



The Society of Asian Biblical Studies *To foster Biblical scholarship in Asia*

19 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I write on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Society of Asian Biblical studies. It is with deep disappointment that we announce the **postponement** of our meeting that was scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from the 9-13 of June 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic as you are aware is now out of control and given the restrictions on travel, the shutting of borders and the risk of infection, it seemed to be best to not meet now. This decision was therefore made with much consideration to these issues and your safety. It was not easy given that many of you have put significant effort into filling forms, sending proposals and meeting deadlines. The enthusiasm and interest in this year's meeting is unprecedented and we were all geared up for a fantastic time together of collegiality and community, exchange of research and ideas, shared experiences and fun with great food, fellowship and hospitality extended by friends and colleagues in Malaysia. We hope that if you have made bookings and other plans, you have not suffered much loss.

Our Host Committee under the able leadership of Dr Kar Yong Lim, has spent much energy and time to prepare for our arrival and meeting. With this letter I express my immense gratitude to him, the principal Rev Dr Philip Siew Tye Yau and colleagues at the *Seminari Theoloji Malaysia*, and Rev Dr Ezra Kok Hon-Seng, President of the *Chinese Annual Conference of The Methodist Church in Malaysia* and the staff at the *Wisma Methodist* for all that they have done in preparation. We are able to gather as a Society only because of the help and generosity of host institutions both in terms of time and resources. So, a big THANK YOU to our colleagues in Malaysia.

And now going forward...please note we are currently seeing this as a postponement which means that we still hope to meet as soon as we are able – and so the theme, the proposals that were accepted remain so and so also the venue of our meeting. **When, and only when the pandemic is behind us, and it is declared safe, and we regain a certain sense of normalcy, will we begin to think of dates** in consultation with the Host Committee. Please watch the website for announcements. We will also contact you personally if we have your email address.

Thinking of all of you in our many varied contexts and how we approach this extraordinary time in the life of our world, our nations, our churches, our institutions and our families. During these heightened times of distress, of fear and anxiety about what is ahead for all of

us, I wish that composure, love, kindness, trust, and common sense will prevail. I pray for the type of faith that will nourish, strengthen and sustain us and our communities as we navigate the challenges that are facing us.

Take care and stay well everyone and be kind to one another.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Monica Melanchthon". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon

President

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