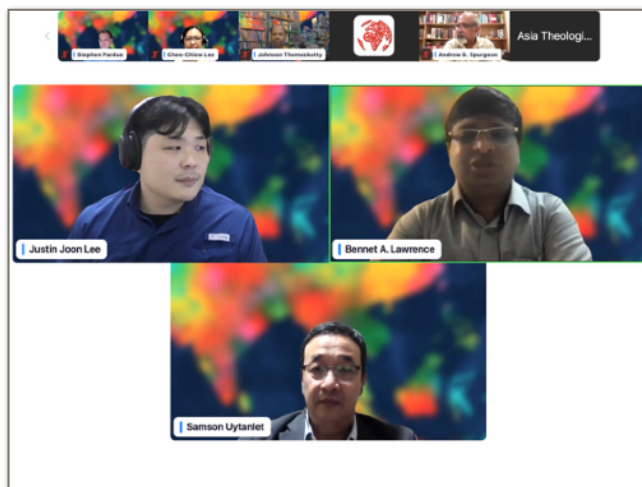
Last November 5, 8pm PST (12:00 BST), Langham Publishing, in partnership with the Asia Theological Association launched its newly released book "Exploring the New Testament in Asia," the fourth title in the Foundations of Asian Christian Thought series. Edited by Drs. Samson Uytanlet and Bennet Lawrence, Exploring the New Testament in Asia is "a collection of essays offering theological reflections on New Testament themes from Asian perspectives." The launch was held online via zoom but was also streamed live on Facebook.

Present during the launch of course were the editors who both spoke about the book along with Drs. Johnson Thomaskutty, and Chee- Chiew Lee, who are both contributors; and Drs. Steve Pardue, Associate Publications Secretary, and Andrew Spurgeon, Publications Secretary. The emcee for the launch was "Mosaic" podcast host, Dr. Justin Joon Lee.

Well, if you missed the book launch, you can still watch it through the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/AsiaTheologicalAssociation/videos/1309886340366370> and if you want to purchase a copy



of the book, you may through the Langham website: <https://langhamliterature.org/books/exploring-the-new-testament-in-asia> and get free shipping on your order. On the other hand, digital copies are available via Amazon, Apple iBooks, Kobo, Nook, and Vital Source eBook. ♦



Asia Theological Association & Global Spiritual Formation Project

CALL FOR PAPERS 2025

USD 2,000
PRIZE
for each published paper

Asia Theological Association and the Global Spiritual Formation Project (with generous funding from Templeton Religion Trust) invites theological education institutions in Asia to submit papers for an upcoming special issue of the Journal of Asian Theological Education & Spiritual Formation (JATES). We are seeking contributions that explore institutional approaches to the holistic formation of leaders, focusing on strategies and practices as well as the underlying theories and principles. Your papers should answer the following question:

How does your institution uniquely foster growth in the areas of spiritual, relational and personal formation?

or

How does your institution uniquely cultivate mature Christian leaders in your context?

Prize Conditions

- Prize recipients are required to present your papers for workshops at the ATA Triennial General Assembly, held in Taiwan from 11-15 August 2025.

A travel subsidy of up to USD750 will be provided to each institution for this purpose.

If you have any questions, please email the editors of JATES at jates.ata@gmail.com

Submission Process

- By 1 March 2025 Find out more details and submit your 400-500 word abstract at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/mwmbmyfm>
- 30 March 2025 We will notify you regarding the outcome of your submission.
- 1 July 2025 First draft of papers (4000-6000 words) to be submitted.
- 11-15 Aug 2025 Authors to present first draft of papers the ATA Triennial General Assembly in Taiwan.
- 30 Sep 2025 Final papers to be submitted for peer review.

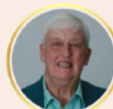


About APTS Press

The purpose of APTS Press and the Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies is to encourage serious theological thinking and articulation by Pentecostals/Charismatics and dialogue with other Christian traditions in Asia to stimulate creative contextualization the Christian faith; and to provide a means for Pentecostals/Charismatics to share their theological reflection.



The Press and the Journal, seek to address issues that impact Asian churches with the conviction that the end goal of academic reflection is to serve the Body of Christ.



Dr. Dave Johnson, D. Miss
Director, APTS Press and
Managing Editor, APTS

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