

## **The Future of the Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary**

### **Kobe Ruteru Shingakko no shoorai ni tsuite**

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#### **Abstract**

Invited presentation at the 60 years anniversary of Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary, Japan.

We want to congratulate KLTS with the 60 years Anniversary. In the last 60 years so many dedicated pastors and Christian workers have graduated from KLTS. In 1984 the Seminary was accredited M.Div degree by Asia Theological Association. That is the proof of excellent education. This is one true mark of the KLTS. The other is the faithfulness to the foundation of the Seminary: Faithful to the Bible, confession, and history of the Seminary. On this solid foundation the Seminary must continue in the future (The House built on the rock). In 1973 NMS joined the Seminary and then four organizations joined the Seminary and the Board (NLM, WJELC, Kinki and NMS). Now this has changed.

In addition to this solid foundation the school must clarify the Goal for the future, the purpose and mission of the school, and a motto.

**Goal:** The Seminary must be used for the furtherance of Gods Kingdom, in Japan and in the world. This is so also from the beginning. This means to educate and foster Japanese pastors, Church leaders and missionaries. The church in Japan needs many dedicated witnesses. Besides a solid biblical and theological basis, the workers also needs tools and help for their ministry. The Seminary must continually serve the

churches and the students. As the society changes, the Seminary also needs to change in order that the students and the churches can reach out to the people in Japan, we need to remember especially the young generation. This also means a global and glocal (Edinburgh 2010) awareness and cooperation. The goal must be to equip people/students for the proclamation of the Gospel and the building-up of the People of God/the Church.

In the 50 years Anniversary Dr. Hashimoto reaffirm **the motto** (from the 40 years Anniversary: «Standing firmly on the Word of God, Being Sustained by the Grace of God and Living out the Faith.» The goal must be twofold: Giving the students a firm standing, and giving them practical knowledge and understanding of the practical skills for the pastoral work. The motto was also expressed by Rev Tsukuda as: «A Seminary Serving the Lord and His Church.»

What themes are important for **the Future of the Seminary**?

1. **To foster and educate pastors**, workers and missionaries for the years to come (as mentioned before) Both the theology and the «Living out the faith»
2. **Global or Glocal theology**. This means a mission perspective, but also Cooperation both in Japan and in the World, especially Asia. This is a need for the Church and for the Seminary. In a small Institution cooperation and partnership is necessary.
3. To find topics and **curriculum** that consider the cultural changes and concerns of the youth, the children and elderly people., but also families.
4. **Soul and Body**: Deaconry can be strengthened both in the Seminary and in the churches. KLTS and some churches has already started this, but it can be strengthened. The churches need to consider how this can be expressed in their own church and neighborhood.

5. **Climate:** cf. Cape Town Statement. The Bible also give us a command (Gen 1:28): The Cultural command: *Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.*» This is a theme in society and the churches today: To keep the world a good place to live also in the future generations.
6. **Cooperation:** We have mentioned cooperation on a wider scale – the world. But cooperation is also needed on the local level. We can mention the cooperation of KLTS and the local churches. What do the churches need in their day to day work? Mostly we will focus on the evangelical churches (cf. Lausanne). But we also must remember Joh 17:20–21: *I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* In Aotani, Kobe, we might consider the good cooperation between KLTS, KLBI, KMRC and Media work. Then they together could offer courses in Data, Internet, Home Pages etc. Could we establish a Center that asks: How to inspire the churches?!
7. **Practical themes** like how the churches should handle and have good routines for offerings, prayer, practical evangelism: How to reach our neighbor, how to reach youth of our times etc. How to create a more loving and caring community in the churches... The Seminary needs to listen to the needs of the churches. When KLTS arrange different courses and themes, discussion and listening should be encouraged. «Den vet hvor skoen trykker som har den på» – The person who wear the shoe, know where it hurts. What help need the workers and pastors receive?

The KLTS is an important institution in Kobe, Japan and on the Global scene. New possibilities should be considered to be implemented in the next 10 years. As Rev Tsukuba says: The Seminary has been privileged to play an important role in the Christendom of Japan. Now (after 60 years) it is the time to formulate a new dream/vision and goal for the future, both academically and practically.

We may quote Rev Mikajimi of Kinki Lutheran Church: »may KLTS be used as a fountain from which God's blessing flows to people in Japan and elsewhere in the world.

The catchword in the 500 years anniversary of Luther's statement would be: seisho nomi, shinkoo nomi, megumi nomi. The Bible, the Faith and the Grace alone.