



# WINDOW TO BGST NEWSLETTER



DEC 2019

WTB 2019-12



# DEMYSTIFYING CHINESE MEDICINE

BY TAN HUEY YING ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY SALT&LIGHT HERE

Dermatitis is a difficult condition to live with. More commonly known as eczema, it causes dry, itchy skin in its sufferers, the majority of whom are children.

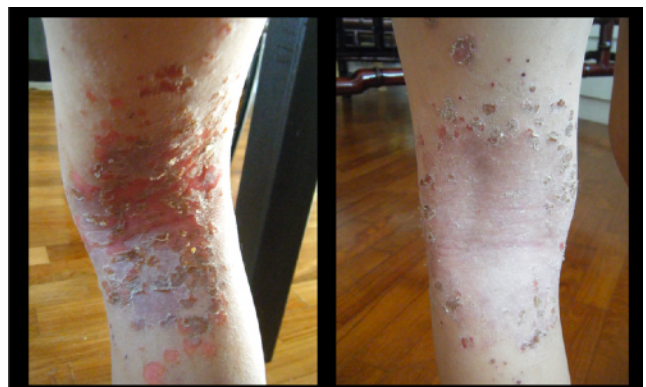
At the risk of over-simplifying this condition, imagine having dry, cracked skin with an itch that is never ever satisfied. Scratching only aggravates it and eventually causes painful, raw skin. On bad days, the patches are itchy and painful. On good ones, the condition varies from dry and patchy, to merely “tingly”.

Dr Lai Pak Wah, Vice Principal of the Bible Graduate School of Theology (BGST), is all too familiar with it. His seven-year-old son suffered from severe eczema.

Western medicine deems eczema to be incurable; it can only be managed, but often with little effect. With a friend’s recommendation, Lai took his son to see a Chinese medicine practitioner.

The physician treated his son by making a spinal adjustment and recommending some lifestyle changes like his diet and even his sitting posture, based on TCM principles. Within one month of that visit, his son’s condition improved significantly.

Today, his son is 13 years old and leads a normal life like other teenagers his age.



The before and after photos of the eczema patches on Dr Lai’s son

## The search for answers

Traditional Chinese medicine or TCM has been gaining acceptance worldwide. However, for many in the body of Christ, Chinese medicine remains a grey area where people hold differing views.

Some are cautious of the supposed links between TCM and the occult, preferring to avoid it altogether. And others view it tentatively, uncertain in their engagement with it.

For Lai, the effectiveness of TCM was undeniable, its impact significant.

With a PhD in Theology and Church History, Lai saw the dissonance between the general perception of TCM as a stumbling block to Christianity and the benefits that it brought. He decided to study further, “because God is the Creator of the world, that means you can explore any area of life safely”.

Lai says he was inspired and strongly influenced by Francis Schaeffer, the famous philosopher-theologian, who said:

“The ancients were afraid that if they went to the end of the earth they would fall off ... But once we understand that Christianity is true ... we can pursue any question and can be sure that we will not fall off the end of the earth.”

After much research, the study into the topic of TCM bore fruit in the form of a book, *The Dao of Healing: Christian Perspectives on Chinese Medicine*.

The aims of the book are expressed clearly in its introduction:

### A clash of cultures – or not

*“It is a sober reminder for Christians to take our engagement with Chinese*

*medicine and culture carefully, lest we create an unnecessary stumbling block to the Gospel, and the Christian faith is deemed by the unreached as nothing but a ‘Western religion’. Apologetics is therefore the first concern for this book.”*

Jesus first mentions the idea of a stumbling block in Mark 9:42. Paul also speaks firmly of not stumbling fellow believers, but instead, exhorts believers to “make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification” (Romans 14:19).

According to Lai, this is important, not just to the countless number of bicultural Singaporeans who have grown up with TCM-based remedies, such as po chai pills and various classifications of “heaty” or “cooling” foods, but also to many who desire to reach out to their parents who are firmly rooted in Chinese culture.

### In faith and in deed

Removing a stumbling block to the Gospel is one thing, proclaiming freedom to those under the bondage of physical ailments is another area Lai expounds on:

*“The second is plain. If Chinese medicine, according to its practitioners and users, has garnered a wealth of wisdom that can prove helpful for the sick, establishing the legitimacy of this tradition then becomes a matter of life and death for many people.”*

In China, the knowledge and practice of Chinese medicine is widely used and is especially practiced in rural and poor areas where Western medicine is costly and inaccessible. Herbal remedies, acupuncture and other methods are low-cost and meet the needs of the people.

In Singapore, it was only in the year 2000



that TCM practitioners were first able to register and to be recognised by the Ministry of Health, even though they have been entrenched in the local Chinese culture. This may be a reason why TCM has been viewed with general suspicion.

Since then, some churches have used TCM as a form of outreach. One example is Bethel Community Services, which runs twice-weekly TCM clinics for a nominal fee. Reverend Moses Pi who runs the clinic is a certified Chinese medicine doctor, *zhong yi*, and he can testify to the relief that TCM has brought to many patients, and the doors that it has opened for the Gospel.

Properly understood, Lai believes that TCM is not incompatible with the Christian faith. However, he clarifies that there is a difference between secular Chinese medicine and spiritual healing like drinking ash water, which is practised in some faiths.

In fact, "TCM is a secular practice and the underlying philosophy is merely a different way of understanding the world".

Chinese medicine can be seen as an instrument of God's healing for man rather than an obstacle to faith – these have been clearly defined through the Word and in church history, Lai elaborates in his book.

### Starting dialogues that inform

The teacher Qoheleth says: "There is nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Applying that principle, Lai explains that "church history becomes an additional piece of this puzzle.

"You can take examples from the past and look at the present."

And this is possibly the most reassuring aspect that Lai seeks to make known about TCM:

*"Throughout the history of the Church, Christians have found it beneficial to engage with non-Christian sources of wisdom, both as a means of articulating and contextualising their faith."*

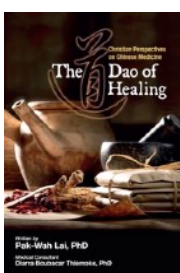
In this case, the very first hospital for the poor was set up by Christian monks who practised Hippocratic medicine, based on Greek philosophy. Prior use of medicine was exclusively limited to gladiators, soldiers and the rich; no one did anything for the poor. To those early church fathers, it wasn't just *Greek* medicine, it was a common good that was used to minister to people. These medical practices have also taken root in modern medicine.

### Finding the harmony of the Gospel of Christ

John Piper, in his book *Think: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God*, says this:

*"The task of all Christian scholarship – not just biblical studies – is to study reality as a manifestation of God's glory, to speak and write about it with accuracy, and to savour the beauty of God in it, and to make it serve the good of man."*

Lai says that the ultimate aim of *The Dao of Healing: Christian Perspectives on Chinese Medicine* is to foster a dialogue – such that the Gospel is demonstrated in terms which relate to the Chinese culture.



**1) Hear more from our November 19 event, *Christian Perspectives on TCM* featuring Dr Lai Pak Wah and Dr Diarra Boubacar [HERE](#)**

**2) Get Dr Lai's book, *The Dao of Healing: Christian Perspectives on Chinese Medicine***



## NEW BGST FACULTY

### MR LEOW WEN PIN

*"BGST, with its interdisciplinary focus, forward-looking faculty and leadership, and dynamic alumni community, is an excellent place to stretch one's mind and grow one's heart in Christ, while being sensitive to the needs of the Church today. My experience with BGST has always been excellent, and I am grateful to the BGST family for their warm welcome as I return home to my alma mater to serve in the critical area of theological education."*

BGST would like to welcome our alumnus and adjunct lecturer, Mr Leow Wen Pin (GradDipCS, 2013), as our new Lecturer in Biblical and Interdisciplinary Studies, starting 2 January 2020. Prior to this, Wen Pin graduated with distinction from the University of Oxford (2019, MSt in New Testament) and the University of Aberdeen (2018, MTh in Old Testament). He also holds a Master of Divinity degree (2016, Biblical Studies concentration) from Singapore Bible College.

Wen Pin's research interests include Hebrew poetry, disability theology, and homiletics. He is currently working on a monograph on the Psalms of Ascents (Ps. 120–134) for the »Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments« series for Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. He has also published articles/reviews in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as a number of book chapters. He is the recipient of several academic awards including, in 2019, the Stuart D. B. Picken Grant and Scholarship (by the International Academic Forum), and the Gingko Fellowship.

Before his move into vocational Christian ministry, Wen Pin was a trained educator, and he also served in Singapore's defence, education, and trade and industry ministries, with portfolios involving human resources, higher education policy, and national research policy. Being especially concerned about the inclusion of people with disabilities, he serves as the school supervisor of a special needs school which caters to children with autism/multiple disabilities. He also serves as a member of the disability policy workgroup of the Disability Concerns Network with the Lausanne Movement. He is the co-editor of *Call Me by Name*, a volume chronicling the experiences of Christians with special needs in Singapore.

Wen Pin is married to Dr Su Xinyi, a clinician-scientist. They have two sons, Matthew and Nathaniel, and they worship and serve together in the English congregation of Singapore Life Church (Presbyterian). Wen Pin frequently preaches and teaches with churches across the denominational spectrum, especially on disability inclusion issues.

# 2020

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### CONFERENCE (SAT)

7  
MAR

"LEADING ACROSS GENERATIONS:  
ENGAGING MILLENNIALS IN CHURCH &  
MARKETPLACE"

Dr Joanna Williamson

9:00am-5:00pm

@ Zion Bishan B-P Church

### CONFERENCE (SAT)

28  
MAR

"DISTORTIONS IN DOCTRINE"

Dr Robert Solomon and Prof Tony Lane

### CONFERENCE (SAT)

25  
APR

"SPIRITUAL RETREAT: A SILENCE AND  
SOLITUDE WITH GOD FOR GOD'S SAKE"

Ms Seah Chiew Kwan

@ BGST

[www.bgst.edu.sg](http://www.bgst.edu.sg)

## 3-DAY RETREAT (MON-WED)

14-16  
SEP

"A CLOSER WALK WITH JESUS"

Ms Margaret Silf, Rev Dr Lim Kar Yong

@ Changi Cove

**[bit.ly/bgstcloserwalk](https://bit.ly/bgstcloserwalk)**

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## PRIVATE DIALOGUE (THURS)

17  
SEP

"JOURNEY OF A SOUL"

Ms Margaret Silf

9:00am-5:00pm

@ St. Andrews Cathedral

**[bit.ly/bgstjourneyofasoul](https://bit.ly/bgstjourneyofasoul)**

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## PUBLIC LECTURE (FRI)

18  
SEP

"SACRED IN THE CITY"

Ms Margaret Silf

7:00pm-9:30pm

@ St. Andrews Cathedral

**[bit.ly/bgstsacredinthecity](https://bit.ly/bgstsacredinthecity)**

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## 1-DAY RETREAT (SAT)

19  
SEP

"AT SEA WITH GOD"

Ms Margaret Silf

9:00am-4:30pm

@ St. Andrews Cathedral

**[bit.ly/bgstatsea](https://bit.ly/bgstatsea)**

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# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BGST OFFICE HOURS FOR DEC

BGST Operating hours will be Monday-Friday (9am-6pm) for the month of December (Closed on Saturdays). We will be closed the whole day on Fri, Dec 6th for Staff Retreat. Opening hours for Dec 24 & 31 will be from (9 am - 1 pm). Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## RED DOT PAYMENT SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE DEC 3 (TUE)

Our payment gateway will undergo a scheduled maintenance on Dec 3 at 4:00am-5:30am. It will be unavailable during this time. Thank you for understanding.

## MOODLE UPGRADE DEC 16-17 (MON-TUE)

Please note that there will be an upgrade to BGST Moodle on Dec 16-17 (Mon-Tues). During this time, please do not upload assignments to Moodle. Instead, you may email your assignments to [assignments@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:assignments@bgst.edu.sg). Thank you for your understanding.

## FREE LIBRARY BOOKS

With the launch of the Digital Theological Library, BGST is downsizing its physical library, and **giving away hundreds of books!**

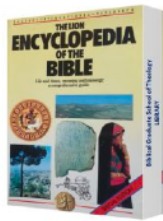
Come browse the titles from Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm (closed during lunch).  
*A love gift would be appreciated.*

## OUR BOOK CORNER IS CLOSING

Take advantage of our parting gifts! **Book Clearance from 5-50% discount** including course texts. While stocks last.



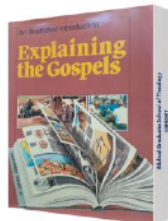
# LIBRARY NEW BOOKS



## THE LION ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE

Alexander, Pat

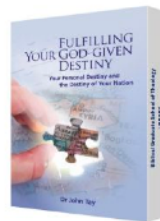
*Bible-Encyclopedia*



## EXPLAINING THE GOSPELS: AN ILLUSTRATED INTRODUCTION

London: Scripture  
Union, c1981

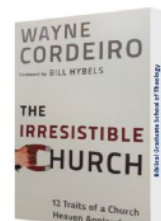
*Bible N.T Gospels*



## FULFILLING YOUR GOD-GIVEN DESTINY: YOUR PERSONAL DESTINY AND THE DESTINY OF YOUR NATION.

Tay, John S. H.

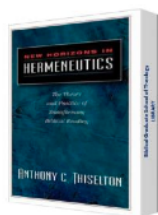
*Christianity-Singapore*



## THE IRRESISTIBLE CHURCH: 12 TRAITS OF A CHURCH PEOPLE LOVE TO ATTEND

Cordeiro, Wayne

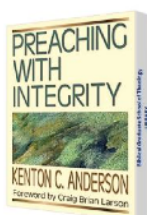
*Church Attendance*



## NEW HORIZONS IN HERMENEUTICS

Thiselton, Anthony C.

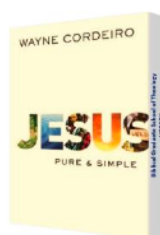
*Hermeneutics*



## PREACHING WITH INTEGRITY

Anderson, Kenton C.

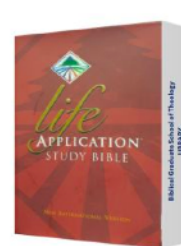
*Preaching*



## JESUS : PURE AND SIMPLE

Cordeiro, Wayne

*Spirituality*



## LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

Tyndale House  
Publishers

*The Holy Bible*

FULL NEW BOOK LIST AT

<https://bgst.vlibonline.com/images/201911-bull.html>

# Join BGST

## MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE

Reporting to: (1) the Principal; (2) Director, Administration & Operations.

Employment Type: Full Time

BGST is looking for a suitable candidate to fill the position of **Marketing Communications & Engagement Executive (MCE Executive)**. The MCE Executive should ideally share the vision and mission of the school. The incumbent will engage and work with various stakeholders, both internal and external, and these may include agencies, business executives, and existing and potential sponsors of BGST. His / her responsibility is to deliver strategic and operational support for the internal and external communication-related matters of the school, including providing innovative solutions in the areas of communication.

### Key Roles and Responsibilities

The work of the Marketing Communications & Engagement Executive entails:

#### **(A) Marketing & Communications** The executive is expected to

- Work with Senior Management to develop marketing strategies to develop BGST's brand in Singapore and the region, ensuring consistency of branding across all platforms and collaterals.
- Implement and oversee marketing campaigns on classical and digital platforms for BGST's programmes, courses, events, and other initiatives.
- Manage the contents for BGST's website and other social media platforms.
- Assist the Principal in his public and internal communications.
- Manage and publicise events in a timely manner by exploring the most effective means of communication and creative promotional materials to reach the target audience.
- Assist speakers / lecturers with event materials. This would include preparation of participant / student content packages for pre-event dissemination and archiving.
- Explore and review creative and digitized means of communication to enhance and improve the current standards.

#### **(B) Strategic Engagement** The executive should work with key personnel to

- Assist the Principal in his Business Development and Engagement initiatives with partners, churches and donors.
- Implement strategic initiatives and programmes to engage BGST's community partners and donors.
- Coordinate sustainable medium to long-term fund-raising programmes / projects for BGST

### Qualification and Experience

The candidate should be a degree holder, preferably in marketing communications. He/ she should have at least 3 – 5 years' experience in the relevant field. Should the candidate not have the required work experience but is willing to explore possibilities with the college, he / she may be invited to present his / her portfolio that indicates creativity and solutioning and / or be invited to make a presentation.

**The candidate should send in his / her resume (hard copy) to BGST, attention "HR Department" or via email to [laipw@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:laipw@bgst.edu.sg)**



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## BIBLICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**[www.bgst.edu.sg](http://www.bgst.edu.sg)**

50 Kallang Pudding Road, #07-01, AMA Building, Singapore 349326

Tel: 065-6227-6815

### OFFICE TIMINGS

Monday to Saturday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

(Closed from 12-1 pm, Wed from 12-2 pm;

Closed Saturdays in June and December)