

## The 26th JELCW Newsletter

No. 171 October 20, 2025  
 Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church Women  
 1-14-14 Okubo, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0072

Overall theme: **"Looking up at the rainbow bridge"**  
 Subtheme: **"For Peace, Generosity, and Diversity"**

Scriptural theme

*"I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant. with the world. "*  
*(Genesis 9:13)*

To you,

**"Gospel is shared in diversity"**

**Rev. Akio Lee**  
 Pastor, Musashino Church



**When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because all of them heard the believers talking in their own language.**

**In amazement and wonder they exclaimed. "These people who are talking like this are Galileans!" How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages? (Acts 2:6-8)**

I attended the 12th Asian Lutheran International Conference (ALIC) held in Kota Kinabalu of Sabah, Malaysia organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) from January 14<sup>th</sup> to January 21<sup>st</sup> in 2025. ALIC was established in 1999 with a view to promoting missionary work to Asian people in America and has been holding conventions every two years cooperating with partner churches in Asia. As time went by, the relations between ELCA and its partner churches in Asian countries gradually evolved from just promoting missionary works in America into strengthening the bond and mutual support between them by learning about common difficulties and problems together.

"Lift Every Voice" was the theme of 2025 convention. We discussed how to listen to the voices of the silent majority and share them with all the Lutherans concerned. As a part of this year's program, we visited Sabah Theological Seminary in Kata Kinabalu, where we met Principal Rev. Datuk Dr. Thu En Yu. It was our great pleasure to hear their words of gratitude for JELC-W's long-standing financial support.

Malaysia, whose national religion is Islam, is both a multiethnic and multireligious country. 60% of the population are Malay and Muslim, 20% are Chinese and Buddhist, 6% are Indian and Hindu. Christians make up 9% of the population. There are several reasons why different religions are respected in Malaysia. First, it is almost impossible to undergo a religious conversion. Second, when religion is connected with nationalism, it stirs up conflicts. Third, the religious makeup varies significantly by region.

In Sabah, where a relatively small number of Malay reside, Christianity has been accepted by people with various ethnic backgrounds and languages. While STS has a Lutheran origin, it has been working hard providing lectures in Malay for Malays, in Mandarin for Chinese and in English as well so that they can send the future pastors to communities of varied denomination rooted in culture and ways of life.

The disciples who were left after Christ died for our sins and was resurrected three days later, started to preach the gospel of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in a variety of languages, which indicates

that there are several ways of conveying the evangel, not just any specific one. Moreover, it follows that the disciples could share the Good News with people in diverse ways. The Bible says that scriptures shared among a few people will encourage and help many more people in turn.

We currently hear more and more voices agitating conflict in every corner of the world generated by xenophobia. I am determined to listen even more carefully to what the Bible tells us and believe that, in this age of diversity, the Good News needs to be shared increasingly more than before.



## Sabah ! Grateful for the blessing in union with the Lord

### JELC-W and STS (1991~2024)

**Kazue Taniguchi**  
Chairperson, The 26<sup>th</sup> JELC-W

No. 171 JELC-W Newsletter is a special edition about Sabah Theological Seminary (STS). JELC-W supported STS for over 30 years until June, 2024. My thoughts go to those past precious years during which time JELC-W contributed to missionary work in a foreign country. This is just like how JELC -W was once supported by prayers and aid from foreign countries for us to grow and become independent. I am deeply grateful to a number of people in the past who devoted themselves to this project.

I hear that STS has produced a lot of pastors and they are grateful for JELC-W's long-time support. I believe it was a time for JELC-W to be of valuable great service to the Lord.

Our financial support has ended but I am convinced that what happened during our time together over the years will be a great help and strength to STS for many years to come. May the gospel prevail with God's help and our mission work be blessed! May the friendship between STS and JELC-W last long, and may we continue praying for each other.

Extract from 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication of JELC-W

JELC-W Newsletter

October 15, 1993

**- Our Project for Mission Centennial Anniversary -**

**“Support for STS's Seminarians”**

**Yoshikazu Tokuzen**

Professor Japan Lutheran Theological College

There is a time for every matter. God decides the time when to bestow it upon us. At times in our life where we are blessed by God to live and let live, we encounter such moments. I have been strongly feeling this truth since I got involved in JELC-W's efforts to realize its wish: support for STS's seminarians. This involvement of mine was so unexpected.

JELC-W held up supporting STS's seminarians as one of the centennial projects with the board of directors at the center. Many people kindly gave advice about candidate seminarians, out of which we chose STS last fall. What we had to do first was to get acquainted with each other. At that time, I was supposed to attend the Theology Educators Meeting organized by LWF in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Knowing this, JELC-W's board members requested of me that I meet the representatives of STS to convey JELC-W's thoughts, prayers, and plans and report back their response. God gave me a special person as well as a time. It was Thu En Yu who was the president of Basel Christ Church (Lutheran church) in Sabah and also principal of STS. He was one of my old friends through a number of churches. It did not take long to communicate JELC-W's wishes to Dr. Thu En Yu. The Lord truly blessed me.

I returned to Japan with the information from STS and its seminarians, and I proposed to the board directors that JELC-W supports 2 seminarians for 4 years, which was what little work I could do personally to start the project.

Malaysia consists of 11 provinces throughout Malay Peninsula and West Borneo. Sabah is one of the provinces in West Borneo, and its capital is Kota Kinabalu. It is 5,500 kilometers away from Japan and there is one direct flight a week from Narita. The flight time is 6 hours. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country: Malay, Chinese and indigenous people. Language and culture varies, but its national religion is historically, traditionally, and legally Islam. Chinese Christians were the first to evangelize Christianity in Malaysia and the number of Lutherans has risen to 35,000. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the two scholarship recipients who have accepted JELC-W's prayer in union with the Lord.



Jaryn Tuskin



Chang Welder

## Shouldering a part of evangelism

**Kumiko Kawano**  
Correspondent  
The 17<sup>th</sup> JELC-W



JELC-W, which started the project of supporting STS's seminarians over 30 years ago, has put an end to it last year. During those years, a number of pastors were produced, and a lot of churches were built, where people engaged in works for God.

Several churches of foreign countries, such as China and Germany, also supported STS. At the time when STS was established, a barracks, which was left behind as a parting gift, was used as classroom. I was overwhelmed when I saw the fantastic hall of the seminary where the 25<sup>th</sup> foundation anniversary ceremony was held.

Sabah in Borneo is adjoining to Indonesia and was a battlefield in World War II. Malays went through a good deal of hardship and suffering.

Jungles spread out across Sabah, an everlasting summer region, which makes livelihood difficult. Despite that, many small-scale churches were built and pastors were sent there. Back in the old days, Chinese Christians crossed the sea to Sabah by boat to proselytize with passion and resources so that they could contribute to the development of churches and communities. They helped JELC-W with its supporting project. Above all, Pastor Pang Kham Ping and Mr. Kham Ping kindly gave us a helping hand in promoting exchanges between STS and JELC-W

We are now finishing the project but I do hope that there will be opportunities to learn about each other and that the friendship cultivated between us in the past will last long.

Lastly, it is a personal story but I visited STS with my husband Shigeaki to instruct the people of Sabah Church on how to use a PC and shared a good time with them.



Instructing usage of PC. Each day of the week had trainees.



Ms. Kumiko Kamano, Dr. Pang Khen Phin, Mr. Shigeaki Kawano

## **The blessing in union with the Lord**

**Naohiro Kiyoshige**

Retired Pastor Japan Lutheran Seminary, Professor Emeritus

When the 15<sup>th</sup> JELC-W decided to start the project to support a seminary in Asia, the president of JELC-W at that time, Ms. Kyoko Ishihara, came to me for advice about which seminary to support. I recommended Saban Theological Seminary. At the time, I was chairperson of LWF's Committee of Theology Education in Asia and had information. There were 20 seminaries. Judging from the policy, independency, and prospects of those seminaries, I chose STS. Historically, STS was founded in 1988 by Protestant Basel Church in Switzerland which did missionary work in China. The governor of Sabah was interested in establishing a school of higher education supporting the project. Principal Thu En Yu, a man of noble character and intelligence, put a great deal of effort into education through 3 different languages: Chinese, English and Malay. On top of that, he emphasized the importance of local mission work to Malay people and the development of the area.

In addition to a brand-new school building, there was also a dormitory which used to be the barracks for the Japanese army. People welcomed President Ishihara with gratitude by saying that the Japanese military, which once came over to occupy our land, were now back here to help us as a good neighbor of Christ. We invited Principal Thu En Yu with an accompanying STS seminarian. 20 seminaries in Asia rely on foreign countries for 80% of their budget. It is only 3 seminaries, Hong Kong, Sabah and Tokyo, that are financially independent, which I think is a significant issue. It was mutual grace and blessing that has existed between STS and JELC-W for the past 30 years, wasn't it?

<b>What the visit to STS bestowed upon me</b>
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### - Exchange Program -

**Akiko Nishikawa**

In 2003, when I was a sophomore in seminary, I stayed in Sabah with the then-current seminary chaplain Mariko Miyazawa. The program was organized, by LWF and JELC-W, and Dr. Pang Kham Ping kindly coordinated schedules for us. We visited around Sabah in the first half of our visit and stayed at the dormitory for about 10 days before leaving STS.

I felt liveliness at a Chinese-speaking church in an urban area. I learned that seminarians from ethnic minorities in rural areas not only studied theology but learned about agriculture as well so that they could contribute to the development of their hometown when they returned as pastors. I was impressed with this story as well as the service, which incorporated local tradition. I was accompanied by two pre-seminarians, Sakia and Latifa, when I visited the rural church. We managed to communicate with each other in our poor English and talked far into the night, which was one of my good memories in Sabah.

When we visited a farming village, all the villagers there welcomed us except for one old man. He said, "I can speak Japanese, but I hate Japanese people" and never showed up again. In Sandakan, we met a pastor whose father was killed by the Japanese army in World War II. He told us that it was an awful, heartbreaking experience, but he didn't think that could be a good reason for not loving "you people". I will never ever forget his words for the rest of my life. I hear that the relation between STS and JELC-W started under such circumstances. JELC-W's financial support is now coming to an end. I hope that there will rise another way of connecting us in the near future.

(Pastor of 3 churches, Asa, Shimonoseki, Ube)

## - Memories of visiting STS -

**Maho Morishita**

In October, 2019, I was given a precious opportunity to visit STS as a seminarian. I clearly remember the days in Sabah, but most of all, the liveliness I felt at STS is unforgettable and still remains in my heart. There were more than 100 seminarians and the facilities were quite good. A glass-walled library, an auditorium with seating capacity of 1,000, a recreation room with a badminton court, and dormitories for seminarians and their families. The life of seminarians at STS was such a comfortable one. We met the present scholarship grantees. They all said that they were grateful for JELC-W's support which enabled them to devote their time to studying.

On the last day of the visit, we met pastors who used to be scholarship students. More than ten pastors were there. There must be more by now. I heard the pastors were most actively working. They were young and I think I will long remember talking with them about the future of the church. Six years have passed since that visit. I believe that more and more evangelists are being raised in Sabah. I will devote myself to my duties, keeping the experiences in my heart.

## Encounter with Sabah Theological Seminary

**Kyoko Ishihara**



The 15<sup>th</sup> JELC-W adopted a resolution at the annual meeting that it would support seminarians studying at a seminary in Asia.

With the help of Professor Naohiro Kiyoshige, President of Japan Lutheran College and Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary, we decided to support Sabah Theological Seminary, whose seminarians were studying in a barracks left behind by the Japanese soldiers.

Soon, a new seminary was built and a dedication ceremony was held. President Kiyoshige and I were invited to a graduation ceremony and ordination.

“When I was facing difficulties in preaching the words of God in a country of Islam and feeling insecure about becoming a pastor, JELC-W proposed that they support STS and its seminarians, which enabled me to be here and graduate as a pastor. I took an oath before God that I would serve a church built in the jungle telling the word of God to its congregation who do not know them yet,” said one seminarian with eyes shining brightly.

When this project started with the help of Dr. Kham Ping, it was a five-year agreement. But our relation deepened year after year and eventually, it lasted for 31 years, which was a glorious and blessed time for JELC-W. I am so grateful for the encounter with STS and I believe that our connection, cultivated in those past years, will develop into a new phase.

(The 15<sup>th</sup> JELC-W President)



Inauguration Ceremony of STS, August 1994  
JELC-W President Kyoko Ishihara cutting the ribbon

## From Support. to Companionship

Sae Koizumi



“We have been supported by churches abroad. Now it is our turn to support the churches overseas. It could be done if every one of us resists just one cup of coffee.” It was the late Yoshie Hoshino who ardently said those words a long time ago. I was living in the countryside where there was no coffee shop. Moreover, housewives in that area were discouraged from enjoying coffee and socializing at coffee shops.

Ten years later, however, a resolution that JELC-W would support STS was passed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> JELC-W General Meeting. Thanks to the prayers and efforts made by all the members of JELC-W and also friendship with Principal Thu En Yu, Dr. Kham Ping and a seminarian named Yan, this support and companionship was carried on for over 30 years.

I visited Sabah for STS's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony. What I saw then was a weather-beaten bungaloid structure, which was a dormitory for the seminarians.

The windowpanes of the seminary had no glass, but the look Principal Thu gave to the graduates when he handed them their Certificate of Graduation was warm and full of kindness.

After the ceremony, graduates, their families and the honored guests from foreign countries dined together. Children, with their t-shirt's necklines stretched out and noses running, stood beside their mothers. They were most proudly present at the dinner with sunny smiles.

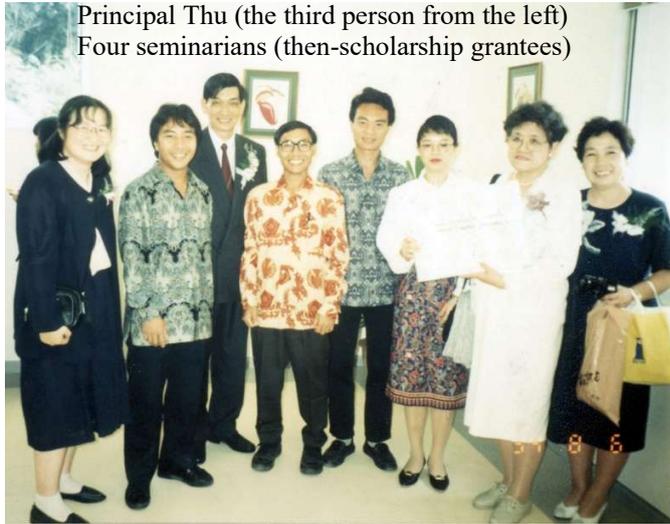
The seminary building which I saw at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony had been much modernized. STS had grown enough to send missionaries abroad. I would like to long remember that the progress STS has made for the past days was brought about owing to the warm fellowship between the people concerned 30 years ago. I hope that the friendship between us will last for years to come.

(The 17<sup>th</sup> JELC-W President)



Dr. Kham Ping and Mr. Kham Ping visited Japan and had exchanges in many places in 2019.

**First visit to Sabah**  
Inauguration Ceremony of STS, 1994



Principal Thu (the third person from the left)  
Four seminarians (then-scholarship grantees)



Ms. Hashiguchi,  
Pastor Noko (LWF),  
Ms. Ishihara

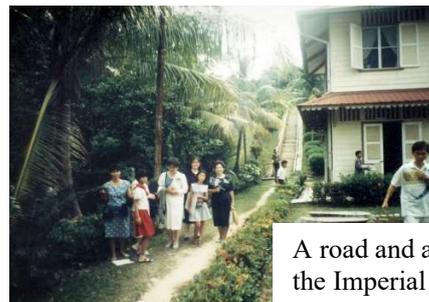


Praise by the seminarians

Ethnic dance and music by the seminarians



Kota  
Kinabalu,  
Sabah



A road and a structure left by  
the Imperial Japanese Army



Cutting the ribbon at the Inauguration Ceremony

**Pastor Rebeca**



**Pastor Vivian Christine Martin**

**Activities of graduates**  
Recent photos from the pastors  
Messages are on p.11



**Pastor Madelin Jeffry**

Program Wanita ECCM Maaui Baru  
**PERSEKUTUAN & SAMBUTAN HARI JADI IBU-IBU YANG LAHIR JAN-JUN**

Tarikh: 12 Julai 2025  
Tempat: Ereney Garden  
Masa: Jam 8 hingga selesai

**MENGADAKAN AKTIVITI PERSEKUTUAN WANITA**

KELAS BIMPINGAN KEPADA REMAJA YANG MENERIMA PEKEGUKHAN SIDI

**Pastor Anitah Ansadu**



## Letter from former-professor Dr. Pang Ken Phin ling to JELCW



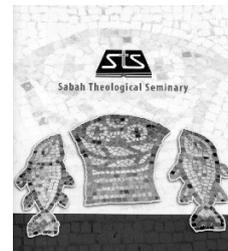
The seminarians who benefitted from JELC-W's Scholarship Project which started in 1993 have been serving as pastors or missionaries. I am truly grateful for

your support, love and partnership for years.

I suppose that those who met the pastors and the missionaries serving on the spot understood the contribution of the project. Over 30 years' time has passed, but the friendship nurtured during that period is unchangeable. We share the same happy memories. I am awfully grateful for the love and kindnesses you showed us living poorly in a remote region. I appreciate your cooperation allowing us to do our mission.

After retirement, I lost the sight in my left eye due to medical malpractice and came to have difficulty in walking without help. My husband and I left Sabah for Kuala Lumpur to live with our eldest son. I have been away from work for some time partly due to COVID 19, so please allow me not to write a formal letter of greeting. You will be always on my mind and I will continue to pray for you for many moons to come.

(Translated by Kyoko Tawara,  
Murozono Church)



- Dr. Pang Ken Phin -
- Awarded Ph.D. in Feminist Theology
- Professor of STS
- The first female reverend of Basel Christian Church of Malaysia
- The first President of B.C.C.M.
- Delivered lecture titled "Women's Vision: To a new stage of missionary work"

### References

- \* JELC-W Report in 2000 "Visiting STS"
- \* Leaflet of JELC-W's 75<sup>th</sup> Memorial Speech in 2003



Recent photo of Dr. Pang Ken Phin (center)

Homegoing: On September 26 in 2025, Pang Ken Phin was called home by the Lord. We are awfully grateful for her works on Earth. We sincerely hope she will rest in peace with God. May the Lord comfort the bereaved family!

## < Messages from STS >

### **- BCCM Bishop Godiva Chog -**

STS is 38 years old and a number of people have studied there, who are scattered all over Malaysia and working for God in several ways. We have been specifically putting an emphasis on teaching theology to the native Christians so that they would be the leaders of their congregations. We will keep on pursuing our future vision and mission with great help from a lot of supporters, cherishing the gift bestowed to each one of us. I thank JELC-W so much for its long-time support and partnership.

### **- Pastor Anita Ansadu -**

Blessed by the Lord, I studied at STS from 2020 to 2023. I am sincerely grateful for JELC-W's support during those years. May God richly bless you! I have been serving as a pastor in BCCM Vinculum and Dangau since 2024. To strengthen the relation with families, women and young people is what I am currently putting effort into. I go to see drug addicts and people suffering from illness.

### **- Pastor Rebeca -**

Four years have passed since I graduated from STS. I appreciate the support and prayers in the past by JELC-W. I am serving at BCCM, 12 kilometers away from STS. Facing a lot of challenges and hardships, I am delighted to help young people spiritually grow by God's grace.

### **- STS Principal Thu En Yu -**

JELC-W's cooperation and kindnesses which lasted for over 30 years was certainly a great blessing for STS, which encouraged our seminarians and enabled them to reach their goals. May God bless you with power, wisdom and joy when you serve Him! I hope God will guide you in preparing this significant Newsletter.

### **- Pastor Vivian Christine Martin -**

I am very grateful for the JELC-W's support from 2021 to 2024 which enabled me to study at STS. I am now serving at BCCM Terhit. I think it is particularly precious to preach the gospel to a young congregation, including middle school students, May JELC-W bring the Gospel and happiness to many people working as a vessel for missionary work!

### **- Pastor Madelin Jeffry -**

I am working as a pastor at BCCM Maubal and Telupid, telling people the word of God through Sunday services or by visiting people with illness and praying for them. I have a class for young people and a Sunday school as well. I heartily appreciate JELC-W's four-years' support.

\* STS ... Sabah Theological Seminary

\* BCCM ... Basel Christ Church of Malaysia

\* JELC -W ... Japan Evangelical Lutheran

Church – Women

### **A quarter century ago**

**Yoko Takahashi**

Soon after the 18<sup>th</sup> JELC-W started, the former President and a member of JELC-W and I were invited to the General Meeting of Sabah BCCM Women's Federation. The day we arrived in Sabah was September 11, 2001, which was and still is unforgettable. They showed us around several places the following day; churches, event venues and the jungles. The professors' gratitude and kindness was such that we were deeply moved. JELC-W's Newsletter repeatedly posted happy faces of seminarians who made their dreams come true. We learned that each church of Sabah BCCM Women's Federation individually carried out its activities by age group, and each group accordingly did what they could.

(The 18<sup>th</sup> JELC-W President)

### **The last visit of JELC-W**

Accompanied by seminarian Maho Morishita October 5 ~ 8, 2019

**Michie Nakahara**

It was a tremendously blessed 4-days' tour, visiting BCCM, joining a Sunday service, socializing with former scholarship grantees and others. I realized I had been wrong in thinking that it must be an ordeal to do missionary work in an Islamic country. There must have been remarkable progress converting many families to Christianity as units thanks to their religiousness. We visited a church pastored by a former scholarship grantee, where more than a hundred believers have been gathering for worship since its establishment 10 years ago, and they are planning to build another church. I appreciate God's guidance from the beginning until the end for JELC-W to help STS produce pastors. It would be great if the relation between us evolves into a new and long lasting one.

(The 24<sup>th</sup> JELC-W President)

### **Sharing the same faith**

**Saeko Sawada**

It was at an "International Camp", which is currently called "Teens Camp", that I met STS's seminarians. They dropped by the camp I happened to be working at as a staff member. I knew nothing about Malaysia back then. I became a JELC-W board member in 2018, and in the following spring, Mr. & Mrs. Kham Ping visited Japan. They ardently invited us to come to Sabah and we did. We experienced sudden thunderstorms and squalls. We saw untethered dogs and free-range chickens in a yard, which made me feel exotic and foreign. I was overwhelmed by the sunset I saw at the beach. It was so mysterious. I thought of the war days, the days of absurdity and stupidity. The church in the mountain and the one downtown were totally different, but all the people we met were equally warm-hearted to make us feel humbled. May both of us be blessed with the Lord's guidance!

(Koromo Church)

### **May we stay connected!**

**Noriko Tsubomoto**

It was fortunate of me to visit Sabah from October 5 to October 8, 2019. Looking at the beautiful horizon, I was reassured that the earth is spherical. I still clearly remember the awesome sunset. I was very excited about seeing the first female professor Dr. Kham Ping. When we arrived at Kota Kinabalu Airport after delay, we were greeted by Dr. Kham Ping in a nice dress with a most friendly smile and voice. Her kindnesses made us forget how tired we were from the long flight. We visited BCCM'S office, where we

learned BCCM preached the Good News with the help of Lutheran churches in America, Finland, and Japan. The bond between the STS graduates and STS has overcome the difficulties. I would love to keep in touch with STS, following its free and easy environment and its unyielding power.

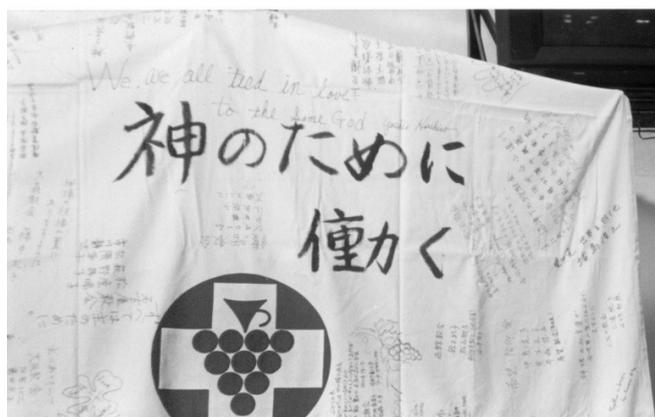
(Hiyoshi Church)

## The Great Commission

**Seiko Asano**

I joined the visit to Sabah in 2013, the year of STS's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to attend the graduation ceremony. We met Mr. and Mrs. Pang Kham Ping, the teachers, and the scholarship grantees. We had an exchange with female leaders of Malay churches and Mandarin churches and enjoyed the ethnic music and dances to celebrate the graduation. We dined with a thousand people, attended a Sunday worship and also visited a school for the stateless children. Everything that I saw, heard or even ate in Sabah was very impressive. What I learned about STS through the tour is only a part of their activities, but I could feel their passion and enthusiasm to try to be helpful to the people in need, keeping "the Great Commission" (Matthew 28:18-20) in mind. I am awfully grateful for having been of a little help by being connected with STS for over 30 years.

(Ichigaya Church)



At the Inauguration Ceremony of STS, we handed messages written by the members of the JELC-W, which received a huge round of applause.

WE are all tied in love to the Same God



### < Pondering over "Gender Justice" at STS >

**Mayuko Yasuda**

There was a training session organized by LWF (Lutheran World Federation) at Sabah

Theological Seminary (STS) in July. Allow me to focus on "gender justice" and look back at its contents.

It began with "the creation in the image of God." Dr. Purasuna Neravara, a Dalit feminist theologian was in charge. She said that every human is made in God's own image, which means that women and LGBTQ+ people also reflect the image of God. When you picture God, you may think God is probably a man with gray hair and a beard, but the image could be otherwise; a young woman, an old woman, a genderless or a non-binary person. Furthermore, her comment on God was memorable: God exists to produce lives, like a mother who could carry lives of children of both genders.

I took up the issues of "baptism, the priesthood of all believers, and ordination and mission", "gender justice," and others. In the bible, we find words of discrimination against women like "Women should be silent." Then, which words of the bible should be read critically and which should be respected? What is the criterion to draw the line between these different approaches to the bible? The questions were shared and discussed by the participants to take a stern look at their prejudices nested inside themselves.

I appreciate the precious time I shared with the participants.

(Japan Lutheran College Lecturer)



### < Purple T-shirt >

**Masato Shimokawa**

I got a purple T-shirt as a souvenir of STS from a member of Ichigaya Church Women's Group in my early teens. Back at that time, I was too young to be interested in a seminary abroad and to understand the meaning of Chinese on the T-shirt, but the purple-colored cloth which came all the way from Borneo remained on my mind.

Twenty years later, I was unexpectedly given an opportunity to visit STS as one of the projects planned for "Asia Luther International Convention" in Kota Kinabalu this year. This visit enabled me to understand, though partly, the initial enthusiasm JELC-W had for STS. How precious it is to have a community like STS in Malaysia where there were lots of fierce religious or ethnical frictions in the past. Students with different backgrounds gather to live together sharing the same faith. I was finally able to perceive the thought that was put into the purple T-shirt that I was given many years ago. It was a happy and blessed time for me.

(JELA Personnel)

◁ Gratitude to the heartwarming encounter ▷

**Mitsue Umeda**  
(Interpreter)

My first visit to STS started on September 12, 2001, the day after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in America. I accompanied the 18<sup>th</sup> JELC-W board members as an interpreter. The seminary was on the top of the hill covered with subtropical plants. I remember the tense atmosphere in which the talk among Dr. Kham Ping, the teachers, and the scholarship grantees carried on.

I visited a church in the deep jungle. I was invited to the General Meeting of Sabah Women's Federation and was overwhelmed by its intensity and excitement. I made such good friends with Dr. Kham Ping and the local people through this first visit, that I repeatedly visited Sabah to see them after that. Sabah is a place which brings back good memories for me.

(Ichigaya Church)



Sabah Theological Seminary