



## *A Word from the Dean*

Dear Friends of BGST,

A blessed new year to you! I hope to communicate with you every month on the first week of the month. If you are a regular reader of *BGST This Week* (or BTW in short) we will be able to 'meet' monthly through this page. I look forward to sharing with you concerning what God is doing at BGST and there may also be other matters of interest that I would like to draw to your attention. So, welcome on board!

The year 2005 was a good year for BGST. We were able to witness God's hand on BGST in many ways. Not everything went smoothly and we had our fair share of difficulties. But God has been faithful through it all.

### **Our Students**

I want to thank God first for our students. Without them there will be no BGST. It is on Sat. Jan 14 we shall be holding our 15th Convocation at Bishan and we hope to have one M Div (Dr Atomic Leow), 4 MCS (Chris Chin, Mathews Abraham, K. Hukali Aye, and Peter Lim Hong Sing), and 2 postgraduate DipCS graduands (Peter Tang and Eileen Su). I always look at the graduation of our students with a sense of nostalgia. We have been through together through thick and thin, teaching and learning, wrestling through issues in theological, biblical and other disciplines. And the time comes when our students will need to prepare to take what they have learned and move on to areas of service to God or further studies. New students will take their place and the cycle goes on and on. It is good that at BGST not all our graduates leave us as some come back from time to time on a lifelong learning basis.

### **Welcome back, Dr Milne**

We are glad to have Dr Douglas Milne with us again on his annual visit with us. Dr Milne teaches Systematic Theology and related subjects. He focus this year on Contemporary Theologians and Theologies and Teaching the Westminster Confession of Faith.

### **Our Wednesday Chapels**

Attendance lately has been rather thin. We would like to remind everyone that our Chapels from 12.00-12.45pm every Wednesday is an "open house" situation and you are all welcomed to come and hear inspiring messages and join us in a time of worship.

All students are also informed that there is a student prayer after lunch on Wednesdays on the second floor. For next Wednesday, Dr Milne will be speaking.

### **Counselling Gambling Addiction**

We are pleased to inform you that we are currently preparing a new course to be started to focus on the need to be aware about the problems of gambling addiction and also to prepare certified counsellors to deal with this problem. This is in preparation of the social cost that is bound to take place when the two integrated resorts will start. BGST is equidistant from both resorts! This is a preliminary announcement. Look out for more details to come.

### **Biblical Languages**

At the beginning of every year we are happy to start new Greek and Hebrew classes. Dr Augustine Pagolu will be teaching Hebrew and I will be teaching New Testament Greek. For the latter we have a dual approach. One can either take a 8 week course in Greek, starting in February and meetings on Saturday afternoons. At the end of this course you will be able to read, speak and understand NT Greek. Impossible? Well, come and see. Of course you will not be an expert but you will at least be unable to say to someone, "It's all Greek to me" (in the sense that you do not understand a word of what is said in Greek). At the end of this course you can decide to stop or to continue and do our serious course which lasts two years and which enables you to competent in going through the New Testament in the original language. As for Hebrew, I am sure that Dr Pagolu will be glad to talk with anyone interested in knowing what is involved in studying Biblical Hebrew.

### **Prayer Requested**

Some of you may know that I am going for surgery on January 17th at SGH. I will be going for a total replacement of my left hip. Thank God for a good team of doctors who will be part of the operating team and I expect to be up and about after my recuperation, moving without my walking stick and serving God and all of you better in the years to come. I would appreciate your prayers and if you interested in the latest reports you might want to consult the BGST website which will carry a daily update of my health condition. Thank God for the many who are praying for me. God bless you all and keep you in good spirit and good health!

(Dr Quek Swee Hwa)

## Alumni News...

### from Lai Pak Wah

To our friends 'scattered' around the world:

May the grace of God and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ always comfort your hearts, wherever you are.

Winter's rapidly setting in. The days have become shorter and the nights, longer. We are thankful, however, that Vancouver's not battered by severe blizzards and freezing temperatures (like what's happening in the rest of Canada).

Temperature here hovers around -2 to 10 Deg C. That's manageable for the family. Perhaps it's a little frigid for some friends in Singapore? :-)

#### For Unto Us a Child is Born: Isaiah

As the year draws to a close, there is much we are thankful for. Firstly, God has blessed us with a new member in the family: Isaiah Lai Zhi-Xin ('Persistent Faith'in Mandarin). Isaiah was born on 31 Jul 2005 (8 lbs) after 3 hrs of labor. Since then, he has doubled his weight and brought much joy to our family. Fide definitely prefers life with Isaiah. She is always running to his crib & greeting him in the morning. *Pray with us that both of them may grow in the knowledge of God's love and wisdom.*

#### Studies at Regent

Secondly, I completed my Masters of Christian Studies (MCS) in end Nov. I marvel at God's grace and mercy over the last 18 months at Regent. In times of self-doubt, He has granted encouragement. In times of academic deadlines, He has granted wisdom. In times when my soul is afflicted by personal 'demons', i.e. personal pride, a judgmental attitude, a prayerless life, lust and so on, He rejuvenates my soul and leads me back to His paths of righteousness. God has been faithful in my spiritual rollercoaster, even when I am not (more reflections on this later).

What's next? Well, I have commenced my Masters of Theology (ThM). I hope to complete it by 2007. Let me explain. The MCS is an introductory degree that lays the foundation for theological studies (similar to a MBA). The ThM (similar to a Masters of Science) is based on a major thesis & prepares one to teach. So what's my thesis topic?

I will be studying *John Chrysostom's view of Christian Transformation*. John ministered in the late 4th century AD. These were exciting times: Christianity had just become the favored religion of the Roman Empire; a wide variety of people were becoming Christians – the rich, beggars, soldiers, governors, even the Emperor! This privileged status of Christianity, however, meant that many lukewarm Christians entered the Church. To uphold the Church's integrity, John preached valiantly against lukewarm spirituality. Over time, he infuriated many and was finally exiled to the wilderness of Turkey. For this reason, he is one of the most respected church fathers in history. I hope to better understand his views

of the Christian life, & consider how his spiritual insights may speak to our present generation.

For the full update, please visit our website.

## Chapel Notes

**D**r Ng Peh Cheng led in a time of prayer and worship for Chapel on Dec 28, 2005.

The Chapel speakers lined up for the month of Jan 2006 are: Jan 4 - Peter Lim, Jan 11 & 18 - Dr Douglas Milne, Jan 25 - Ms Choy Wai Fann.

## NEWS BITS

- 1. BGST Convocation & Thanksgiving Service.** You are warmly invited to join us on this joyous occasion held at Zion BP Church, 4 Bishan St 13. Dinner reception will be at 6pm followed by the service at 7pm. Library will be closed at 4pm to prepare for the event.
- 2. Welcome, Dr Douglas Milne!** All of us at BGST are glad to have Dr Milne with us again. He will be teaching two courses: Teaching the Westminster Confession of Faith and Contemporary Theologians & Theologies. To register, call Admin Office at 62276815.
- 3. Closure for Public Holiday.** The Library and Offices will be closed on Tuesday, 10 Jan, for Hari Raya Haji. We will be opened on Wednesday, 11 Jan.
- 4. Dr Ng Peh Cheng is on sabbatical leave** from Jan to Jun 2006. She will spend 4 months in Regent College, Vancouver, as their Scholar-in-Residence and two months in the United States.
- 5. Library News.** It is the time of the year for students to ballot for the rental of library lockers for the period for 14 Jan - 14 Jul 2006. Please obtain the details and application form from the library counter. Submission must be done by 11 Jan 2006. Successful applicants will be notified by email. Unsuccessful applicants will be put on the waiting list. New lockers may be available in the near future.

## A Blessed Birthday to ...



Mrs Kalene Tey	9/1
Mr Low Keng Shin	10/1
Mr Tong Ming Hung	11/1
Mr Tai Kok Wai	1/11
Mr Kelvin Kwek	12/1
Mr Koh Chin Kok	14/1
Mr Steven Heng	14/1
Ms Lily Chung	14/1
Mdm Tee Chwee Hoon	14/1
Ms Chow Lye Kuan	15/1