



CELEBRATING COLLABORATION: THE 2025 ATA ANNUAL MEETINGS

Collaboration makes the ministry of ATA thrive.

- Dr. Theresa Lua, ATA General Secretary, in her annual report

Last January 13- 17, the leaders of the various ministries of the Asia Theological Association, along with its Board, gathered in Taipei, Taiwan for this year's Annual meetings. From celebrations of all that has been accomplished in the previous year to plans

for the year and years to come, to moments of fellowship, bonding, and laughter- every moment was rich and meaningful!

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Yet of all that was celebrated that week, worth highlighting is ATA's growing collaboration between various groups and organizations! Certainly, the word "collaboration" has become such a buzzword and a trendy undertaking, particularly among next generation influencers. Yet amid the buzz, collaboration can be such a difficult endeavor, especially among big and established organizations. So, when it does happen and even bears fruit, there is no doubt that it is worth celebrating!

This year, ATA has been blessed with the privilege of collaborating with several organizations, working together to strengthen our member institutions. First, we continued to work with TearFund East and Southeast Asia and with them organized a couple of gatherings toward the end of helping our member institutions incorporate Integral Mission in their formative efforts. With them we organized the Church and Community Mobilization (CCM) workshop- a key component of ATA's partnership with the aforementioned. Through the CCM workshop, "the participants looked into the theological framework of pursuing 'life in all its fullness,' several models of how to bring about this vision in local communities, and the process of outworking CCM in the particular context of Mongolia." Then we also organized year 2 of Equipping Leaders for Integral Mission, a by invitation only gathering of about 30 leaders from across East and Southeast Asia. But more than just events, through our partnership with TearFund East and Southeast Asia, we were also able to award scholarships to three doctoral students for their dissertation data gathering! We hope to continue to provide scholarships to more post-graduate students across East and Southeast Asia through our partnership with TearFund. In fact, we are calling for new applications! These scholarships are available particularly to ThM, Dmin, and PhD students whose research is in the area of Integral Mission and are



The ATA Executive Board



Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development (CAED)

enrolled in ATA- Accredited schools in the said region. ([See announcement on page 9](#)).

We also collaborated with Local Leaders International (LLI) in organizing the Academic Leadership seminar with theme "Building Institutional Capacity for Quality Online Education". It was LLI that provided the funds to subsidize the accommodation and meals of the 63 Leaders from 16 countries. It was also LLI that provided the airfare of the facilitators.

Then, in our hope to see seminaries equipping their students wholistically- and that includes their emotional health, preparing them to handle the emotional and relational challenges that come with

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Christian service- we are collaborating with Fuller Theological Seminary in conducting research on the emotional health of Christian leaders. This research project is being led by Dr. David Wang , Cliff and Joyce Penner Chair for the Formation of Emotionally Healthy Leaders and Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary. An initial focus group discussion was held last July 11, 2024 in Manila, Philippines but research will also be conducted in other countries across Asia. In fact, during the recently conducted 2024 Theological Consultation in Chiang Mai, 12 seminary leaders/ faculty from various countries gathered to meet with Dr. Wang.

Regarding the Theological Consultation, that gathering allowed for another collaborative relationship to also flourish. This was with Asia Biblical Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Chiang Mai. It was ABTS who organized the details on the ground, scouting, inspecting, coordinating, and just making sure everything went smoothly.

Finally, expanding the GATE workshop to Sri Lanka was also made possible through collaboration with Coworkers. Coworkers gave us a generous grant which has already benefited and will continue to benefit Sri Lankan theological institutions and their faculty.



AGST Council



Publications Committee

Collaboration is beautiful. Collaboration is not just essential, it is biblical

Collaboration is beautiful. Collaboration is not just essential, it is biblical, just as Ecclesiastes 4:9 states, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor." We are grateful that God has opened doors not only for us to partner with

organizations but also with individuals. This year's annual meetings were through the efforts of Dr. Evan Hsu, Chairperson of ATA North America and president of the Global Mission Seminary in California. He raised funds for our hotel accommodation, dinner, and local transportation expenses- and for that we are deeply grateful! We are likewise deeply grateful for the partnership of China Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS) who not only allowed us to use their facilities for free but also provided lunch and snacks during the various meetings! We indeed thrive when we work hand in hand with others- and we look forward to more and growing collaborations in the years to come! ◆

Working Together for Holistic Formation

What impact does seminary education have on the spiritual, character, and virtue development of those who will someday play a role in the development and even the flourishing of societies and communities? That is the question that has been driving the groundbreaking, multiyear project of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin University called *Forming Religious Education and Leadership towards a Global, Ecumenical, Culturally Decentered Vision of Spiritual Maturity and Flourishing* led by Dr. David Wang and this project has received a generous grant from the Templeton Religion Trust!

The research project began a few years back and data has been collected from seminary students across North America. It is comprehensive data but not necessarily relevant to contexts outside North America, particularly the Global South. So, in order to hear voices from the Global South, particularly those in Asia, Calvin University has moved to the next phase of this research project and has partnered with the Asia Theological Association to conduct research on holistic spiritual formation. Also, through this partnership, ATA was awarded a generous grant which will be allocated to the following:

First, the ATA Spiritual, relational, and personal formation research which will be led by a committee composed of Drs. Allan Harkness (Project Manager), Sooi Ling Tan, Bennet Lawrence, Annie Pan Yi Jung, and Theresa Lua. The main question this research aims to answer is: *What are ATA member institutions' definitions, perspectives, implementation and perceived*

impact of the means they use to enhance spiritual, relational and personal formation in their students as a key component of a holistic approach which authentic Christian leadership requires to effectively serve churches and societies in fulfilling God's mission? Additionally, it is worth noting that [t]he research is designed to be aligned with elements of ATA's TE values, and so potentially provide valuable 'in house' data for ATA, as well as contributing to the global research project on 'the impact of a seminary education... on the spiritual, character, and virtue development of religious leaders who will one day contribute to the shaping and flourishing of communities and societies.

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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.

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.

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



Transformative Insights on Pedagogy: ATA India's First Nationwide Deans' Seminar

The Asia Theological Association (ATA) India hosted its first ever nationwide Deans Seminar from January 21 to 23, 2025, at the CEO Centre, SAIACS in Bangalore. This event is specifically designed for academic deans and registrars from ATA institutions, aiming to enhance the academic standards of these institutions. In the keynote address, Dr. Bennet Lawrence shared a simple yet powerful journey towards this significant event—which all began with a thought that turned into an idea, which was nurtured through prayer and planning—eventually became a tangible reality. This story highlights the importance of visionary leadership and faith as well as the many united hands that supported and worked diligently to turn the vision into a reality.

Highlights of Participation:

The event received a positive response across India, attracting a remarkable turnout of 109 Academic Deans and Registrars who travelled long distances and from regions as diverse as the Uttarakhand to Kanyakumari, highlighting the event's significance. In addition, it was encouraging to see an increasing number of women in leadership positions actively participating in the Deans Seminar, reflecting progress towards gender inclusivity in academic leadership.



Significance of the event:

- Various scholars led sessions based on their areas of expertise, providing participants with an enriching experience. It was a valuable opportunity for attendees to hear from both male and female resource persons from diverse backgrounds, each sharing insights drawn from their extensive practices.
- Dr. Malcom Webber discussed the holistic approach to developing effective leadership in India. He emphasized the importance of nurturing leaders in

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spiritual, experiential, relational and instructional dimensions.

- Dr. Bennet Lawrence's session on Mission statement, taught the participants the importance of penning down the Mission Statement and the clear distinction between the Vision and Mission statement. This experience helped participants develop their institution's curriculum in alignment with their Vision and Mission statements.

- The session on writing syllabi conducted by Dr. Bennet was highly enlightening for many participants. He provided a clear explanation of the why, what, and how of syllabi.

- In the session on personal management, Dr. Bennet emphasized the importance of focusing on five key areas, or "buckets," that are essential for effective leadership, knowledge, skills, network, resources, and reputation.

- Dr Vizovono Chiesetsu discussed lesson planning through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy, emphasizing its role in fostering critical and deep thinking among students. She outlined how this framework can be effectively utilized to design educational experiences that promote higher level of remembering, thinking, understanding and applying.

- Mrs Joyce Lawrence taught the participants about the seven essential steps of lesson planning and how these steps culminate in the development of knowledge, changes in attitudes, and the acquisition of skills and ultimately leading to personal transformation.

- Rev. Shaiju, in his session on online education, enlightened participants about the standards and quality measures that institutions should uphold. He discussed the importance of adhering to established guidelines to ensure that online education meets high-quality benchmarks.



- Additionally, Rev. Shaiju shared valuable insights about evaluation and assessment strategies, emphasizing their critical role in measuring student performance and program effectiveness.

- Dr. Saji KP's session focused on personal formation, where he shared insights drawn from practical life experiences. He guided participants through the process of personal development, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness and growth in various aspects of life.

Impressions from the Event:

All the delegates expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the valuable insights gained during the seminar. They appreciated the high quality of the materials provided, both in soft and hard copies, which enhanced their learning experience. Participants left with numerous takeaways that they are eager to implement in order to drive transformation within their respective institutions.

As one of the participant Rev Jacob Paikad shares, "The Dean's seminar was a profoundly enlightening experience that significantly enriched my pedagogical perspective and skills, that challenged me to reevaluate

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CHRIST-LIKE LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOR OUR TURBULENT WORLD: THE 2025 ATA TRIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

You've seen and heard it in the news.

War. Calamities left and right. Fascism. Religious intolerance. Moral degradation and the breakdown of society.

The list goes on and there is no doubt that the world we live in today is highly complex... filled with a plethora of unpredictable challenges... turbulent.

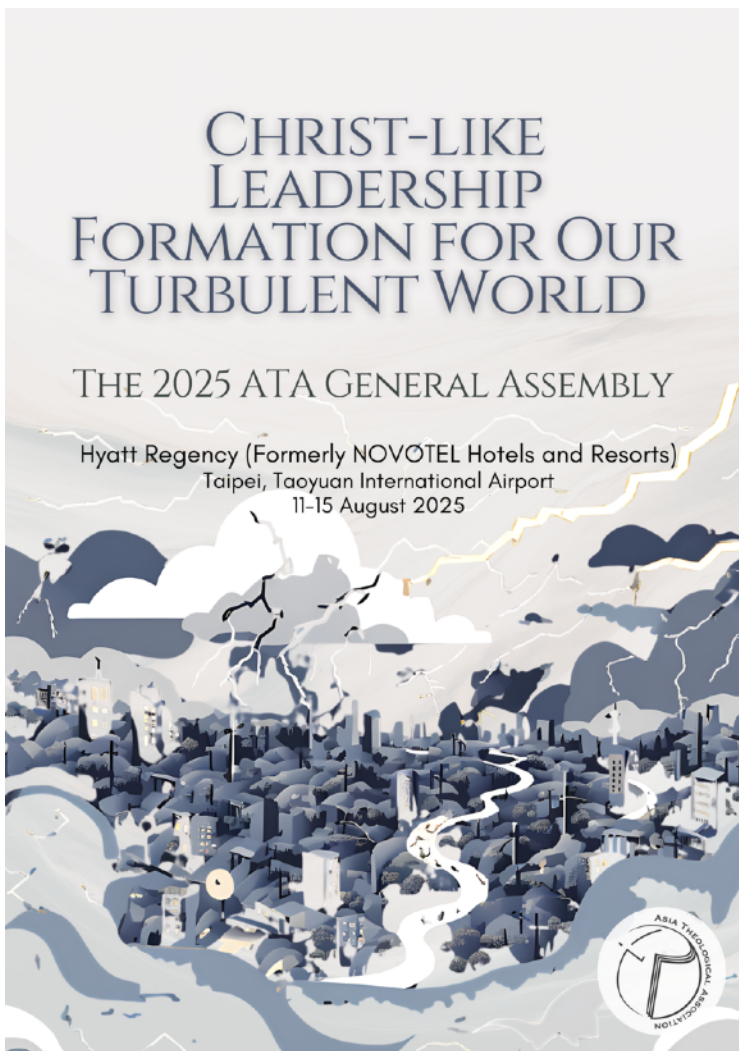
Yet amid the chaos and turbulence, our calling as a church remains: "declaring and demonstrating Christ together"! We are to press on in our calling faithfully despite the challenges of the time and we need leaders who are not only effective but also display Christ in their

leadership and service. How do we nurture these kinds of leaders?

Thus, the theme of this year's General Assembly: "Christ-like Leadership Formation for our Turbulent World". It will be from the 11th to the 15th of August at the Hyatt Regency Taoyuan International Airport (formerly NOVOTEL Hotels and Resorts, Taipei, Taoyuan International Airport).

What are you waiting for? Register now through the following link: <https://www.ataasia.com/2025ataga>

See you in Taiwan! ♦



ACCOMMODATION AND REGISTRATION FEE

For stay-in participants:

Room Type	Accomm. Fee	Registration Fee			Total		
		Member (Group A Countries)	Member (w/subsidy)	Non-member	Member (Group A Countries)	Member (w/subsidy)	Non-member
Single	US\$ 600	US\$250	US\$ 200	US\$ 300	US\$ 850	US\$800	US\$ 900
Twin	US\$ 300	US\$250	US\$ 200	US\$ 300	US\$ 550	US\$500	US\$ 600

For stay-out participants:

Stay-out (Member - Group A Countries) - US\$ 250
 Stay-out (Member with subsidy) - US\$ 200
 Stay-out (Non-member) - US\$ 300

Check-in: Aug. 11th, Monday at 3 pm
 Check out: Aug. 15th Friday at 11 am

**Group A Countries:

Within Asia- Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Macau, Singapore, Taiwan
 Outside Asia- North America / Europe, Israel, Australia

Note:

Meals include dinner on the opening night, daily lunch and snacks. Dinner will not be provided on Tuesday-Thursday nights as these evenings are allotted for networking and fellowship. Participants are free to go out and explore the night markets in Taipei.

For more information and to register, Please scan the code:



ataasia.com/2025ataga

Why Is Asian Church History Important?

By Bong Rin Ro, ThD

When I taught church history at different seminaries in Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, and Hawaii, I dealt with Western Church History (Early Church, Medieval Church, Reformation, and Modern Church). I rarely was given the opportunity to teach Asian Church History. If someone mentions church history, he usually deals with western church history. The Roman Catholic Church in western Europe and Eastern Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe have a long history of Christianity from the Early Church to modern time, sending their missionaries to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Well the tides have turned. Today, Asia contains 60% (5 billion) of the world population of 7.9 billion people. In 1,800 A.D., the world population was 978 million, of whom 208 million (23.1% of the population) were Christians. Out of 208 million Christians, 86.5% were white Christians. When William Carey went to Calcutta, India from England in 1793, Asia had a population of 602 million people, of whom the Christian population was only two-tenths of 1%. Certainly, an Asian church historian in the 18th century did not have much research material to write a book on Asian church history.

So, we see that two major demographic changes have taken place in the world during the last two centuries. First, Asia contains the majority of the world

population. Second, 60% of the World's Christian population also resides in the Third World. While Christianity has been declining in Europe and North America, rapid church growth has been taking place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Over the last 50 years, several Asian churches have experienced rapid church growth: Korean Church "(Six New Churches Every Day" in the 1970s), Chinese Church in China (over 100 million Christians), Philippines Church (16.3 million Protestants-24.7% of the population), Singapore (17%), Indonesia (15.8%)-

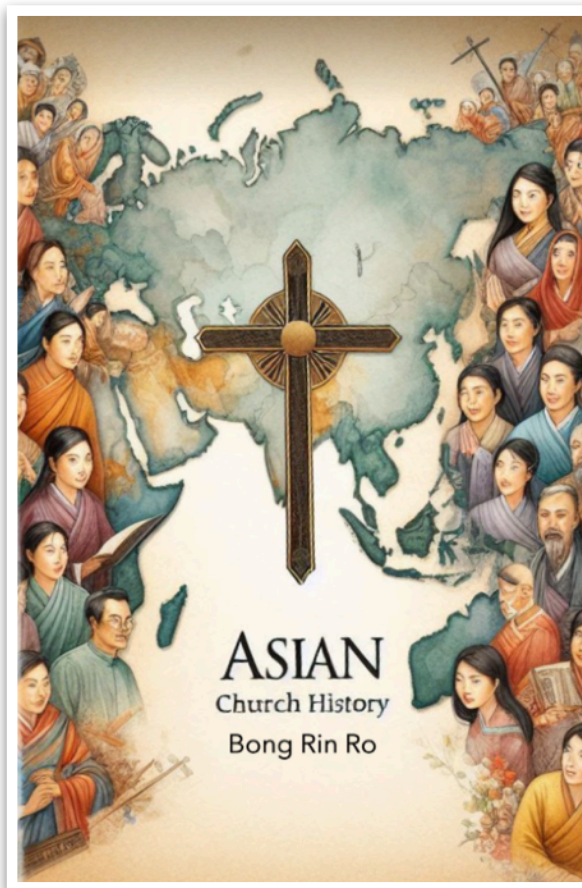
and the list goes on! But more than just church growth, Asian churches are also sending their Asian missionaries (approximate numbers): India (30,000), Korea (24,000), Singapore/Malaysia (1,200), Philippines (670), Japan (510), Taiwan (560), Hong Kong (500), China (1,000-2,000), and Thailand (60).

The Lord has been moving in Asia- and it's about time we look at how throughout history.

That is the very reason why the book Asian Church History came to be.

Asian Church History (575 pages) was published in Korea in August 2024, just before the Lausanne IV Congress, to explain what God has been doing in the Asian Church with its rapid church growth and crucial

challenges under growing persecution. Accompanying the book is "Asian Church History is Asian Church History: Outline and Chronology" (150 pages), a supplementary book, has also been published. One main target audience of this book is the 1,300 theological seminaries in Asia reaching from Japan to West Asia. This book will help many theological students and church leaders to have a better understanding of Christianity in 25 Asian nations. ◆



Calling all Post-graduate students of ATA-Accredited Schools in East and Southeast Asia!

Are you a ThM, Dmin, or PhD student in any of the ATA- Accredited schools in East and Southeast Asia? Are you doing research in the area of Integral Mission?

Then we are inviting you to apply for the ATA-TearFund Integral Mission Scholarship! To do so, kindly follow these instructions:

1. Fill out the application form found in the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfQ851D5eJXFxWCQBD4LarOLaBuWkUQ3EpTDvrYNyztT12uQA/viewform>
2. In the application form, there is space for you tell us more about your research project. You will need the following ready:

- Topic: scope and purpose of your dissertation/ thesis research project.
 - Field research methodology: data gathering and analysis.
 - Research subjects and context.
3. Provide one academic recommendation.
 4. Provide a copy of your current transcript of grades.

The deadline for applications is on March 20, 2025. ◆

Announcement from CTIA & JAET:

We are pleased to announce the winners of the first annual JAET Essay Prize. This year, we were delighted to receive 20 submissions from both younger and more established scholars from 7 nations. To help us select the winners, we engaged scholars with relevant expertise to review the top submissions. As is standard for JAET, we used a double-blind peer review process in which submissions are anonymized and then assessed by two scholars with relevant expertise.

Based on these reviews, we were able to identify one first-prize winner and three second-place winners. ◆



In collaboration with:



Essay Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the first annual JAET Essay Prize!

- 1st Modesto Biolango III**
"Sakop-Orientation and Communal Sanctification: A Filipino Christian Cultural-Theological Reflection on Biblical Holiness"
- 2nd Ni Buxiao, PhD**
"Gospel-Centered Indigenous Church: Discussion on the Practice of Wang Mingdao's Thoughts"
- Francis Samdao Jr., ThD**
"Decolonizing Some Evangelical Beliefs through Indigenous Wisdom: Listening and Learning from Bontoc Ato Traditions"
- Michelle Wu**
"The Parable of the Rich Fool in the Context of Chinese Culture"

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Second, the prizes for the winning papers for the Journal of Asian Theological Education and Spiritual Formation (JATES). Late last year we began putting out a call for papers focusing on how theological education institutions in Asia understand spiritual, relational and personal formation and demonstrate it in their practices. We continue to call for institutions to submit their abstracts and a prize of USD 2,000 awaits each published paper (regardless of number of authors). The winners will likewise be given an opportunity to present their draft papers (regardless of the number of authors) at the ATA Triennial General Assembly and will be given a travel subsidy of up to USD 750, which covers airfare and conference fees. The deadline to submit paper proposals will be on March 01, 2025.

Finally, the prizes for the winning papers for the mini conference of the Center for Theological Inquiry in Asia (CTIA) in 2026. CTIA will soon be announcing the details for this but prize money of USD 2000 per selected paper (up to 10 papers) and a USD 500 subsidy for travel and for the conference fee has already been allocated.

We praise God for how He has not only provided financially for these activities but also for how He has opened doors for us to grow in nurturing holistic formation within our community! We are likewise very grateful to Dr. David Wang for making it possible for ATA to be part of this global project. ◆

**TRANSFORMATIVE INSIGHTS ON PEDAGOGY:
ATA INDIA'S FIRST NATIONWIDE DEANS' SEMINAR**

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my ministry as a Theological educator, emphasizing that teaching extends beyond knowledge transmission to the holistic formation of individuals into the likeness of Jesus.... Contextual Curriculum emphasized aligning curriculum development with the institution's vision and mission. And teaching methodology was highly engaging, demonstrating how to create a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. Similarly, ...insights on assessment and evaluation transformed my perspective, offering invaluable strategies for effectively assessing students."

Another participant thanked ATA India for giving them an opportunity to take their institution to the next level.

We praise God for the positive and encouraging feedback from those who came and participated in this year's Deans' seminar. We look forward to working at more opportunities to empower those in our institutions to better serve their constituents. ◆

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