

Visit to Sabah

Ten JELCW members visited Sabah in October 2013 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Sabah Theological Seminary (STS) and attend the Graduation ceremony.

The day after we arrived in Malaysia, we went to Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM) to meet Bishop Dr. Rev. Thomas Tsen. He told us about the history of the church and the support system for the students



BCCM Kota Kinabalu Church stands on a large property, where the kindergarten and the library are also located.

Population Increase in Malaysia

As the economy keeps growing at a rapid rate, more and more workers migrate from near-by Indonesia or the Philippines, causing a surge in Malaysia's population. When it became independent from the UK in 1963, the population was 600,000 but now it has reached 3.5 million. There are many Muslim migrants because the state religion is Islam and welcomes Muslim migration accordingly. When it won independence from the UK, Christians outnumbered Muslims. state of Sabah. Now it is vice-versa. Christian population accounts for about 35% in the state of Sabah.

Ballooning Malay Christians

In spite of the surge of Christian population, there is only a limited number of pastors. Therefore, one pastor ministers to 3 or 4 churches.



Bishop Tsen spoke fervently

“What do the students do after they finish Seminary?”

They engage in ministry either at church, or schools/kindergarten attached to the church. In addition, the Mission Center in Sabah extends its work beyond national borders. It sends missionaries abroad, including to China, Madagascar, France, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, and Hong Kong.



Rev. William Loh distributes the scholarship fund from Japan.

About the STS

The seminary has a similar curriculum to Japanese seminaries, but the STS covers the tuition for those who want to study there. In return, the students have to serve as pastors for at least five years after graduation. If they quit in less than five years, they have to repay the full scholarship amount. The STS provides rooms for the students' families if he/she is married, so that the students need not worry about leaving the family behind while studying there.



Entrance to the STS; the venue of Anniversary concert and graduation ceremony.

“JELCW members partner in the mission”

Bishop Tsen and Rev. Dr. Pang Ken Phin extended their gratitude saying, “We are really thankful for your support. The donation given by JELCW has supported the church and the theological students greatly. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to you. The awardees, after having graduated, are engaged in mission in different countries or cities. You take part in the mission by nurturing pastors.”



Commemorative photo taken after the graduation ceremony.



At the concert: The students are dressed in the traditional clothes of the Asian countries to which the missionaries are sent.



Pastor Yen Se Veg and his wife. He once came to Japan with the STS Principal.

“This year BCCM sent 10 students to the STS. They calculate the tuition needed for each seminarian and determine the scholarship amount.”

BCCM allows some people who have served as a pastor for certain years, to reenter the STS to get degrees if they want to study theology further.

After the dialogue, we looked back at ourselves as Christians living in the same part of neighboring countries, “Yasukuni issues” for example, we felt the dialogue was God’s blessing for having such a precious partnership for mission established firmly between Japan and Malaysia.



We attended the English worship service at BCCM Kota Kinabalu Church. The service is composed of hymns and testimonies and led by youth leaders.

Four Students Graduated



Lee Swee Tin: She ministers at Telipok Congregation after graduation.



Liew Chui Chu: She works as missionary at Kuching Mission Center after graduation



Ishak Bin Johniusu (left) Soulus Jeffrin (right)

The FY2014 Scholarship Students

Thomas Voo Chung Hew
Program: M. Div. (2nd year)
Department: Chinese
Race: Chinese



Thomas grew up as a 3rd generation Christian. At the age of 12, he lost his father due to brain cancer. Since then he had been depressed but in 2001, he was renewed and baptized. After that he took part in various church activities including Student Mission Camp as a University Malaysia Sabah student. After graduating from UMS, he took a pre-seminary program and enrolled in STS in 2012.

Jeremiah Lo Siong Yen
Program: B.Th. (2nd year)
Department: Chinese
Race: Chinese



Jeremiah grew up as a 5th generation Christian. From a young age, he took part in various church activities until he went to further studies at KL. Due to financial problems, he had to return home despite being in the last semester of the diploma course in architecture. He had struggled through a big turbulence in his life before he finally served full time at the church for two years and took a year to equip himself at a 1-year church course.

Rev. Deen Angkorou
Program: B.Th. (1st year)
Department: Malay
Race: Murut



Rev. Deen Angkorou comes from a non-Christian family in the interior Sabah, Pagalungan parish. Even though he has a family, that never was a hindrance for him to go to STS in 1992 to study theology to equip himself to be a servant of God and preach His Word to the indigenous people in the interior of Sabah.

Pilihan Sungkiat
Program: CTS (1st year)
Department: Malay
Race: Murut



Pilihan comes from Pagalungan parish, in the interior of Sabah. He was enrolled at STS four years ago and studied for 2 years. He needs to further his study to equip himself to serve God more efficiently and effectively.

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⊠ Notice: Addressee Change ⊠

We thank you for your cooperation in shipping used clothes to Brazil for the church yard sale. Rev. Tokuhiko requests to address your parcel not to the church but to the pastor personally, by adding either "Pastor Hirota TOKUSHIGE" or "Sr, Hirota TOKUSHIGE." There is no change in the street address as is indicated in the Church Directory.