

# LTS

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



信義宗神學院

# NEWS



CHRISTMAS:  
GOD'S PRESENCE  
AMONG US



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## Statement of Purpose

The LTS News is a newsletter for local and global alumni/ae and friends of the Lutheran Theological Seminary "LTS" in Hong Kong. Through stories about people and events at LTS, it aims to connect readers and create a sense of belonging to a broad LTS community even beyond graduation.

## Donation

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# Editorial

Dear LTS community,

Do you know the tradition of the Christmas pickle?

This tradition is located in the United States. It is not a major tradition which is practised in every family. But for some families, it is common to decorate the Christmas tree not only with red, silver or golden baubles, but also with a Christmas decoration in the shape of a pickle. Because of its green color, the pickle is difficult to see in the green branches of the Christmas tree. Often, the child who first discovers the pickle gets a small gift.

The origin of this tradition is not entirely clear. One explanation is a story from the 19th century: a European who had been emigrated to America was in prison. He was not doing well and was on the brink of death. The guard asked him what he would like for his last meal. And his answer was: a pickle. He got it and that pickle gave him strength again and he recovered. And so the pickle became a symbol of strength and hope. (You can compare that to the sailor Popeye who gets super strong by spinach.)

Why am I telling you this story about pickles? I tell it for one reason: because in the Christmas pickle you can see the meaning of Christmas.

Such a pickle is very ordinary, nothing special. You can buy it with some HK-Dollars. It is different from luxurious food, e. g. the rare porcini mushrooms which cost a fortune. There is nothing simpler, nothing more ordinary than a pickle. And at Christmas, God becomes normal, ordinary, a part of everyday life. God becomes a child, a very ordinary child, a part of our world. The special thing about Christmas is that it is not special. A child is born, nothing more. That happens every day. The special thing about God's incarnation is that it is so normal. He becomes one of us.

You can compare it with Emperor Augustus in Rome. He forced Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem through his census. He, Augustus, lived in a palace that had 260,000 square feet. The ceilings were decorated with stucco; expensive mosaics were placed in the floor. But our God chooses a wretched manger in an old stable in a remote mountain village in a cold winter night.

When we look at a Christmas tree, the glittering silver and golden baubles match the splendor of the Imperial Palace in Rome. The ordinary, everyday pickle, however, suits the child in the manger. It fits the God who does not choose a 260,000 square feet palace to become human. The pickle befits our God who finds a wooden manger sufficient. The special thing about God's incarnation is that it is so simple, so normal.

Not a God who is far above us, but a God who lives with us. That's the meaning of Christmas we can find in the pickle.

In Christ,

*Stefan Gradi*



# Sign of Nativity

**Dr. Kenneth Tsang**

President of LTS

On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the Scriptures - Luke 2:1-20 are often read in the Church. These verses are about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in a manger of a small town called Bethlehem. In this story of Nativity, an angel suddenly appeared before a group of shepherds. The shepherds were terrified. Then, the angel spoke to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12, NRSV)

The angel gave the shepherds a "sign" for finding the newborn Messiah. This "sign" was "a child in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." When we meditate on this "sign," it is obvious that it was not just a sign for locating the baby. It is also a sign telling us how God loves people through Jesus Christ.

God has full sovereignty over the world that He has created. Nevertheless, the Holy Son was born under the rule of Emperor Augustus. The earthly reason Jesus was born in Bethlehem instead of Nazareth in Galilee was the census command by the Emperor. Out of love, the one, who is free, is willing to be restricted;

the one, who has the right and power to rule, is willing to become a person being ruled.

God has abundant resources. There is no deficit in God. Nevertheless, the Holy Son was born in a manger because "there was no place for them in the inn." Out of love, the one, who is rich, is willing to become poor.

God is righteous. In Him there is no sin. Nevertheless, the Holy Son was wrapped in bands of cloth. In Genesis, we know that Adam and Eve needed clothing because of their sins. Out of love, the one, who is sinless, is willing to let others treat Him as a sinner.

About two thousand years ago, the "sign" brought the shepherds to baby Jesus. Today, the "sign" also brings us to Jesus Christ, who deeply loves us. Of course, in this Christmas season, as a Christian, a church, or a seminary, we are also called to be the "sign" as baby Jesus in the manger in our context. In other words, are we willing to sacrifice our freedom and rights for the gospel preaching? Are we ready to have a simple life and be in solidarity with poor people? Are we willing to suffer from the wrongs of others for the sake of others? I hope that people notice a church at Christmas not because of the decoration of light bulbs. It is because "a child in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."



# Dubbelman Family Introduction

## Dr. Samuel Dubbelman

Greetings from the Dubbelman family—Samuel, McCall, and Hans (nearly five years old)—who arrived in Hong Kong on October 9th. Dr. Dubbelman will serve as an assistant professor of Church History and begin teaching classes next semester (Spring 2023). Sam and McCall are from the USA and met twelve years ago in Asia while serving in a bible school run by YWAM (Youth With a Mission). Sam served in India and McCall served in Taiwan. The years spent in Asia with YWAM were not only formative for the trajectory of Dr. Dubbelman's life because he fell in love with McCall, but also because it was here, while studying book by book through the bible, that he ascertained a call to teaching. After YWAM, Dr. Dubbelman then pursued further education at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and then Boston University.

While a student at Seminary, Sam and McCall took a class on the life and theology of Martin Luther. Having both grown up broadly evangelical (in the American sense of the term) and having devoted their entire lives to following Jesus, something still seemed qualitatively different about the way Luther articulated the gospel. Luther spoke of the gospel as

a promise of God's forgiveness and acceptance that came outside of yourself. Because of the external nature of the gospel and Christian righteousness, this meant that the Christian was—as Luther phrased it— *simul iustus et peccator*, that is, simultaneously righteous and a sinner. This different way of understanding the gospel subsequently changed Dr. Dubbelman's studies and his confessional orientation. After seminary he pursued doctoral studies at the School of Theology at Boston University under the advisership of Dr. Christopher B. Brown, the general editor of the new expansion series of *Luther's Works: American Edition*. Here the Dubbelmans also became members of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America), the denomination sponsoring their position at LTS.

So far, the Dubbelmans are thoroughly enjoying their new life in Hong Kong and are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to join LTS. They have very much appreciated all of the loving welcome that you have extended to them over the last month. They also happen to think the bottom of To Fung Shan Road is truly an exciting place to live. Where else can you see monkeys and wild pigs on a mountain walk to IKEA?







**Rev. Dr. Jukka Helle**

Sent by the biggest mission organisation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, Felm, I arrived in Hong Kong in mid-August this year. Even though Hong Kong was, and still is, a new place to me, Asia was not an unexplored terrain to me. Before moving to Hong Kong, I had lived in Asia (Thailand) for almost 17 years. Those years I served as a missionary and teacher of theology within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Thailand. Another significant part of my immersion in Asia took place when I wrote my doctoral thesis on contextual theology of Asian Catholic Bishops. During my earlier years in Asia, I also made friends with many people from several Asian countries. It has been a great joy to work with them. Many friendships have lasted until the present date.

However, I did not come to Hong Kong directly from Thailand. There was a gap of a few years during which I served as executive secretary for mission and international work in the diocese of Kuopio, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

Now it feels good to be back in Asia once more; this means coming to the continent which has become dear to me. The years in Thailand I lived there with my family of three children. Now the children have grown up and lead their own lives. This time, unfortunately, also my wife could not travel with me to Hong Kong because of her mother's health condition.

Nevertheless, my job as an assistant professor at LTS provides thrilling opportunities to take part in

theological education in Asia's major Lutheran theological school. As I arrived at LTS, I was given a warm welcome. All colleagues have been ready to assist with any question or concern. I enjoy the diversity of various nationalities of the faculty, staff and the students. The more the merrier.

During all my nearly 20 years in Asia I have learned at least as much as I have given. It has been both challenging and inspiring to work together with many Asian colleagues and friends. And there is certainly yet much to learn and discover! I am happy that a part of my job description includes participating in the development of theological education in those Southeast Asian countries where my mission organisation Felm works.

In this Fall semester at LTS I was requested to teach two courses: Mission and Diakonia, and Lutheran worship: its history and theology. In both classes I have a good mixture of students from Hong Kong (also from Macau) and Myanmar. In class sessions it is nice to see how the students of both countries are willing to learn from each other.

As the semester have reached the halfway, it will soon be a time to start preparing for the courses of the Spring semester. Undoubtedly, exciting new experiences await! Please pray for LTS, its faculty, staff and the students so that we can fulfil the purpose of the Seminary in training good theologians and pastors for the Kingdom of God in various Asian countries.



### Dr. Cynthia Chau

Blessed and sitting in my office at LTS, which is situated near the willow tree and where I can enjoy the sight of the fish pond, I marvel at the guidance and blessings of the Lord. It is more than I could imagine and pray for. Back on March 31 EST time in the afternoon (which is early April 1 HK time, a day that made me wonder whether it all was just an April fool joke), I successfully defended my dissertation via zoom. I finished the revision in about two weeks and thus brought my journey of obtaining degrees to an end (hope so, ha-ha). At the same time, I started my journey of finding the ministerial teaching position meant for me. Being perplexed, I prayed that the Lord would show me a way, and at the same time other doors closed, so that I could discern God's will clearly. Led by the Lord, I joined the LTS family on August 15.

It appears that the Lord has always led me when I reflect on my voyage of serving. When I was nine years old, on



the eve of a school exam, a Sunday morning, I woke up early and watched cartoons (hmm, yep, not studying). When my brother saw this, he asked me to attend church with him. In this way, I had the opportunity to know the Lord's salvation and later became a member of the Chinese Rhenish Church. I was called to serve the Lord during high school and started studying MDiv one year after I graduated from university. Due to some life situation, however, I just finished my PhD this year. Nevertheless, I could start my teaching role within five months after graduation. I am genuinely thankful for the guidance of my Lord.

## MMF Meeting

### Dr. Stefan Gradl

It started more than 20 years ago. In 2000, the Lutheran World Federation invited its member churches of the Mekong region and other Lutheran churches which were engaged in the region to a consultation in Bangkok under the theme 'Partnership in Mission in the Mekong Region'. As a result, the Mekong Mission Forum (MMF) came to birth: a network of Lutheran churches and mission organizations in order to accompany the churches in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. MMF supports projects and programs in the Mekong region and it promotes theological education by organizing joint theological consultations and financing short term teaching in the churches and seminaries of the region. Furthermore, MMF member churches provide scholarships for students. Already from the beginning, LTS was involved in the MMF. Like his predecessors, President Kenneth Tsang has taken on the role of coordinator of MMF. In order to fulfill this task, he is assisted by Ms. Hellen Bok.

After a long break due to Covid-19, this year, the annual meeting of MMF could be held again in person. On 16 and 17 November, more than 40 people from Asia, Australia and Europe came together in Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh. Besides President Tsang and Ms. Bok, Dr. Jukka Helle and I attended the meeting because our mission organizations (the Finnish



Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Mission OneWorld from Germany) are MMF members.

A central theme was the impact of Covid-19 on church and mission and what mission will look like after the pandemic. In his paper, Dr. Philip Lok, LWF's Regional Secretary for Asia, analyzed thoroughly the impact of Covid-19 on the global economy, social norms and basic freedoms. According to him, one lesson we have learned by the pandemic is the insight that we need each other in order to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28) and that after Covid-19 cooperation will become essential.

An important part of the meeting was sharing. Because of the lack of physical meetings in the last years, the participants were eager to know about each other's situation.

Of course, a big part of the meeting was dedicated to 'business' decisions like the budget 2023 or a revision of MMF's terms of reference. Also, elections took place. Mr. Leon Chau from the Chinese Rhenish Church HK was elected moderator of MMF.

Most of the participants will meet each other again next year. Then, the annual meeting will be held in Thailand.





## The Installation Service of the President of Lutheran Theological Seminary "LTS"

Phyllis Lam

Praise our Lord! The Installation Service of the President of LTS was smoothly held at the ELCHK Truth Lutheran Church on 16 October. The first part of the service was to pay tributes to the three Chinese predecessors for their dedication during their terms of office, namely, the late President Andrew Hsiao, President Tak-ho Lam and President Simon Chow.

Bishop Rev. Chun-wa Chang, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of LTS, then delivered a sermon under the theme of "The Cross and the Succession". He told the congregation that God would lead the Seminary all the way as He had accompanied LTS to go through many hurdles in the past. He went on to say that Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tsang, the new President, should follow the mission of LTS laid down by the predecessors to serve the Chinese congregations as well as the churches and seminaries in the mainland, Mekong River Region, and the Southeast Asia. He presided the installation service after the sermon and invited all Board members to join the laying on of hands ceremony.

After the liturgy of installation, President Kenneth Tsang had some sharing with the congregation. He said before and after assuming the new post on 1 July, he received encouragement and blessings from many counterparts. One of the close allies said he wondered as to whether a message of congratulations or condolences should be sent to him. In response, he said, though the world and Hong Kong are under rapid changes, he would like to receive a congratulatory message.

He said he was moved and reminded after reading



Luke 17:5-10. Though being the President of LTS, he well-understood that God was the master and he was the servant. He shared when he got the calling from God to receive the theological training in 2005, his spirituality was down. Thanks for the unswerving love of God, his soul was revived. He joined LTS and commenced the church ministry until now. All were grace of God.

He treasured every opportunity to serve God and would carry out wholeheartedly and faithfully his responsibility entrusted by God with His blessing. That explained why he preferred the message of congratulations instead of condolences.

He earnestly hoped to collaborate with colleagues to equip LTS students so that they could have the faith of walking through the rough sea. After training, they could treasure every chance to serve, defy hardships, comfort lonely people, render assistance to the underprivileged and deliver their best to bring the good news to those not yet believing in Christ.

On that day, the church was packed with guests from churches and Christian organizations. We received donations, floral baskets, and congratulatory messages from different sectors. We were overwhelmed by their unfailing support. This reminds us that LTS is not lonely in carrying out our mission to train faithful servants of our Lord. As the scripture says, there are many parts and we all belong to each other. We are one body in Christ.

May our Lord continue to lead LTS on the way forward. May His mighty power at work with colleagues of the Seminary so that they could shine up for Christ and let the world see the beauty of our Lord!





### **Ai Khun (M.Th.)**

My name is Ai Khun. I am from Myanmar. I belong to the Wa ethnic group. My church is the Wa Baptist Church, Lashio. I am married to Lu Taung. We have a daughter and two sons.

I have decided that my life is dedicated to the preaching and teaching ministry because we, the Wa people, are undeveloped and thirsty for the Word of God.

I have served the Wa Baptist Mission for 18 years. In order to serve more, I want to equip myself with spiritual strength, leadership skills and mission knowledge at the Lutheran Theological Seminary.



### **Yan Kho Lin (M.Th.)**

I am Yan Kho Lin, called David Yan, from Myanmar, more precisely from the Sagaing Region in the North-Western part of the country where wars have often taken place. My family is still living in that area.

I am an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, Upper Myanmar. I have three children: Samuel Paominlun, Julie Kimngaineng, and Elizabeth Veichoichin. Their mother's name is Nemneikim. They are a lovely family. The oldest one is 13 years old, and they are three years apart in age.

I came from a civil war zone, and when I arrived in Hong Kong, I felt free from stress. I am also grateful for the warm welcome of the teachers and students of LTS.

And I think the atmosphere in Hong Kong is very pleasant and relaxing. I am here to study M.Th. for 2 years. Please pray for me. Thank you.



### **Sa Khaing Htoo (M.Th.)**

I'm Sa Khaing Htoo from the Myint Pauk Pwo Karen Baptist Church in Myanmar. I was baptised on August 17th, 2008. My people are farmers and I am the third of three siblings. I am

a lecturer at the Pwo Karen Theological Seminary. I came to Hong Kong to study for a M.Th. in Church History and my special topic is about Augustine of Hippo. When I arrived at LTS, I felt like I was meeting real relatives. This place truly feels like a community based on peace and love. I would like to ask you to pray for a speedy restoration of peace in my country, for my family and for my studies.



### **Kyaw Oo (D.Th.)**

I am Rev. Kyaw Oo, an ordained minister and lecturer, belonging denominationally to the Lahu Baptist Convention, Myanmar. I am married and have three children.

My wife and I are serving the Lahu Theological Seminary in Myanmar. Now, I am doing the D.Th. program at the LTS.

When I arrived, the architecture of the seminary impressed me because it is cultural, natural and creative. The warm fellowship of the seminary made me really happy and I feel blessed to be a member of the LTS family. And, please, pray for my country Myanmar.



### **Saw Tha Shee Kapaw (M.Th.)**

I am Saw Tha Shee Kapaw (Tha Shee means "Pure Heart" and Kapaw means "Light" in English), a Karen from Myanmar. My mother church is the Sar Bu Town Law Thaw Karen Baptist Church. Both my grandfather and parents were ministers; their

passion and their dedication to the ministry help me to understand and value the life of a minister.

The name LTS was familiar to me even before I came to Hong Kong because there are some alumni of LTS at the Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (KBTS), a seminary where I was serving. Whenever they gave lectures, they shared their experiences at LTS and this encouraged me to dream of studying at LTS.

I would like to request a prayer for my country, family, and studies in LTS.



## New Students



### **Nu Ra (M.Th.)**

My name is Nu Ra. I am from Myanmar and my ethnicity is Kachin. I belong to the Janmai Kachin Baptist Church, which is in Myitkyina, Kachin state. I have my parents and five siblings. They are living in Myanmar now.

When I arrived at LTS, I was amazed by the seminary's campus and the buildings because it is the first time that I have left my country and experience new things and a new culture. Moreover, the family spirit of this seminary was extraordinary. Everyone is very warm and close to each other. Please remember my country and my family in your prayer. And pray for me and my study in LTS in order to glorify His name. Thank you!



### **Jessica Law (MA-D)**

Thank God! It's so blessed that I can start my studying journey in LTS. I'm Jessica, from Macau. My church is the Ha Wan Evangelical Church in Macau. I have a daughter who is working as environmental engineer in California, US after she

has finished her first degree this May. Once I arrived at LTS, I felt that the nature surrounding the seminary was very fresh and everyone was very helpful and friendly, no matter whether he/she was a student, a staff member or a teacher. This let me feel like "back to home" – warm and sweet home! Now, I am trying my best to adapt to this new environment – new place, new people, but the same God! May God continue to give me wisdom to deal with my studying life and encourage me so that I can equip myself well to serve HIM and his people! Amen!



### **Ye Naing Oo (D.Th.)**

My name is Ye Naing Oo. I come from Rakhine state, Western part of Myanmar. I am a senior pastor in the Canaan Baptist Church and part time teacher at the Liberal Arts Program of the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT). My spouse's name

is Rony Chit, and we have one son and one daughter. I am studying the D.Th program in Systematic Theology. Why I choose the LTS for study is because we can have an opportunity to study under the supervision of international scholars. Please pray for me to finish my study in time and my family as well.

## New Students from Myanmar and Laos



### **Bountom Soukpaseuth**

Eng. Dip.  
Xaysomboun, Laos



### **Chanthaphone Phommaviseth**

Eng. Dip.  
Vientiane, Laos



### **Thang Dong Khai**

D.Th.  
Sagaing, Myanmar



### **Khup Zo Mang**

M.Th.  
Chin State, Myanmar



### **Ngin Lam Cin**

M.Th.  
Chin State, Myanmar





**Kevin Wu (D.Th.)**

We all know that the Hong Kong Lutheran Theological Seminary, "LTS," is an internationally highly acclaimed seminary. It was founded more than a century ago. Over the years, LTS has nourished many knowledgeable and faithful servants of God. I am much obliged that by the grace and the guidance of our Lord, I could come to LTS to study my Doctor of Theology program focusing on the Old Testament.

My journey of faith is an ordinary one. At the outset, it is the family where I have grown up. Under such family environment, I got lost on my way forward, like sailing without a compass. After having my faith in Jesus Christ, I know the abundant love of God and my life is full of hope. I pray God to give me more spiritual gifts and more strength to serve Him.

Before coming to LTS, all along, I served in the Jiangsu Theological Seminary, "JTS" With the approval of the Jiangsu Provincial People's Government and the State Bureau of Religious Affairs, the JTS was set up in 1998. In the coming years, JTS will put more effort to strengthen the research programs. JTS will then become a seminary focused on both teaching and research. To cope with the development needs of JTS, I was deployed to advance my research studies in LTS.

Being a student from the mainland living in LTS for about one month, I am much impressed. Our campus, imitating the academy in Ming and Qing dynasties, is delicate and beautiful. The architectural design and decorations have profound theological meanings. The campus, staying away from the hustle and bustle city lives, gives us a peace of mind and a serene studying environment. Also, we have various kinds of colorful extracurricular activities. It is a big family full of love. The leaders and professors of LTS are humble and approachable. They have set exemplary role models for me to follow.

Having the chance to study in LTS, I give thanks to God all the time.

May God bless LTS and each of my kind and lovely friends in LTS.

May God be with you always.



**Hu, Yingqiang**

D.Th.  
Hongqiao town, Shanghai, PRC



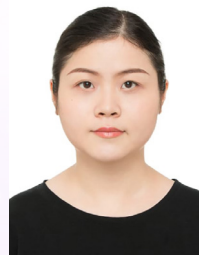
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**Meng, Jia**

M.Div. 2-yr  
Changchun city, Jilin, PRC



**Luo, Ya**

M.Div. 2-yr  
Guiyang city, Guizhou. PRC



**Enoch Wang**

D.Min.  
Hangzhou, Zhejiang, PRC



**Cai, Hongqiang**

M.Th.  
Ningbo city, Zhejiang, PRC





### Soe Saing (D.Th.)

May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding be with you all!

I am Soe Saing from the Naga Baptist Church-Yangon, Myanmar. The Lord has blessed me with my lovely life partner, Phyu Phyu Khine Thin, and two children, a son Zue Rein Saing and a daughter Hoshana Phyu Phyu San.

I am so grateful to our Lord that He has entrusted on me to be a part of His Kingdom building on earth through His church and teaching ministry in the Biblical schools/seminaries. I served as an assistant pastor in my local church for 5 years and then as a lecturer in Bible school/seminary for 8 years prior to my student life at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS).

When the opportunity came up to me to study at LTS, Hong Kong, indeed, I faced a dilemma of whether I should be leaving the current ministry that God had

bestowed on me. Eventually, with the encouragement of my wife and my senior pastor, I chose to start a new chapter of my life and so I arrived at LTS on July 26, 2019. However, after five months of my leaving home, the sad news reached me that my senior pastor who had the full responsibility for the church ministry had been called to be with the Lord. So, I had to take up the works all from Hong Kong through the online form for the continuation of our church activities.

Then, the spread of Covid-19 interrupted the usual church activities. The saddest event came up when the military junta seized power on February 1, 2021. This affected people in Myanmar not only politically but in social and religious affairs too. It is painful to talk about the current situation as my local church ministry has been unable to continue as usual, and the theological seminary where I had been teaching has been completely closed down.

In fact, this should be one of the toughest times



ever for me as my future seems not clear. Yet, thanks be to God, my life at LTS has been one of the most significant life experiences for me. Besides, exploring deeper theological studies, I have benefited in many ways: more meaningful worship which I had never experienced in the past, the sweet community care life experience which always gives me the feeling of being at home, a deeper fellowship and companionship with the faculty and staff, the

friends from a multicultural background, all these reminding me that the love of God binds all together for His kingdom's sake. With all the inspirations received, I am not at all reluctant to return to my homeland where I may hope to be able to transmit the reflections of LTS life experiences to my people so that where their hopes, expectations and visions now being overtaken by darkness may be restored by God's grace.



# My theological journey

Than Naing, David (D.Th.)



My name is Than Naing (David), an ordained assistant pastor and lecturer at the Pokey Theological Seminary from Myanmar. The name of my organization is Self Supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society which was established in 1912. Now, I am doing doctoral studies (D.Th.) in the area of Church History and Historical Theology.

As I have received a calling from God, I served three years for the AD 2000 mission. I began my academic study in 2002 and received a bachelor degree from Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology. Then, I started advanced studies for a master degree. Since 2004, I served as an assistant pastor of the Yangon City Church and as a lecturer of the Rev. Dr. R.L. Pokey Memorial Theological School. I also served as a secretary of the Yangon-Hmaw Bi Association (S.S.K.B.M.S) for eight years. Indeed, I decided to stop my academic study after I had received a Master of Theology degree from South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. But I changed my mind in 2020. As I realized the importance of promoting academic learning not only for me but also for my seminary, I sought the instruction of God for my future study. By the grace of God, I applied for admission at LTS and received it in 2020. For me, LTS is the academic place where I can get plenty of theological resources for my academic study.

Indeed, I and other Myanmar students faced frustration and sometimes almost loss of hope because of the current situation in Myanmar. But the kind and compassionate help of the LTS community (our beloved president, professors, staff, and students) and its family spirit comforted our hearts.



### Nant Tin Si Moe (D.Th.)

I'm Nant Tin Si Moe, from Myanmar. I began serving at my church, the North Okkalapa Pwo Kayin Baptist church, and its branches after completing my B.Th. degree in 2004. I got a lot of experience while I was serving in a branch of my church. The majority of the members were Buddhists who had converted to Christianity. They were struggling to make ends meet because of their low income. It was not easy for grass root people to become Christians. We provided them as much as we could, but we could not fully support them. Some have given up their Christian identity in such a situation, while others have remained faithful in the face of suffering. I have learned that it costs a lot to be a believer. When I was assigned there, I heard their voices and had the amazing experience of being there when they needed me.

Then, I enrolled at the Myanmar Institute of Theology to study their M. Div Program (2008). Later, I worked at the North Okkalapa Churches Fellowship of different denominations, after that I moved to the Hpu Hsan Paw Bible School in Karen State as a lecturer. The drug problem was the most significant challenge. Among the young people and ministers there are many drug addicts. Drugs devastated their lives. Drug addiction is still a challenge for children, young people and ministers in the community.

I returned to MIT in 2014 for an M.Th. degree. After that, I worked as a lecturer at the Pwo Karen Theological Seminary. When I worked at my school, I saw some issues; many of the students came from different backgrounds, I discovered that some of their ideas were challenging in our ministry. Some students are heavily influenced by doctrines that deviate from the Bible. This is one of the challenges.

I had a plan to extend my study and advance my academic career, so I applied twice in LTS and started my study in 2020. This is my third year of the doctorate program. I am focusing on New Testament under the supervision of Dr. Solomon who shares patiently with me his invaluable academic knowledge, and I am blessed to have him as my advisor.

Student life has many challenges, requirements, and deadlines. Yet, it is a great privilege to be a part of the LTS community, where people of all races, languages, cultures and denominations come together for God's ministry and mission, and we have the opportunity to learn from each other. I discovered that LTS encourages the development of faithful servants, spiritual formation, academic achievement, mission spirit commitment, etc. Also, LTS is surrounded by beautiful mountains and I enjoy going hiking and exploring the beauty of nature with other students from time to time.





# A young man who wants to follow his grandfather's footsteps!

Harvey Van Bik (D.Th.)

God calls many people for His kingdom in various ways. Among others, I, am one of the called ones. When I finished my Master of Divinity in 2009, I started part-time teaching at Chin Christian University "CCU" (formerly called Chin Christian College) in my hometown, Hakha, Chin State, Myanmar. The Christian University is a special one for our family because my grandfather, the late Rev. Dr. David Van Bik, was appointed by Chin churches to be its first principal.

After one year of teaching, I received an invitation to be a full-time teacher. I became a lecturer and it is my joyous calling of God to be able to follow in my grandfather's footsteps. While I was serving in the CCU, a newly established church named 'Sangling Memorial Baptist Church' invited me to be a pastor and I started working as an adjunct pastor in 2015. This made me feel a double-calling of God to serve Him more for His people.

While I came to the Lutheran Theological Seminary "LTS" to pursue my Doctor of Theology in the field of Old Testament in 2019, I had the opportunity to meet both local and international outstanding scholars at the campus. They inspired me through discussion, reflection and conversation.

Moreover, I was invited to present my research paper at the ATTR research school, University of Oslo, Norway in summer 2022. Among the eleven PhD-fellows from worldwide, I was blessed to represent Asian fellows. The seminar was funded by the Norwegian Research Council and it lasted 4 days of lecturing and presentations. In this way, the international PhD-fellows' gathering not only upgraded my theological insight but also challenged my research skills in this digital world.

This is my prayer that being equipped with new and fresh theological education from LTS may lead

me to make contribution to the Chins as well as the churches in Myanmar. In the past, my grandfather translated the Lai (Chin) Bible, wrote a dictionary (Chin/English – English/Chin), a dozen of commentaries, and several theological books for the Chin people. My humble request is to follow his footsteps for my people. Furthermore, my sponsor institution, the CCU, is the focal learning center for many of the Chin people/tribes in Chin State. I believe that the CCU will witness the Christian uniqueness more through the theological education and liberal arts education to the people of Myanmar in this challenging times. As Myanmar is a multicultural, multi-racial and multi-religious country, bearing Christ likeness is a living gospel to our neighbor's religions. Without mutual respect of any religion, diversity and race, there will be no peace and harmony at all. Hence, the CCU upholds Christian values and sets a core of Christian uniqueness through Christ likeness among differences.

For the ten years I served at the CCU, the number of students each year reached around 400, including both theology and liberal arts students. Statistically speaking, this number indicates a growing and a fruitful organization that could produce a hundred disciples annually. Besides, many of the Chins around the globe render support financially and with human resources to the CCU to strengthen it and to make it run the programs more efficiently.

Therefore, within 32 years, the small college from 1990 grew into a Christian University nowadays. This is the work of God who always remembers the voice of the oppressed, marginalized and poor. Thus, the vision of a church to start with a college came alive today. It has become a Christian University where I am willing to serve the people of Myanmar, devoting in God's service.

To God be the glory!







## From Hong Kong to Finland: Attending the Peace and Reconciliation (P & R) Seminar in Helsinki

Rose Mary (2022 M.Th. Graduate)

The Mara Evangelical Church (MEC) is a member of the Lutheran World Federation and a mission partner of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Felm). Felm invited me to attend this seminar on April 21-24, 2022, in Helsinki, Finland, with special consent of the LTS. Felm has been carrying out God's mission work in the Mara Church as God's guardian angel. Since the Myanmar Military Regime has taken over power in 2021, the people of Myanmar boycott and demonstration take place in every village, town and city across the country, meaning that there is no peace and tranquillity across the country. That is why I was invited to attend the seminar.

The seminar was held in order to share experiences, challenges and the theological questions related to peace work in each local contexts and to reflect how theology and practice interact. I shared my role of pastor in the current situation of our church members and the people in Myanmar. The P & R Theology workshop had effective input and impact on my M.Th. thesis, "Importance of Ecumenical Relations with Special Reference to the Mara Evangelical Church in Myanmar". This seminar gave me insights on how to relate ecumenical relations to P & R in church and society.

The Mara Church has been isolated to the rest of the world for a long time for various reasons – based on one ethnic group called the Mara, geographically located in the rural areas where there is no communication and transportation channels. Therefore, the church was

called "Mara Independent Evangelical Church" putting an emphasis on "Independent."

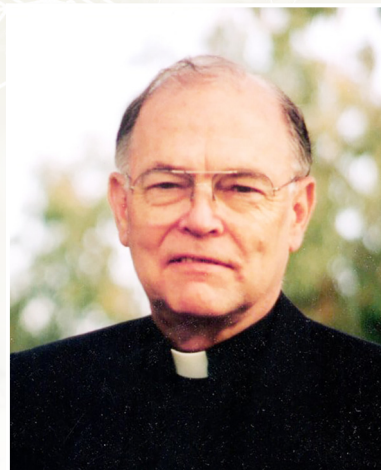
For a long time, most of the Mara people were unaware of their isolation from the rest of the world, and they preferred to stand alone as a church. While some MEC members understand what it means to have ecumenical relations with other churches, some members have negative feelings about this due to a lack of their truly understanding of ecumenism. My thesis examines the impact of the ecumenical movement and ecumenical ties on the MEC in the past and present.

Beginning in early 2019, there was a discord inside the Mara Evangelical Church in the USA, which led to greater miscommunication between the Church in the USA and the MEC Assembly in Maraland, Myanmar. The Mara Church in the USA temporarily ended relations with the MEC General Assembly. Therefore, with prayer, I took the privilege of my visit to USA to build peace and reconciliation between the Mara Church in USA and the General Assembly. I believe God sent me for peace and reconciliation for the MEC with a prayer. I took several weeks to convince both sides in USA and Myanmar. God really did hear my plea for the church to become peaceful and to have normal healthy relationship. It was successful in September 2022. I should add that this is a result of both my M.Th. thesis and Felm's workshop on P & R theology. I will continue to make an effort to advance the work of peace and reconciliation as much as I can for the glory of God.



# In Memoriam: Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmalenberger

Rev. Maggie Mathieson



Dr. Jerry was a former teacher in LTS.

I received with sadness the news that God had called our dear Dr. Jerry home, but also celebrated with alleluias as he is now truly 'Home'.

Over a decade ago, while studying at LTS, I heard our Indonesian classmates rushing around conversing in Bahasa. Senior students then joined them. "What should we do for Dr. Jerry?"

Who was this man? The day came when Dr. Jerry arrived, and the first thing I noticed was his wide-brimmed hat and his Batik shirt. Then he gave that mischievous smile and that look. I saw how much everyone respected him and how he made an effort to speak to everyone, local and international - even to newbies like me.

I attended one of Dr. Jerry's classes. A special class that showed the Pastor's heart of Dr. Jerry, his passing on of knowledge, but also his challenging us to examine ourselves and our future ministry.

One of his gifts was storytelling. A child again, I would listen to his tales. But he was equally happy listening to

our stories. During this time, he would open more of himself to us.

Dr. Jerry was interested in all cultures and would take the time to share his own. I remember participating in the All Souls' Eve prayer and being greeted by a carved pumpkin sitting on the wall outside Dr. Jerry's room upon returning to the lower dorm area. Some students were shocked as they considered Hallowe'en non-Christian, so Dr. Jerry shared this aspect of history and culture with us.

As both teacher and learner, he was people-centred, a pastor.

Dr. Jerry was, is and always will be a person to emulate in ministry. We may remember him differently, but we all acknowledge him as a faithful servant of God.

Thanks be to God for Dr. Jerry's life and legacy.

Rest in Peace, Dr. Jerry - Rise in GLORY.





## Lutheran Theological Seminary Graduate List 2022

### Forty-Fifth Graduates

	Name	Congregation
<b>Diploma in Theological Studies</b>	1. Chan, Mun Yee 2. Lau, Tin Chak	ELCHK Tuen Mun Lutheran Church ELCHK Faith Joy Lutheran Church
<b>Bachelor of Christian Studies</b>	3. Sit, Tun Chi Allen	ELCHK Peace Lutheran Church
<b>Bachelor of Theology</b>	4. Lo, Pui Lam 5. Yip, Wang Fai 6. Zaw Tun Win @ Jan Philip	Abundant Life Christian Church The Chinese Christian Church of Amoy Lutheran Bethlehem Church (Myanmar)
<b>Christian Counseling Programs Higher Diploma</b>	7. Cheung, Miu Ling 8. Tsang, Wai Wa 9. Yee, Mei Lin 10. Yip, Yin Ping	ELCHK Truth Lutheran Church Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (LCHKs) Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong Hang Hau Chapel
<b>Master of Arts</b>	11. Au, Wing Chi 12. Fong, Kwai Shun 13. Lam, Kit Ying 14. Lee, Chui Ling 15. Ng, Wing Yan 16. Wong, Li Ying 17. Wong, Sau Lin 18. Wong, Yan Wing Ricky	HKSKH All Saints' Cathedral C&MA Shuen Tak Alliance Church Hong Kong Church of the Nazarene C&MA Wah Kee Alliance Church C&MA Tai O Alliance Church NLSI New Life Church ELCHK Centre Lutheran Church ELCHK Truth Lutheran Church
<b>Master of Arts in Theology</b>	19. Chung, Edmon Wang On	HKSKH Christ Church Kowloon Tong
<b>in Christian Counseling and Spiritual Direction</b>	20. Lai, Fung Ching	C&MA Shatin Alliance Church
<b>in Christian Spirituality</b>	21. Leung, Chi Kong 22. Wong, Wai Ping 23. Yu, Joannie Kuk Lin	Church of God CRCHKs Chinese Rhenish Church, Taipo The China Holiness Church
<b>in Christian Spiritual Direction</b>	24. Chan, Wai Man Cynthia 25. Li, Chui Hung 26. Shum, Yuk Lan 27. Tam, Wai Man Vivian 28. Yuen, Lai Seung Myra	University Baptist Church EFCC Ecweddell Memorial Church Kornhill Baptist Church South Horizons Baptist Church Cumberland Presbyterian Tao Hsien Church



	Name	Congregation
in Diakonia	29. Shek, Wai Man	Shatin Baptist Church
in Pastoral Counseling	30. Ho, Chi Kin	The Methodist Church, Hong Kong
in Diakonia (Intensive)	31. Cai, Chuan Dian 32. Ma, Yuan Hui 33. Yang, Shu Yan 34. Ye, Li Qin	Guangdong Jieyang Christian Church (Guangdong) Wudi Christian Three-Self Patriotic Committee (Shandong) Guan Christian Church (Shandong) Wenzhou Liushi Christian Church (Zhejiang)
<b>Marketplace Programs</b>		
Higher Diploma	35. Li, Yan	
Master of Arts	36. Bai, Wen Biao 37. Cao, Mei Fang 38. Chen, Xiao Fang 39. Ding, Chang Min 40. Huang, Min Min 41. Li, Jie 42. Li, Xin Lan 43. Liang, Xiu Shuai 44. Liang, Yong Jian 45. Liao, Yue 46. Liu, Feng 47. Liu, Hong Hua	48. Nie, Yue Hua 49. Ou Yang, Pei 50. Pang, Wei 51. Su, Qiang 52. Tang, Ru 53. Xiong, Ming Tao 54. Yan, Ying 55. Yang, Guo Jie 56. Zhang, Bin 57. Zhang, Jian Feng 58. Zhang, Shao Bo 59. Zhang, Ting
Master of Divinity (Intensive)	60. Liu, Xiao Lu 61. Zhao, Hong Mei	Heilongjiang Theological Seminary (Heilongjiang) Nanning Christian Council (Guangxi)
Master of Divinity	62. Besra, Karan 63. Chan, Chi Kin 64. Chan, Oi Yin 65. Tiet, Thu Andisit 66. Yip, Chui Pik	Nepal Evangelical Lutheran Church (Nepal) Christian Salvation Proclaiming Church EFCC Tung Fook Church International Christian Assembly Lock Tao Christian Association Kowloon City Church
Master of Theology	67. Chan, Kin Chiu Daniel 68. Kong, Wai Choi Timothy 69. Lo, Wan Wah 70. Roi Seng 71. Rose Mary 72. San Aung 73. Wong, Wai Kwong	Grace Hong Kong Evangelical Church CRCHKS Chinese Rhenish Church, Wan Chai CCC Leung Faat Memorial Church Ywama Baptist Church (Myanmar) Mara Evangelical Church (Myanmar) Myanmar Lutheran Church (Myanmar) LCHKS Saint Mark's Lutheran Church
Doctor of Theology	74. Chong, Calvin Vui Leong 75. Leung, Ching Hang 76. Nay Win Tun	Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (Malaysia) C&MA Mei Mun Alliance Church Pathein Myaung Mya Karen Baptist Association (Myanmar)



- ◆ Thanksgiving Service on the occasion of the retirement of the President Dr. Simon Chow was held on 26 June 2022 (Sun) 3:30p.m. at the ELCHK Truth Lutheran Church. A Festschrift *Word in Life and a Life in the Word : A Festschrift in Honor of President Simon S. C. Chow* was dedicated to Dr. Chow during the event to express gratitude and appreciation for his contributions to LTS.



- ◆ This semester, we have 10 new students coming from Myanmar, 2 from Laos, and 7 from Mainland China. Please pray for their family and adaptation.



- ◆ We have a new center officer of Companion LeShalom Centre and her name is Natalie Wong. Praise the Lord and may God grant her wisdom and love to serve!
- ◆ We have two new colleagues joining our team! They are our administrative assistants Ms. Tang Man-yu, Mandy and Ms. Wong Nga-yi, Minnie. Welcome to LTS!
- ◆ The installation Service of Rev. Dr. Tsang Ho-yin Kenneth as the President of Lutheran Theological Seminary was held on October 16, 2022(Sun), full of blessings.
- ◆ 2022 Walkathon was held successfully from November 6th to November 25th, thanks be to God! The theme of this year's Walkathon is to raise funds for Myanmar bursaries. Our target is HK\$700,000, of which all will be put forward as bursaries to

support Myanmar students, an action sending our blessing to Myanmar churches and seminaries. The event raised a total of HK\$834,660. By the grace of our Lord, may it be a blessing to Myanmar.

- ◆ We celebrated the 109th Anniversary of the seminary on 25 November 2022(Fri), filled with joy! Thanks God's grace to us!

### Upcoming events:

- ◆ Seminar on Commitment 2023 will be held on 18-19 Feb, 2023. Please pray for the preparation and the participants.
- ◆ The Rev. Daniel Wong Lectures on Pastoralia will be held on 13 March 2023 (Monday).



## Snapshot of LTS



New Students  
dedication Service



A Walk to Needle Hill



Mid-Autumn Celebration



Students and Teachers fellowship



All Saints Eucharist



Big Meal



109th Anniversary and Walkathon  
Thanksgiving Service

