



# WINDOW TO BGST NEWSLETTER

▶ FEB 2019

WTB 2019-02



# LIFE AND FAITH THROUGH MY NEIGHBOUR'S LENS

A REFLECTION ON THE RECENT  
CONFERENCE, CHRISTIANS & MUSLIMS IN  
CONVERSATION BY PROF PETER RIDDELL

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Terri Koh & Burton Chia

## What prompted us to sign up

Jesus commands us to not only “love the Lord our God” but to also “love our neighbour”. In our multicultural and multiracial society, most of our neighbours subscribe to a different faith. How are we to love our neighbours then and obey Jesus’ command, if we do not understand their faith values?

Our society is also full of strict, unspoken “out of bounds” (or OB) markers that govern how we interact with others from a different faith, especially Christians. Since we don’t know where these are until we hit them, Christians tend to avoid discussions on issues of faith in the fear of inadvertently violating these markers and disturbing the peace. Furthermore, the prevalence of stereotypes also curtails meaningful interfaith

dialogue. Formed from quick assumptions, and perpetuated by ignorance, stereotypes, if left unaddressed, form barriers to understanding members of another faith.

The key to navigating OB markers and countering negative stereotypes is to have open and authentic conversations between Christians and members of other faiths, which naturally allow for a mutual understanding and respect to flourish.

Indeed, the Understanding Sacred Texts Conference organised by BGST was a first in such conversations which we have attended, and it not only gave us the opportunity to hear from learned scholars but also provided a precious space for us to practice such conversations with our Muslim friends.

## What we did

The conference opened with a lecture by Prof Peter Riddell. Prof Riddell covered a diverse range of topics including the history of Christianity and Islam, in particular, tracing the tension between both religions from the time of Abraham and Ishmael through historical accounts and writings. We were also challenged to identify the stereotypes which present-day Singapore Christians may have today of Islam and Muslims, and how these stereotypes impact the way we are to love them as our neighbours. Before we adjourned for the practicum, we were presented with some pointers on engaging in meaningful conversations about faith with our Muslim friends.

During the practicum, we were joined by about fifteen Muslim friends for a smaller group dialogue. This segment of the conference was moderated by the Leftwrite Center together with BGST. All the participants, Christians and Muslims, were encouraged to share their views on three main questions on faith: how do we practice our faith, who God is to us and how is this relationship with God manifested. Unsurprisingly, the conversations took us to dinner and we shared a halal meal with our Muslim friends at the end of the conference.

## What we took away

We distill our reflections from the experience as follows:

1. Challenges to our faiths. It was interesting to find out that the challenges we face within the church is not unique to us, as our Muslim friends appear to face the same challenges in their own community. We are both concerned about the stability of family units, growing rate of divorce, and the issues around LGBT. Likewise on the faith front, we both share the challenge of nurturing the next generation in their faith, and helping the young see the relevance of their faith. Decreasing literacy of our holy texts is also a common worrying trend. We felt that the sharing of our common struggles presented us with new opportunities to support each other, especially in the area of social concerns, for the common good of our society.
2. Lifting the veil of ignorance. More importantly, our veil of ignorance of the Muslim faith was lifted, thanks to the frank views of the two Muslim friends in our group. Their differing perspectives on the

same issues served as a humbling reminder that our stereotypes of Muslims fall short of truly representing the Muslim community, and in fact, do a disservice to them. There is no one kind of Muslim, just as there is no one kind of Christian. Like us, they have the liberals and the conservatives, the devout and the dispassionate. We fail to love them if we box them up.

3. It will take time and effort. It was certainly refreshing to experience first-hand a desire of participants of both faiths for more of such open and authentic dialogue. The road ahead for interfaith understanding is a long and complex one. Understanding takes time to build and requires both vulnerability and humility from both ends. We also recognise that the inhibitions to cultivating interfaith understanding can come from within our own quarters, where some see such desire to cultivate such understanding as watering down our faith or “pandering to the demands of the other side”. But if we, as Christians, desire to love our neighbour as Christ demands, we must press on. For surely, loving our neighbour must necessarily entail first understanding them and seeing life through their lens.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019

### SLEC-BGST CHAPEL / 13 & 27 FEB (WED)

13 Feb - Rev Dr David Wong

27 Feb - Mr Timothy Ang

12:00pm - 1:00pm @ BGST

**Open to All. No registration required**

### PUBLIC LECTURE/ 25 FEB (MON)

"SCIENCE AND FAITH - MORE SIMILAR THAN YOU THINK"

Dr Denis Alexander

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm @ Bartley Christian Church

**[bit.ly/scienceandfaithpl](http://bit.ly/scienceandfaithpl)**

### MINISTRY LEADERS RETREAT / 27 FEB (WED)

"SACRED IN THE CITY"

Mr Anthony Siow

9:00 am - 5:00 pm @ Montfort Centre

**[bit.ly/ministryretreat](http://bit.ly/ministryretreat)**

### SPIRITUAL RETREAT / 27 APR (SAT)

"BE STILL"

Dr Alex Tang

9:00 am - 12:30 pm @ BGST

**[bit.ly/bgstretreat](http://bit.ly/bgstretreat)**

### OPEN HOUSE AND ALUMNI HOMECOMING: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS / 1 JUN (SAT)

In Conversation With Rev Dr Quek Swee Hwa

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm @ BGST

**[bit.ly/bgsthomecoming](http://bit.ly/bgsthomecoming)**

### UK CHURCH HISTORY TOUR / 7-18 AUG

"BGST CHURCH HISTORY TOUR 3: THE SPIRITUAL  
LEGACY OF BRITISH CHRISTIANITY"

@ United Kingdom

Email **[laipw@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:laipw@bgst.edu.sg)**

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# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHANGE IN AUDIT FEES

Beginning July 1, 2019, BGST Audit Fees will increase to \$120 per 1.5 credit module and \$240 per 3.0 credit module, respectively.

## BGST ACCESS MEMBERSHIP

Beginning **July 1, 2020**, BGST will be introducing the BGST Access Membership. With your BGST Access Membership, you can access the entire BGST Library, benefiting from thousands of books, journals, e-books and more. This Membership will be mandatory for credit students and optional for audit students. Members may renew their annual membership online.

### Fees

1. General Public \$25/year
2. Audit Students \$25/year
3. Credit Students \$35\*/semester

\*Mandatory for Credit Students. Includes administration, registration and technology fees.

Due to the generosity of our donors, we are able to absorb the above costs for 12-months. Thus, the BGST Access Membership Fee will only be in effect from **July 1, 2020** onwards. Fees will remain unchanged up to this point.



## 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You By Tony Reinke

**NOW: S\$16.05**  
**USUAL PRICE: S\$21.35**

### Do You Control Your Phone—Or Does Your Phone Control You?

Within a few years of its unveiling, the smartphone had become part of us, fully integrated into the daily patterns of our lives. Never offline, always within reach, we now wield in our hands a magic wand of technological power we have only begun to grasp. But it raises new enigmas, too. Never more connected, we seem to be growing more distant. Never more efficient, we have never been more distracted.

Drawing from the insights of numerous thinkers, published studies, and his own research, writer Tony Reinke identifies twelve potent ways our smartphones have changed us—for good and bad. Reinke calls us to cultivate wise thinking and healthy habits in the digital age, encouraging us to maximize the many blessings, avoid the various pitfalls, and wisely wield the most powerful gadget of human connection ever unleashed.



## Even Better Than Eden By Nancy Guthrie

**NOW: S\$18.15**  
**USUAL PRICE: S\$24.20**

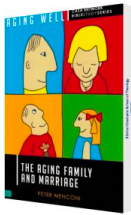

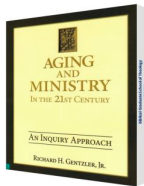
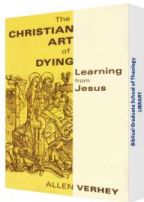
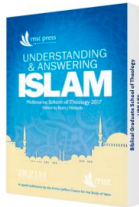
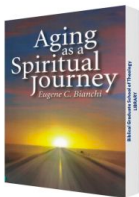
### God's Story Will End Better Than It Began . . .

Experienced Bible teacher Nancy Guthrie traces 9 themes throughout the Bible, revealing how God's plan for the new creation will be far more glorious than the original. But this new creation glory isn't just reserved for the future. The hope of God's plan for his people transforms everything about our lives today.

Written for individuals and small groups alike, this book will help you understand God's plan for the future of his people—life in a garden even better than Eden—in order to experience the glory of this new creation break into your life even now.

# LIBRARY

NEW  
BOOKS

BOOK	TITLE	AUTHORS	CATEGORY
	The Aging Family And Marriage	Menconi, Peter	Caring For Aging Family – Christian Family
	Political And Social Issues In Christian-Muslim Relations: The Questions Christians Ask	Riddell, Peter G.	Christian - Muslim Relations
	Aging & Ministry In The 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach	Gentzler, Richard H.	Church Work With Older People
	The Christian Art Of Dying: Learning From Jesus	Verhey, Allen.	Death - Religious Aspects - Christianity
	Understanding & Answering Islam	Nicholls, Ruth	Islam
	Aging As A Spiritual Journey	Bianchi, Eugene C.	Older Christians – Religious Life

MORE NEW BOOKS AT

<https://bgst.vlibonline.com/images/201901-bull.html>



## BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER POSITION



To support our local and regional expansion, we are recruiting a Business Operations Manager (BOM) to coordinate the evolution of our administrative cum IT processes, human resources and infrastructure. This involves strategizing, planning and implementing organisational and change projects that will support the initiatives stated above.

### The job specifications are as follows:

- i) This will be a full-time position.
- ii) The candidate will work with the Principal/ Vice-Principal and Faculty to develop BGST's organisational and administrative capabilities to support the school's business strategies.
- iii) He/ she will head the administrative department, library, finance, marketing and fund-raising functions.
- iv) The candidate is familiar with (1) MS Word, Exel and Powerpoint; (2) the use of IT and Web technologies to improve business processes; and is able to (3) develop the academic and business processes/ policies needed to support a growing school.
- v) The candidate is able to engage in the operational activities required for (iii), such as business process mapping, IT systems implementation and drafting business policies.
- vi) The candidate will also provide administrative and governance support for the Council.
- vii) He/ she shares BGST's conviction of the importance of theological education for the whole people of God, and a passion for facilitating marketplace ministry.
- viii) He/ she is a team player, able to work collaboratively with Faculty and staff.

**Interested applicants: Please contact Dr Lai Pak Wah (Vice-Principal) at [laipw@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:laipw@bgst.edu.sg)**





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## OFFICE TIMINGS

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm (Closed from 12-1 pm, Wed from 12-2 pm)

Extended Hours for Library & Book Corner

Monday & Thursday: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Saturday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm