

MYANMAR EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL of THEOLOGY

MYANMAR



The Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in Yangon, Myanmar serves churches affiliated with the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Fellowship, a group determined to avoid the European liberalism which troubled the previous generation. MEGST seeks to “impart a vision for evangelism and mission so that its graduates will be well prepared either to go forth as missionaries themselves, or to raise up mission-giving and mission-sending churches.”

While most Christians in the country come from the Christian minority tribes, MEGST is seeking to train up students to plant churches amongst the majority Buddhists. Students at MEGST are involved not only with their own local churches but also in student-faculty church planting work. Dozens of churches have sprung up throughout the capital and the region. As a graduate college, about half of MEGST students go on to lecture in other colleges across Myanmar but always continue to plant and pastor new churches.

The college has grown steadily, and now inhabits 30 apartments in close proximity. Twelve are joined together to form the lecture rooms, library, chapel and administration. The other apartments house faculty and students. The library is the largest in the country with 20,000 books and the faculty development program is reaping fruit: a steady supply of well trained lecturers, mostly trained at SAIACS in India.



MEGST AT A GLANCE

- 70 full-time students representing about 20 denominations.
- 11 full-time faculty, 4 part-time, 9 adjunct faculty (in training). All bar one are Burmese.
- Led by 8-member board of directors. Administration led by Dr. Aung Mang, Principal.
- Member of the Asia Theological Association (ATA).
- Over 150 graduates since founding in 1996. All are working in ministry in various parts of Myanmar.
- Degree offerings are at the master's level in Biblical Studies, Missions, Pastoral Studies, and Theology. All are 3-year programs. A two year MTh program has now begun.



2 / 22 Pitt Street Parramatta NSW 2150
p: 1300 889 593 e: office@overseascouncil.com.au
w: www.overseascouncil.com.au

MEGST IN CONTEXT

Myanmar was a British colony until 1948, known as Burma after the Barma people who comprise 57% of the population. It was the key supply-line to China for the Allied forces during WWII and, consequently, the site of some of the most brutal fighting.

Burma has been ruled by a military oligarchy almost continuously since its independence. Parliamentary elections were held in 1991 in the newly renamed Myanmar but the cruelly-named State Peace and Development Council (the military junta) prevented Parliament from sitting. Uprisings have been harshly quelled. Economic isolation has led to large scale forced labor and other violations of human rights. This cycle of oppression, isolation and autocratic rule has left Myanmar one of the world's poorest nations.

Myanmar is predominantly Buddhist. Despite espousing freedom of religion, the government regulates life to such an extent that evangelism is difficult. Churches are outlawed in most of Yangon. The lack of trained evangelical leaders is a critical challenge. Leaders must be trained in sound theology, but also in practical ministry to reach a nation in need of reconciliation yet strangled by unbalanced military power. This is the arena in which students and faculty at MEGST minister.

OCA AT MEGST

Early in its development, MEGST sought assistance from Overseas Council for finances but also for institutional advice. OCNZ has taken the lead, with the OCNZ Director visiting regularly. Each year a team of OCNZ volunteers facilitate a three-month English course to assist the new students. This is a vital aspect of theological education in Myanmar since resources are in English.

Since 2004 OCA has joined OCNZ by providing scholarships and funds for capital projects. In the first years, OCA funds helped raise the number of students from just a handful to twenty. There are now 70 students at MEGST and 34 are sponsored through OCA.

Other major contributions have injected funds into the library, office equipment, into the campus, with the purchase of ten apartments for use by faculty and students. In 2010 a faculty member sponsored by OCA completed his Doctorate.



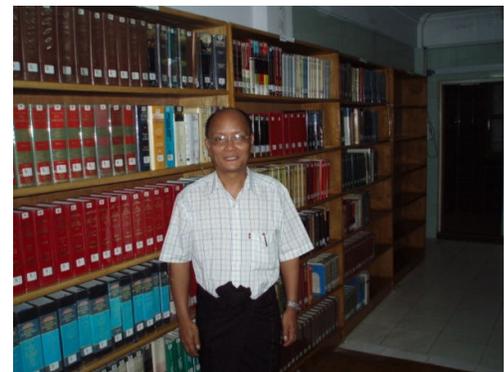
POPULATION: 50.5 million

BUDDHIST: 80%

CHRISTIAN: 9%

MUSLIM: 7%

The junta calls Christianity "the C-virus"; churches are illegal and 3000 Christian villages have been razed in the last decade.



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