



亞洲路德宗神學院
ASIA LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Stakeholder Survey Findings

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Section One: The Institution

Why does Asia Lutheran Seminary exist? Is it doing that well? This section draws on responses to four foundational questions: how stakeholders understand ALS's mission, what they believe graduates are trained to do, what they see as the seminary's core strengths, and what they identify as its primary challenges.

MISSION: A CLEAR AND SHARED IDENTITY

Perhaps the most notable finding from this section is how consistently respondents across all roles and regions articulated a shared understanding of what ALS exists to do. Whether a student, a missionary, or a partner organization, the core answer was remarkably unified: ALS exists to equip confessional Lutheran leaders as pastors, evangelists, church planters, and lay leaders to serve across Asia. Respondents described this in a variety of ways, but the theological and missional DNA was consistent.

“ALS's mission is to equip and prepare Christians to serve faithfully as leaders of Confessional Lutheran communities throughout Asia.” — Administrator

“Grace-centered Lutheran theological education in Asia.” — Professor

“Christ-centered; mission as our calling.” — Student

“Rooted in the Bible and centered on the pure gospel, we provide theological education to equip more church workers and support gospel ministries.” — Student

ALS's former mission statement, “Christ-centered, mission-driven,” appeared verbatim in several responses, suggesting it has taken root in the institutional vocabulary. Others reached for Scripture: “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4), and “Make disciples of all nations.” What stands out is not only the content of the mission but its apparent breadth of reception: students, alumni, and external partners see the mission similarly to how faculty and administration describe it. That kind of alignment is worth noting and praising God for.

GRADUATE PREPARATION: A LADDER OF MINISTRY ROLES

Respondents were clear that ALS graduates are being prepared not only for parish ministry but for a nested range of roles from house church leaders to evangelists to ordained pastors to seminary faculty. This ladder vision of ministry was named explicitly by several professors and missionaries and was reflected in how students and graduates described their own formation.

“Leaders are needed at various levels: engaged lay leaders, evangelists, house church leaders, pastors of congregations, church body leaders, and seminary faculty.” — Professor

“We are looking for a lot of house church leaders. And then later, from that, a few qualified individuals to become pastors.” — Missionary

“ALS trains many students serving in all kinds of vocations around the world, not limited to public ministry.” — Graduate

Church and denominational stakeholders consistently emphasized that they hope graduates will combine doctrinal integrity with practical pastoral competence: the ability to preach faithfully, shepherd effectively, discern truth from error, and multiply leaders. The language of “character”

surfaced more than once. One graduate noted it is “paramount and often overlooked,” and the leaders of an affiliated church body called for graduates who are “not only academically competent” but also formed in spiritual maturity and servant leadership.

STRENGTHS: QUALITY AND COMMITMENT

When asked about ALS's core strengths, respondents converged around several consistent themes with notable enthusiasm. The quality and commitment of the faculty were cited more frequently than any other single factor. Respondents across all roles described the faculty as doctrinally grounded, academically qualified, and genuinely pastoral in their teaching.

“Exceptional faculty and staff, well-designed and flexible programs of study for all levels of leadership.” — Supporter

“Professors are equipped with pure gospel and systematic theological knowledge.” — Staff

“Professors not only possess profound theological knowledge but also demonstrate a rich spiritual life.” — Student

Hebrew and Greek Biblical language instruction was highlighted as a distinctive and valued feature, particularly by students and graduates. Confessional doctrinal clarity was also named repeatedly as a strength. In a region where reformed, charismatic, and other theological streams are dominant, the clarity of ALS's Lutheran identity was seen as an asset. The flexibility and accessibility of online delivery, multilingual offerings, and ALS's nested curriculum structure were also cited as significant strengths, particularly for students in restricted or geographically dispersed contexts.

“Its ability to offer high-quality education through digital platforms allows busy church leaders and students from remote areas to receive elite training.” — Student

“Online accessibility, nested program.” — Missionary

CHALLENGES: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, PRESSURE, AND PRACTICALITY

The challenges surfaced in this section were candid and recurring. Student recruitment was the most commonly named obstacle, with many respondents describing a thin pipeline of committed students — particularly those willing to enroll in longer or more demanding programs. This was attributed to several factors: a general cultural decline in interest in theology, competition from other seminaries, the perceived gap between academic training and practical ministry, and, in some regions, government restrictions. Respondents from one sensitive area noted specific and significant obstacles: constraints on online communication, blocked websites, and the inability to meet in person. These factors affect both the reach of the institution and the experience of students.

“The main challenge is that most people don't like studying theology and think it's boring.” — Student

“In some regions, policy restrictions prevent adequate promotion and teaching activities.” — Graduate

“[local restrictions] affect student ministry significantly — courses cannot be discussed on [social media platforms], the website is blocked.... This affects the student experience and the reach of the programs.” — Staff

Several respondents also raised the challenge of localization: the perception that ALS's curriculum reflects a Western, American perspective, and the need for it to be more contextually

attuned to the diverse Asian settings it serves. A handful of voices raised questions about practical theology. They called for more coursework that prepares graduates to pastor across different age groups, addresses contemporary social and pastoral challenges, and leads in the specific cultural contexts where they minister.

“There is quite a lack of practical theology for addressing the current situation of churches in Hong Kong.” — Student

“Application. The professors teach us sound doctrines, but may not be able to respond to our cultural issues, since some are from the US.” — Graduate

“Unclear positioning — are we serving Hong Kong, churches in [the region], or churches elsewhere in Asia?” — Pastor

“Localization, which means having more local leaders in the decision process.” — Graduate

SECTION ONE SUMMARY

Survey results demonstrate a widely shared understanding of Asia Lutheran Seminary’s mission: to equip confessional Lutheran leaders for service across Asia, grounded in Scripture and the pure gospel. Stakeholders see ALS preparing graduates for a “ladder” of ministry roles. They value both doctrinal integrity and pastoral character and praise the quality and commitment of the faculty, biblical language training, clear Lutheran identity, and the flexibility of online, nested programs. Key challenges include recruiting and retaining committed students, government restrictions, limited contextualization and practical theology, and questions about regional focus and the role of local leadership in decision-making.

Section Two: The Context

This section asked stakeholders a single but wide-open question: In your context, what are the most important social, political, and religious needs and challenges that ALS should prepare its graduates to face? Respondents come from diverse settings—increasing social and political pressure, government scrutiny, minority Christian communities, diaspora contexts, and more. As a result, the answers present a large variety of backgrounds and contexts, rich in texture. Taken together, they paint a picture of a complex, often difficult landscape, and reveal both the weight of the responsibility ALS carries and the contextual intelligence that must underpin its training. Four themes emerged:

THEME 1: MINORITY FAITH IN HOSTILE AND COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

Across nearly every regional context represented in the survey, one reality recurs: Christians are a minority, and in many cases, a persecuted or politically vulnerable one. Respondents from South Asia described social ostracism, caste-based pressure, and resistance from majority religious groups. Those from one sensitive region described the near impossibility of open religious activity and the need to navigate carefully to continue any kind of ministry. Those from Southeast Asia noted the complexity of living as a confessional Lutheran community in a majority Muslim or Hindu society.

“In our country, Christianity is a minority religion. Graduates face many challenges from radical Hindu groups. They need to be trained in sound doctrine and how to stand firm.”

— Church Leader, South Asia

“Fostering a multiplicative mindset in cultures where individuals and churches face persecution for their faith.” — Missionary

“Churches face severe restrictions and cannot gather in person. Online meetings are our only option.” — Student

Respondents consistently emphasized that this context demands more than theological knowledge, but formation in courage and spiritual resilience. Students need to gain the ability to navigate government systems, register appropriately, and continue ministry without unnecessarily provoking closure. The task of equipping graduates to minister faithfully under pressure without either capitulating to cultural compromise or becoming unnecessarily confrontational emerged as one of the defining contextual needs.

THEME 2: CULTURAL CONTEXTUALISATION: THE CHALLENGE OF BEING LUTHERAN IN ASIA

Several respondents raised the practical and theological question of how to be authentically confessional and genuinely contextual at the same time. The concern was not that Lutheran doctrine should be adjusted, but that its application and communication need to be deeply embedded in the cultural realities of each context ALS serves. Respondents noted that in many Asian settings, communal and relational dynamics, respect for elders, and the role of community in spiritual formation all shape how ministry must be done.

“Asian countries are far more complicated than Wisconsin, and it requires missionaries to truly understand each culture to communicate the gospel effectively.” — Graduate

“The greatest challenge is maintaining a clear Lutheran identity without becoming isolationist.” — Student

“The Lutheran theology is often questioned, for example, on women’s ministry. Graduates need to be equipped to engage those questions.” — Staff

“Reach out to a primarily non-Christian community; respond to the overwhelming reformed and other backgrounds that shape theology.” — Professor

“In Japan: boldness to share Christ and reaching workaholics. In Indonesia: wisdom to evangelize in a majority Muslim nation.” — Missionary

Several respondents from East Asia specifically asked for a curriculum that helps graduates engage Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, folk religion, and other prevalent belief systems so that they might learn how to communicate Lutheran doctrine more effectively. One student suggested adding a course introducing major world religions as a practical gap in the current offering.

THEME 3: THE CALL FOR PRACTICAL AND APPLIED TRAINING

A thread running through almost every regional response was a desire for more practical, applied ministry training. Respondents repeatedly asked that theological education be tethered to the realities of congregational life: how to pastor families, engage youth, address mental health and emotional suffering, respond to political pressure, conduct funerals and weddings, and lead worship in contextually resonant ways. This was not a rejection of theological rigor, but a call for integration.

*“Being in Hong Kong, I naturally hope the seminary will offer more practical theology courses, such as how to pastor children, youth, working adults, and women’s ministry.”
— Pastor*

“I hope the college can provide more online resources and offer courses closely tied to the practical lives of our congregants.” — Student

“Equip students to face social issues with God’s perspective and compassion.” — Student

One administrator noted that the greatest social and religious need graduates should be prepared for is the challenge facing families and marriages — a context in which the church must speak directly through the gospel. Another respondent described the need to help believers engage the workplace, not just the sanctuary. The priesthood of all believers and the Lutheran theology of vocation were named by multiple respondents as underutilized theological resources for equipping graduates to speak into their contexts with a Lutheran voice. As one missionary put it, “Equip them with God’s Word—that will prepare them best.”

THEME 4: POLITICAL PRESSURE AND THE TWO KINGDOMS

The question of how to navigate the relationship between church and state and how to remain apolitical as a seminary while serving students in highly political environments surfaced across multiple responses. Respondents generally agreed that ALS should not become a political institution, but many called for the curriculum to give graduates better tools for thinking clearly about two-kingdoms theology and its application to their situations.

“Correctly understand the church-state relationship and grasp the mission to continue proclaiming the gospel and shepherding believers.” — Graduate

“Most churches in Hong Kong seldom address two-kingdoms theology, yet are involved in social and political issues. Good and systematic training is important.” — Graduate, Hong Kong

“Do not be influenced by politics; continue to hold to the truth.” — Student, Hong Kong

THEME 5: MENTORING, SPIRITUAL FORMATION, AND PASTORAL COMMUNITY

Beyond curriculum and programming, respondents emphasized that relationality and simply being together are essential to ALS’s effectiveness. They also underscored the need for intentional pastoral support, especially for students who lack strong backing from their local churches. Together, these voices point to a context in which relational presence, shared worship and prayer, and individualized care must remain core dimension of ALS’s mission and impact.

“Beyond course teaching, build relationships that walk with students — prayer meetings, devotions, counseling, and fellowships.” — Staff, Hong Kong

“I appreciate ALS’s efforts to disciple and mentor the future leaders. I see the Devil attack them on a personal level in their lives and ministries.” — Partner Organization

“Provide more opportunities for students to interact and share how their churches handle issues. Offer specific guidance to students who need it, including pastoral support for those lacking local church backing.” — Staff

SECTION TWO SUMMARY

Stakeholders describe a ministry environment marked by minority and often persecuted Christian communities, complex cultural and religious pluralism, and growing political pressure. They call for ALS to equip graduates to live and serve as confessional Lutherans in hostile or sensitive settings; to communicate Lutheran theology in ways that engage Asian cultures, major world religions, and local spiritual practices; to integrate rigorous doctrine with practical, applied ministry skills; and to think and teach clearly about church–state relations in light of Lutheran two-kingdoms theology. Further, ALS will do well to continue and strengthen mentoring, spiritual formation, and pastoral community so that graduates are resilient, wise, and well-supported in their callings.

Section Three: The Impact

This section asked four questions about the fruits of ALS's work: what impact graduates are making in the church, what impact they are making in broader society, how the institution's programs have contributed to those impacts, and what recommendations stakeholders have for increasing effectiveness. What emerges is a picture of real and meaningful impact in the church — particularly in preaching, teaching, and pastoral care — alongside honest acknowledgment that the seminary's societal reach is harder to see, and that there is significant room to deepen the connection between classroom formation and on-the-ground ministry.

CHURCH IMPACT: FAITHFUL SERVANT LEADERS

The most consistent and confident affirmations of ALS's impact came in the area of church ministry. Respondents from many different contexts described ALS graduates as doctrinally grounded, committed, and actively serving in all regions across Asia. Pastors noted that graduates can preach with doctrinal integrity, distinguish Law from Gospel, and lead congregations with a clear confessional identity in contexts where other theological influences are dominant.

“ALS graduates have helped our church by providing several pastoral and doctrinal training sessions.” — Pastor

“I have seen ALS graduates competently leading worship and prayer, preaching, writing devotions, administering Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, leading Vacation Bible School programs, overseeing Sunday school, and organizing volunteers.” — Professor

“Seminary graduates have a proper grasp of theology and the necessary pastoral skills, enabling them to step into church ministry immediately.” — Graduate

“The number of baptisms in the last two years is proof that our graduates are making an impact in the church and the world.” —Professor Emeritus

Several respondents highlighted the multiplying nature of the impact: ALS graduates who teach others, mentor leaders, and build up future servants of the church. Some noted that graduates from the ALS faculty itself are a visible fruit of the institution's work. There were also honest counterpoints, particularly from respondents in more restricted regions who noted that they have not yet seen many graduates or have not been in a position to observe the impact directly.

SOCIETAL IMPACT: QUIET WITNESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

When asked about broader societal impact, responses were more varied and more cautious. Many respondents affirmed that graduates are making an impact but described it as largely indirect — flowing through the church rather than through explicit social programs or institutional engagement. Several noted visible examples: SALEM churches in Hong Kong responding to a residential fire in Tai Po, study centers for children in the community, outreach and evangelism efforts, and community care in places across Asia.

“In the recent Tai Po Wang Fuk incident, we saw coworkers at Grace Church caring for affected residents with compassion and offering prompt help.” — Student

“ALS graduates bring the good news that we have eternal hope in Christ, which gives those who hear and believe confidence as they face challenges in this life.” — Professor

“Diaspora ALS graduates to the USA are connecting with US congregations and becoming actively involved in ministry.” — Partner Organization

Several respondents were candid that the societal impact is difficult to measure or observe, particularly from a distance. In fact, in some restricted regions, graduates cannot act openly. One administrator acknowledged bluntly: “This aspect is relatively weak.” Others offered a theological perspective: that the impact of the Word proclaimed and faith strengthened is real and eternal, even when it cannot be counted or observed. As one student put it, “Social influence cannot be quantified by humans — only God knows.”

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: DOCTRINAL CLARITY AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

When asked what specifically about the institution and its programs has helped graduates make an impact, respondents pointed to several consistent factors. Doctrinal clarity and biblical grounding were most commonly named. Students and graduates confirmed the sense that ALS gives students a sure foundation from which to serve. The nested curriculum model, which invites students into ministry from the beginning of their program, was also highlighted as effective. Close mentoring relationships and the pastoral heart of the faculty were named repeatedly as formative influences.

“A nested program that encourages students to be in ministry from the beginning of their program.” — Professor

“ALS makes a difference because it clearly teaches God’s Word and keeps Jesus at the center.” — Student

“Teachers who have been impacted by the gospel; mentoring that helps grads make the most of their opportunities; prayer that supports the work.” — Former Professor

RECOMMENDATIONS: MENTORING, FIELD FORMATION, PRACTICAL COURSES, AND GRADUATE CONNECTIONS

Recommendations from respondents clustered around four practical themes. First, many called for stronger mentorship and field-based formation — local mentors, vicariates, internships, and structured pastoral placements to bridge the gap between classroom learning and on-the-ground ministry.

“Intentional vicar and mentoring working alongside a pastor brings training that can only come on the ground in ministry.” — Administrator

“One-on-one mentoring by experienced teachers or pastors should also be beneficial.” — Student

“I hope the seminary can provide internship opportunities, allowing students to experience pastoral ministry in churches across different regions.” — Student

Second, respondents suggested more practical ministry courses: counseling, community engagement, family ministry, evangelism strategy, and even bi-vocational skills such as social work or digital communication.

“Focus more on building students’ character rather than just doctrine; offer courses that help students understand their own cultural context.” — Graduate

“Courses specifically designed for church ministry, such as DCL, can help graduates gain more practical experience” — Student

“Introduce bi-vocational modules. Graduates should be equipped with a secular skill — social work, basic accounting, digital marketing — alongside their theological degree.” — Pastor, Indonesia

“Allowing students to experience pastoral ministry in churches across different regions.” — Student

Third, several advocated for stronger community among students — peer cohorts, graduate networks, and regular gatherings that build accountability and belonging.

“Opportunities for students to interact with one another increases the feeling that ALS is their school. This growth of school culture strongly impacts their sense of buy-in.” — Professor

“Establish graduate peer-walking groups and plan projects linking church and community.” — Staff

“Gathering or visiting to enhance communication and discuss practical issues in ministry.” — Graduate

Fourth, a number of respondents called for closer collaboration between ALS and the churches its graduates serve — joint projects, consultative relationships, and a culture of ongoing learning after graduation. One graduate called for “having more professors who are involved in our churches, our life, and our community.”

SECTION THREE SUMMARY

ALS is bearing meaningful fruit in the church through doctrinally grounded, servant-hearted graduates who preach and teach faithfully, administer the sacraments, and step into ministry with confidence, often multiplying their impact by mentoring and training others. This is evident, even as broader societal influence remains more modest, indirect, and difficult to measure, especially in restricted contexts. Stakeholders attributed this impact to clear confessional teaching, a strong biblical foundation, the nested curriculum that places students in ministry early, and close mentoring by pastorally minded faculty, while recommending strengthened field-based formation, additional practical ministry courses, deeper community among students and graduates, and closer collaboration between ALS and the churches it serves to keep classroom formation tightly connected to real-world ministry.

Section Four: Sustainability and Support

This section focused on the long-term health of ALS as an institution: how it recruits students, how it builds commitment, whether stakeholders believe it can sustain its work into the future, and how they might contribute. The responses reveal both genuine confidence and important tensions. There is strong faith that the work of ALS matters and that God will sustain it. There is also honest recognition that the institution faces structural and financial vulnerabilities that require intentional action.

RECRUITMENT: WORD OF MOUTH REMAINS CENTRAL

Across nearly every region and context represented in the survey, recruitment into ALS programs happens primarily through relational networks: pastors recommending to their congregations, current students sharing with friends, and graduates inviting others into the journey they themselves have found meaningful. Formal promotion through posters, worship announcements, and social media was named as a complement to this, but rarely as the primary driver of actual enrollment.

“Students who study steadily with ALS usually come from churches that embrace Lutheran teaching. So the key to a stable student pipeline is the growth of local churches.” — Staff

“Through pastors and current seminarians. Where restricted, the safest approach is through the seminary’s own network.” — Graduate

“A teacher or staff member introduces the college’s courses to the leading brother of the church, enabling them to recommend more suitable courses. The leading brother then returns to the church to introduce these courses.” — Student

“Through experience sharing of church leaders and existing students. The current Instagram and Facebook posts are working well.” — Staff

Several respondents suggested areas where recruitment could be strengthened: free taster courses or workshops to lower the entry threshold. A stronger social media presence was suggested, especially for younger audiences, with respondents suggesting YouTube content and student testimony videos. One professor proposed building connections with WELS-affiliated schools in the United States to identify students who return to Asia after their studies. Several noted that recruitment in many areas is severely constrained by political restrictions and can only realistically happen through trusted personal relationships.

TUITION AND STUDENT BUY-IN: BROAD AGREEMENT WITH NUANCE

ALS's conviction that charging tuition, even just modest tuition, helps students take their training more seriously found wide support among respondents. The “skin in the game” logic resonated across roles and regions. Missionaries, professors, administrators, and students alike affirmed the principle, with many expressing it in theological terms: where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“A reasonable tuition fee fosters a sense of stewardship and professionalism.” — Student

“Students are more motivated when they personally have some skin in the game financially.” — Missionary

“ALS tuition is very low and greatly supports those employed or with family burdens.” — Student

At the same time, several respondents raised important nuances. Some noted that church workers are often paid very little or nothing at all, and that even modest tuition creates real pressure. Others suggested that beyond tuition, what truly builds engagement is relational investment: cohort community, accessible classroom technology, interactive teaching, mentoring relationships, and a sense of belonging to something larger. One professor proposed that gifted students be invited to serve as teaching assistants or teach certificate-level courses, creating mutual ownership of the institution's mission.

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY: CONFIDENT BUT NOT COMPLACENT

The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed confidence that ALS can sustain effective ministry in the years ahead. Many grounded this confidence theologically in God's faithfulness and the enduring need for sound theological training across Asia. Others pointed to concrete factors: the commitment of WELS, the growing network of alumni, the strength of the faculty, and the continued demand for trained leaders across Asian churches.

“ALS has its own mission, and God will lead its future. Its doctrinal and theological education features are irreplaceable in the region.” — Graduate

“Yes, because there is an increasing hunger for sound doctrine in a world of theological confusion.” — Student

“ALS has transitioned from a static institution to a dynamic network — it is not just a building in Hong Kong; it is a curriculum and a community spread across the continent.” — Pastor

Alongside this confidence, several respondents named genuine concerns. Dependence on WELS funding was raised as a structural vulnerability, with the recognition that if support were reduced or withdrawn, it is unclear how the institution would continue. One administrator cautioned against over-centralization, arguing that a regionally distributed model with locally paid staff is more sustainable long-term than a centralized structure with high overhead. A few respondents flagged the low number of full-time seminarians and the challenge of the seminary serving such a geographically and linguistically diverse area from two primary locations. One voice called for the seminary to develop “robust mission advancement efforts” and independent fundraising capacity to reduce vulnerability to any single funding source.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES: A WILLING AND ENGAGED NETWORK

When asked how they might support ALS more effectively, respondents offered a wide range of responses that together reflect a genuinely engaged and committed stakeholder community. Prayer was the most frequently mentioned form of support. A willingness to personally recommend ALS to potential students and share information in their churches and networks was also widely named. Financial giving was mentioned by several respondents and churches, including some who noted they are already supporting ALS financially. Others offered to volunteer as instructors, mentors, or student ambassadors.

“Become a ministry partner of the seminary, sending future church workers for theological training. Our church is willing to donate and is already doing so.” — Graduate

“Add ALS to the institutions I support financially. Pray more frequently for the ministry of ALS.” — Missionary

“Recruit volunteers to form prayer groups dedicated to the college’s development.” — Student

Several respondents suggested structural improvements that would make giving easier — including making financial donations more accessible both within and outside the region, and ensuring donated funds are used transparently and directly for the institution’s work. One respondent proposed a creative “1,000 People, [each give] 1,000” (in local currency) grassroots fundraising initiative to build broad community ownership of the institution.

SECTION FOUR SUMMARY

Respondents demonstrate strong confidence in ALS’s God-given mission, while demonstrating honest awareness of structural and financial vulnerabilities. Recruitment remains primarily relational and church-based, with social media and formal promotion playing secondary roles, especially given constraints in sensitive areas. Stakeholders generally affirm modest tuition to build student commitment but stress that relational investment, community, and shared responsibility matter just as much. While trusting God’s provision and valuing ALS’s unique regional role, respondents name dependence on WELS funding and centralized structures as key risks. Stakeholders express readiness to support ALS through prayer, recruitment, financial gifts, and volunteer service, provided that giving channels are accessible, transparent, and diversified.

Section Five: Additional Feedback

The final section of the survey invited respondents to share any additional thoughts or feedback they wished to offer as ALS undertakes this self-evaluation. Not all respondents completed this optional section, but those who did offered a range of reflections — affirmations, cautions, creative suggestions, and expressions of gratitude. Their comments, taken together, provide a fitting closing portrait of how stakeholders see ALS and what they hope for it.

GRATITUDE AND CONFIDENCE

A significant number of respondents used this space to express genuine appreciation for ALS and what it represents. Several noted that the invitation to give input into the self-evaluation process itself felt meaningful. They saw it as a sign that the institution is listening and taking its stakeholders seriously. The tone across these responses was one of deep goodwill and investment in the seminary's future.

“Thank you for the opportunity to give input into the reaccreditation process.” —
Missionary

“May God continue to bless ALS.” — Supporter

“Keep asking how we can better change to become what best serves an ever-evolving world in desperate need with the never-changing, life-giving truth of Christ crucified.” —
Administrator

STRATEGIC SCOPE AND REGIONAL FOCUS

Several respondents offered strategic observations about ALS's scope and identity. A recurring theme was the tension between serving a broad and diverse pan-Asian mandate and doing any one thing particularly well. One pastor in Hong Kong suggested that ALS designate distinct teams or streams for Hong Kong and the broader Asian regions, each focused on developing theological training suited to that context. An administrator noted that ALS must hold two things together: its identity as a key component of WELS World Mission strategy, and its standing as an independent institution in its own right with the capacity to grow and adapt.

“The seminary's service scope is too broad; suggest separate focuses for... Asian regions.” — Pastor

“It is important that we continue to support world mission work. At the same time, ALS also needs to see itself as an independent institution to provide the bandwidth to remain strong into the future.” — Administrator

PRACTICAL AND LOGISTICAL OBSERVATIONS

A handful of respondents offered practical suggestions about how ALS operates day to day. One student asked for hybrid options, such as the ability to earn attendance credit through recorded class viewing rather than synchronous presence, to accommodate working adults. Another asked for the thesis requirements to be benchmarked against comparable seminaries. One supporter commented that ALS's physical spaces could benefit from renovation and tidying up to meet current standards. One professor raised a thoughtful question about social media: whether an

active presence is genuinely strategic or simply following a trend, while also acknowledging that it provides legitimacy for those exploring enrollment.

A FINAL NOTE: THE DEPTH OF COMMITMENT

What is perhaps most striking about the additional feedback section — and about the survey as a whole — is the depth of investment respondents brought to it. People took time to write carefully, to offer nuanced observations, and to express both honest concern and genuine hope. The voices in this survey span continents, languages, roles, and life stages. But across that diversity, there is a shared conviction: that the work of training faithful leaders to carry the gospel across Asia matters. ALS, with its unique position, its committed faculty, and its 20+ years of experience, is worth believing in and working hard for.

“I am particularly grateful for how ALS empowers men and women to study deeply. I would encourage the seminary to continue looking for ways to support bi-vocational students who are balancing family, work, and ministry.” — Pastor

“ALS is doing a great job.” — Graduate