

ASIA-PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATOR EXPOSURE PROGRAM
SPONSORED BY FTESEA
HOSTED BY BTESSC AND SATHRI
Nov 28-Dec 1, 2022

Listener's Group Report

From November 29 – December 1, 2022, FTESEA sponsored a conference hosted by BTESSC & SATHRI, “to discuss the possibility of creating a network for mutual support and the sharing of resources for strengthening quality theological education for leadership in Christian communities.” Leaders from theological schools in Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Fiji responded to the invitation. The participants included representatives of individual schools, national and regional associations of theological educators. Over the three days, various schools and associations presented information about the challenges they faced and what was needed to enhance the work of theological education in their context. A primary commitment that emerged sought to find ways to strengthen those places where theological education has just started or is yet to start, e.g., Bhutan and Nepal, two countries that were represented at the consultation.

- A. Creation of the importance of the **National Asia-Pacific Theological Association (NAPTA)**, as a space for ongoing mutual dialogue and enrichment. NAPTA is not a superstructure but a fellowship for the national theological associations to help those regions where leadership formation is critical for Christian communities.

Purpose and Nature of Organization

- To enrich the quality of education in theological schools
- To address common concerns, benefit from each other
- To foster cooperation among churches and theological schools for higher theological education and ecumenical relationship.
- To develop minimum requirements such as:
Common eligibility for student enrollment, basic curriculum, faculty qualification and requirements, duration of studies, sharing of resources, and recognition of each other's degrees.
- To support and involve in leadership development in countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Mongolia, Timor Laste, and Papua New Guinea.

Resource Sharing and Cooperation: Human, Library, and Finance

Human (Faculty Member and Librarian):

- Strengthen cooperation among the theological colleges and seminaries in sharing faculty resources.
- Develop faculty by sponsoring them during higher theological studies.
- Funding for women's scholarship.
- Welcome sponsored teachers from within and outside the country.
- Facilitate online teaching along with physical classes.
- Conduct training for schools' librarians. Suggested topics are online libraries, inter-library loan systems, etc.
- Build strong networking among librarians of theological schools in Asia and the Pacific.

Library:

- Digitize Asian – Pacific resources, Dissertations (Asian Theological Library Association – ATLA)
- Seek sponsorship for online resources, e.g., GDTL,
- Donate books and share each other's publications.

- Encourage the publication of monographs, journal articles, and study materials.
- Develop online libraries with wider access.
- Develop an inter-library loan system.

Finance:

- Pool in financial resources nationally to support the program.
- Develop infrastructure for theological education.
- Identify and apply for the sponsorship of the library and faculty development programs.

B. Suggested Action Plans

- 1) Task Force – The Listener's group and Executive Director to be Task Force. The ED of FTESEA be the convenor and bring the national Asia-Pacific Theological Association (APTA) structure and its viability by June 2023.
- 2) To identify the specific accompaniment on faculty development in those countries where Christians are emerging, and theological schools have just started or yet to start, an Ecumenical Team visit in three regions: South Asia (Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh – coordinate with Senate of Serampore College), Mekong region (Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia – Coordinate with ATEM and ATESEA) and South East North Asia (Mongolia, Timor Leste, Papua New Genuine – coordinate with PERSETIA & ATESEA).
- 3) Research students' exposure and short-term faculty exchange programs within Asia will promote contextual research. It will also benefit those countries that are struggling for faculty. This will also strengthen contextual theologies in Asia and Pacific. Therefore, the TF is requested to develop MoU for the mutual exchange program.
- 4) Organize a NAPTA conference on the theme “Christian and Theological Education Contribution to Nation Building”.

Listener's group were: Rev. Dr. Nang Sawm Piang, (Convener), Rev. Dr. Edwin Tay, Dr. Aswathy John, and Rev. Dr. Justitia Vox De Hattu.