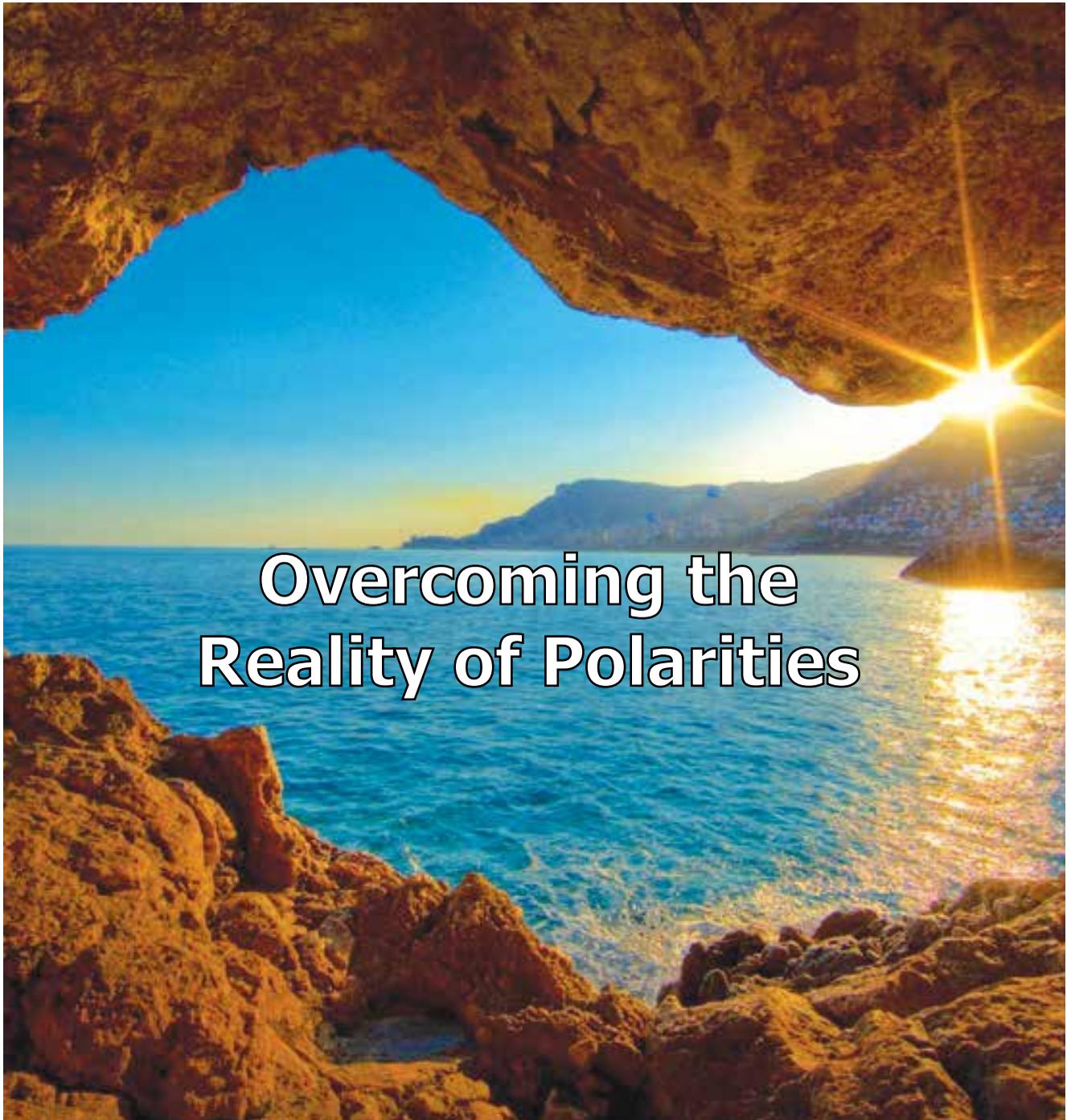


# PELITA METHODIST

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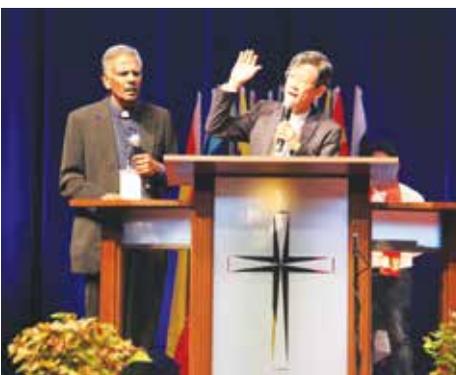
PP 3233/01/2013 (031518)



## Overcoming the Reality of Polarities

# Moment

MDOP 2017 was held at Calvary Convention Centre on Malaysia Day, September 16, 2017



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# PRAYER UNITED

## **National and State Elections**

Righteous Men and Women to be Nominated in Upcoming National (GE14) and State Elections

Pray for politicians of integrity and good character, with a calling to serve the people, to be nominated as candidates for the upcoming GE14 national and state elections. Pray for civility, respect and peace in the run up to elections. *"The thoughts of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are deceitful."* - Proverbs 12:5 ESV

## **Church Unity and Leadership**

Authentic Christian Love For One Another

Pray for national church leaders to be filled with grace, wisdom, courage and spiritual authority to serve God in the church in the nation at such a time as this. *"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"* - Psalm 133:1 ESV

## **Parliament Session Begins**

Third Meeting 23 October - 30 November 2017

Pray for the upcoming third meeting of the 2017 Parliamentary session which will begin on 23 October and will be for 25 days. Pray for parliamentary members to do their work of policy making diligently, especially in the light of RUU355 being pushed back into the agenda.

## **Tabling of Budget 2018**

Tabling of The Supply Bill (Budget) 2018 by The Minister of Finance on 27 October 2017 at 4 pm

Pray for wisdom among the policy makers and government leaders in the planning of the nation's Budget 2018 in the last lap to the tabling on 27 October. Pray for sustainable policies and wise use of resources and pray against the temptation of giving election goodies.

## **Raising of Youth Watchmen**

PU Youth Conference in Kuching from Nov 9-11, 2017

Pray for the raising up of youth watchmen for the nations, preparing ahead for the PU Youth Conference in November 9-11, 2017.

## **Safety of Missing Pastors**

Missing Pastors and Activist to be Found Safe

Pray for Pastor Raymond Koh, Joshua Hilmy and wife, Ruth, and also Perlis Hope activist, Amri Che Mat, to be found safe. Pray for their captors to be convicted to release them back to their families. Pray for police to solve the crime as soon as possible.

Excerpt from PU Prayer Guide  
September/October 2017

# Overcoming the Reality of Polarities

**W**e live in a world of reality that encompasses the polarities and dualities of life that can often render us confused and troubled.

In the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens opened his famous book *A Tale of Two Cities* with these renowned words: *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way. . . .”*

Today, we still experience these polarities and dualities in life that seem irreconcilable. They trouble and challenge our daily living, witness and ministry as disciples of Jesus Christ, both individually and communally as His Church in Malaysia. Some “dualities” are made more intolerable when they smack of outright hypocrisy such as when there is the declaration of freedom of religion, yet there are overt restrictions imposed, when there is the pronouncement of moderation yet elements of excess practices that threaten the fabric of our multi ethnic and multi-religious society are permitted.

We live in an inescapable world of polarities and dualities – the co-existence of good news and bad news, if there is hopelessness there is also hope, if there is disappointment there is also fulfilment, if there is pain there is also joy, if there is death, there is also birth. The reality of these polarities and dualities are also reflected from another perspective in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 - *For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. <sup>2</sup>A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. <sup>3</sup>A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. <sup>4</sup>A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.*

The New Testament teaching prepares us for living in this reality of polarities and dualities. The Lord Jesus, John and Paul were teaching in line with what ancient Jews believed: that world history was divided into two “ages” or epochs [NT Wright: *The Letters of John*]. The “**PRESENT AGE**” is full of misery and suffering, injustice and oppression especially for the people of God. Then there is the “**AGE TO COME**” – the time when GOD would sort it all out, put everything right, and would in particular rescue His people from the evil they had experienced and are experiencing. This “age to come” has already broken into our present reality even as the Kingdom of God is in the here and now, abundant life is here already, not only in a distant “hereafter” life in

heaven, though not consummated till the second coming of Jesus Christ. Until then, the Church will face the polarities and dualities of life that can be faith-shaking at times.

Hence the early Church was born at a time of these polarities and dualities. They were a “small church facing huge problems” both inside [eg false teachers deceiving true believers with heresies, unspiritual leaders in a spiritual community etc] and outside [persecution, prosecution, marginalization etc]. These early believers made significant impact in the “present age” of suffering and oppression, never being “so heavenly minded but of no earthly good” – because they never lost the “big picture” of living ultimately for the “age to come”. We must also learn to hold these polarities and dualities in healthy, faith-ful and hopeful tension.

An individual who overcame the polarities and dualities that almost tore him apart was Joseph in the Old Testament. He held the “visible” world of his suffering and the “invisible” hand and plan of the Sovereign God, Maker of heaven and earth in healthy, faith-ful and hopeful tension. He had learnt to develop a “secret and sacred history” of relationship with Almighty God so that he could affirm that God works mysteriously in ways that are mostly hidden to us on earth. Joseph knew he could trust God Who leads through darkness and obscurity, when circumstances went from bad to worse because He is the God of goodness, love and power. He could rest in God’s steadfast love that never ceases and His sovereign grip of history – even though he cannot see the good that God was doing.

Just like Joseph, even as we continue to wrestle with what we “cannot see” from the divine hand, we shall continue to fulfil our call to be “salt and light” in the world that we “can see.” Joseph was a beacon of blessing wherever he was placed and “stationed” because God never left him but “the Lord was with him” [Gen 39:2].

We too must do likewise. At our recent August General Conference Executive Council meeting in Sibu, the following Episcopal sharing arose from the leading of the Lord that came during the worship and devotion of the Council of Presidents that took place a day earlier. As a Methodist Family in Malaysia, we are called to take note of the following, especially for our East Malaysian Annual Conferences – in the light of the coming 14<sup>th</sup> General Election:

**#1. “Do NOT sell your BIRTHRIGHT for short term gain but suffer long term loss.”**

We are to especially watch out for short-term promises and proffered gratification especially vote buying and to reject

and denounce such corrupt practices from any party.

**#2. “TODAY is a KAIROS moment from our Sovereign God for our orang asal, Sarawak Iban Annual Conference, Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference and Sabah Provisional Annual Conference to strategically impact our community, state and COUNTRY”**

The national political situation presently gives greater opportunity and leverage to those in East Malaysia to influence and bless our national life with fresh breakthroughs and even greater good to God’s glory.

**#3. “The Church is PRO-ISSUE of GOOD GOVERNANCE; we are NOT into partisan politics”.**

The Methodist Church is above partisan politics that divide the Church, and we do have a responsibility and duty to seek the total “welfare of the city/land” [Jer 29:7] as God’s people resident in this beloved nation of ours.

Polarities and dualities are “normal” in a fallen world that is being redeemed by the Lord and in people who continue to carry the image of God though this is now marred; we are not surprised to see that humankind is capable of the noblest of deeds such as the sacrificing of one’s life for others, yet also

capable of the vilest and sickest of deeds such as unspeakable torture and murder of little children.

We choose to follow in the footsteps of Joseph in this generation. He knew that in all things God is at work. That “in spite of, through and against all human effort” – the Sovereign God of goodness, love and power Who has all history in His grip – is orchestrating and bringing His purposes to pass. He has not lost the plot!

We stand on the time tested and “unexpired” words of the prophet **Isaiah [43: 1-3]** - “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. <sup>2</sup> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. <sup>3</sup> For I am the LORD your God,..your Savior...”

The people called Methodists – through the Holy Spirit remain Jesus Christ’s “**apostles of hope**” in Malaysia and beyond – no matter the polarities and dualities in our generation and in our land!

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

## Devotion

One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

### The Faithful God

Be still my soul. the Lord is on thy side.  
(Katharina Von Schlegel)

**IN WORD:** Paul’s sermon in Antioch, recorded in Acts 13, was compelling. Many Jews were intrigued by it, and many Gentiles rejoiced over it. It shows God’s work throughout the ages, unifying a strange, varied history under one overarching purpose; salvation through Messiah Jesus.

For us, Paul’s sermon is like an aerial photo taken at thirty thousand feet. It shows the whole landscape, including the glorious peaks of salvation. Even more than that, it demonstrates the abiding faithfulness of God—from the choosing of Abraham to the resurrection of the Savior. Every step of the way, this God has watched over His people, cultivated their loyalties, purged their rebellions and sins, and secured their redemption. God had invested centuries in His plan. He never abandoned it or even diverged from it. He had a remedy for the Fall from day one. And when the Holy Spirit had come, believers knew just how perfect the remedy was.

**IN DEED:** That should be profoundly comforting to those of us who wonder if God is still with us. Not that we doubt His faithfulness in principle, of course. No, our doubts are more subtle. We wonder if He is faithful to us right now, in our current circumstances—in our nation, in our families, in the details of our daily lives. We know He would never abandon His plan for the world, but we suspect He might abandon His plan for us. We appreciate the view from thirty thousand feet, but we really want Him at ground zero in our lives.

God’s story in the Bible is not simply told for the sake of Israel or the church. It is told in order to reveal His character. And one undeniable observation from the story in Scripture is that God is faithful, both in master plans and individual lives. Always has been, always will be. Remember that when you doubt. There has been a remedy from day one, and it is perfect.

*What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us.*

Acts 13:32-33

# Malaysia Day of Prayer 2017

## Calvary Convention Centre

September 16, 2017

### 1. MDOP 2017 was held at Calvary Convention Centre for the third time on Malaysia Day, September 16, 2017.

- a. It was the first time where the Catholics of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur came together in solidarity with CCM and Prayer United as co-organisers to pray for the nation, under the theme, “Seek the Peace of the Land” from Jeremiah chapter 29 verse 7.
- b. Main organisers for the event from the CCM were the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia and the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Bishop Ong Hwai Teik is chairman of the MDOP Organising Committee.
- c. The audited accounts of MDOP 2017 will be presented at the next CCM BOM meeting as the accounts are still being finalised.



### 2. We take this opportunity to give thanks and our deep appreciation to all who helped to make this event happen.

- a. The Methodist Church in Malaysia for helping to provide facilities and financial resources for “up front” usage in organising MDOP 2017. This event could only have been made possible with the help of advanced payments for the event. We thank Bishop Ong and the Methodist Church in Malaysia for the help extended.
- b. Tan Sri Prince Guneratnam and the Calvary Convention Centre for letting us use the place at a special concession priced at 2013 rates.
- c. Archbishops Ng Moon Hing and Julian Leow for coming on board to co-organise this event, together with the many church leaders, priests and pastors who

stepped up to lead intercession sessions. These sessions touched many hearts on the issues facing the nation.

### 3. We are thankful for such a meaningful and wonderful inter-denominational, multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual national prayer gathering, representing diverse expressions and traditions.

- a. MDOP has grown from being just one event in the year, to becoming the culmination of various prayer events in the run up throughout the year under the theme “A Day of Prayer for the Nation”.



- b. This year, MDOP was celebrated widely by churches and pastor fellowships such as those in Teluk Intan, Kuching, Sibul and Bintulu, and as far as Lahad Datu. Praise God for more churches are showing their love for the nation by coming together in unity and prayer.

### 4. As this is the 5th year we have organized the September 16th Malaysia Day Combined Prayer in KL/Selangor, we hope that more CCM churches will block off and reserve September 16 as a Day of Corporate Prayer for the Nation, and encourage their congregations to come for corporate prayer together in solidarity and unity of love and purpose. Given that MDOP 2018, i.e. 16 Sept 2018 falls on a Sunday, we pray to consider how we can make this a bigger event across the nation.

5. Archbishop Ng Moon Hing presented the reflection for MDOP’s theme - Seek the Peace of the Land. In a powerful, timely and prophetic call to bless the land, Archbishop Ng reminded all present to bless the nation through prayer and action. The full text is provided for everyone’s consideration and meditation.

By Chrisanne Chin

# Farewell Mdm Chia Loy Tian, Principal of WMSKL (International), 2011 - 2017

Highly respected and well loved by her students as well as teachers and parents, Mdm Chia Loy Tian's last day at Wesley Methodist School Kuala Lumpur was a truly emotional affair. One by one, from the Deputy Principal, Mdm Pearl Moses, Vice Principals, Mr Nathan and Mdm Doreen Ti to Heads of Departments and long serving teachers, poured out their hearts, endless praise and glowing tributes to Mdm Chia. And they all said the same things that connected all the dots about Mdm Chia's personality - calm and collected, patient, always listening, demure but yet firm when called to be a tough and loving Principal with not just her teachers but her students whom she often called in Mandarin "my baobei" or "treasures".

Under Mdm Chia's leadership, the school scored many firsts, such as stellar SPM results coming out top in the country in the year 2014 (CGPA of 0.92) and 2015. (CGPA of 1.13). Admon Lee, a Form Four student became the world Powerpoint champ in the Microsoft Office Specialist Tournament, Dallas, USA in 2015. This includes, her successful oversight and supervision of WMSKL (Private) as the first WMS School to make the transition to WMSKL (International) offering Cambridge IGCSE. The first batch of IGCSE students in 2016 made Mdm Chia proud, with 85% scoring A\*/A and 5 students received the Cambridge International Examination's Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards. And who could forget all the high quality concerts under Mdm Chia's creative leadership, such as Mulan and Lion King, Emma the Pop Musical or the Prince of Egypt. More students have also made trips to Japan, Australia,

U.K., USA, China and Singapore for student-exchange programmes and taken part in international tournaments.

Student leaders and alumni, remember her as a wonderful Principal, full of wisdom and grace, who used her careful diction of sagacious words (using wise and discerning words) at each Monday morning assembly and displayed sangfroid character (full of composure) in the midst of adversity. She projected a motherly figure, a worldly wise guide and mentor, a praying Principal and most of all an Educator mentoring the students to go above and beyond their comfort zone. One by one students salute her for her tenacity and tireless dedication over the 7 years, transforming WMSKL into a high performing Christian International school. For Mdm Chia, attaining academic success is only second to ensuring character building through Godly principles and love.

Probably the most inspiring speech must have come from parent Mr. Kenneth Tan Kian Chong of the Christian Parent Support Committee, whose wonderful speech described Mdm. Chia as a communicator who balanced scoldings with praises. She cajoled the students especially at every Monday morning assembly and also through her day to day interaction with them.

Mdm Chia's final speech was filled with emotion as she would surely miss dearly the school's hustle and bustle and the endless hive of activities of making sure that the teachers inspired learning in the students everyday. These were interspersed with the myriad of co-curricular activities of WMSKL(I). She paid tribute to the new in-coming Principal Mr. Wong Chee Kheon who has in-



herited a vibrant and dynamic school, full of high achieving students and yet a need for the students to demonstrate humility and be God conscious.

In closing, to mention a quote from Fred Rogers, "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else". Everyone within the family of WMS who has come into contact with Mdm Chia wishes her a blessed retirement. We pray that she will be able to do all the things she has longed to do: waking up to no alarm clocks, losing herself in a good book, traveling with her beloved spouse Mr Patrick Tai, and keeping in touch with relatives and friends like it is summer vacation every day! Wishing God's blessings on Mdm Chia and her family always.

By Daniel Gan  
Methodist Council of Education

# 世界循道卫理宗华人教会联合会 第七届宣教大会

报道/摄影：甘慧仪

7月13至17日，五年一次的世界循道卫理宗华人教会联合会第七届宣教大会“整全宣教·代代相传”，在香港的循道卫理联合教会九龙堂进行。英国、印尼、新西兰、缅甸、美国、新加坡、澳洲、台湾、香港、沙巴、砂拉越和西马十二个地区的七百二十二人参与其盛；吾会六十九人团队里，三十人是牧者、传道。

13日晚上七时三十分，九龙堂已座无虚席。香港循道卫理联合教会九龙联区联合诗班献唱后，台湾的陈建中会督在证道中，提醒会众要“整全宣教·代代相传”（徒2：37-38、39-42、43-46；太9：35-38），过圣洁的生活，委身侍奉来经历神。陈会督劝勉众人牢记先贤教导，效法先贤留下的典范，达到初期教会的情况——主将得救的人天天加给他们。

会上特别纪念上主忠仆——沈冠尧牧师，藉短片、诗歌和祷告，缅怀沈牧师爱主侍主的一生。接着，澳洲的官佰全会督主持圣餐礼，会众同心步向十架前，同擘这饼，同喝这杯，同领主恩。陈建中会督引领会众彼此立约后，宣布：世界循道卫理宗华人教会联合会第七届宣教大会正式开幕。

身为华宣大会主题讲员的钟志邦教授，带来三场主题：重新审视全面的福音、文明间的冲突与世界的新局势、中国的崛起对华人普世宣教的意义；重点如下所示：

主题一：个人、社会与全球的整全福音。基督必丰盛地给予信徒生活内容、人生方向和侍奉岗位。在政治社会层面，上帝与人都有守约的责任，其理念是决定一切“民主”和“法治”的基本精神。在创造观与环保方面，上帝将治理世界的巨大责任委托给其代理人——人，这是神圣的使命，给了人向上帝“交代”的责任；

主题二：引述前哈佛大学资深政论家和美国白宫幕僚——亨廷顿的著作《文明间的冲突与世界秩序的重建》，提出上世纪美国和前苏联的冷战结束后，随之而起很可能是世界几个大文明之间产生的冲突，尤其是美国领导的西方文明与伊斯兰世界的文明冲突，以及西方文明可能与华夏文明的冲突。中美冲突、中国和台湾、朝鲜与韩国的矛盾是意识形态和国家利益冲突，而非文明冲突；

主题三：以中国有六千万基督徒为可靠的基数，只要其千分之一参与海外宣教事工，就可成为六万大军的宣教队伍。中国改革开放为香港教会带来生机和得以参与中国教会，尤其是提供神学教育和培训事工。台湾出版、文字事工和神学教育，对全球华人教会的影响和贡献很

明显。东南亚华人教会中，新马和中国的关系较密切。美国、加拿大、澳洲、纽西兰和欧洲的华人教会，也会继续对全球宣教事工做出贡献。华宣大会虽然主要关注华人世界，但也不能忽略全球视野和异象，如会祖卫斯理所言，全世界也应该是我们的牧区。

刘世尧牧师、何威达牧师（博士）和万富奇牧师任查经讲员。刘牧师主领的“查经一”主题“整全宣教”，引导听者思索循道卫理宗宣教应有的特色和意义（彼后3：18）。他表示，卫斯理强调信徒要善用恩典的工具，包括上帝在圣经启示制定的基本工具，信徒因应处境而选择的多元工具和手法，可相辅相成，以转化宣教工场。

何牧师主领的“查经二”主题“救赎人生你我他”，以人际关系的角度，引领会众学习审视“自己”、看“我和你”、看素未谋面的“他们”（加6：1-10）。人生是不断撒种、耕耘的过程，须为个人生命负上全责。我们若变得冰冷，放弃行善，最终会危害自己的救赎人生。因此，循道卫理宗起初就集体行善，彼此打气。

万牧师主领的“查经三”主题“整全宣教，代代相传：宣道就是宣教之反思”，唤醒会众作传道者的责任，因每个基督徒都是传道者（提后4：1-5）。基督徒的责任不能只是“知”道，也要宣道、讲道、布道和行道；除了向他人传道，亦要将宣教使命传给下一代，让一代又一代的基督徒震撼世界，见证上帝的大能。

14至15日，华宣大会提供二十七场工作坊（共四十四堂），吾会有二人受邀担任工作坊的讲员，即黄迪华牧师（博士）和年会会友领袖——李祖国。在两天的工作坊里，与会者分组研讨“整全宣教”的议题。无论课堂内的气氛严肃，或轻松，众人皆能自在地学习和消化信息，更全面地认识各种事工。

工作坊讲员来自新马、港台、澳洲和英国，主题繁多，反映时下教会严峻的处境，有：圣言宣讲的宣教角色、循道卫理宗华人教会看同性恋、灵修生活与灵性操练、家庭教育、《顶峰门徒》与门徒训练、踏上了祂的足迹、中国教会的困境和机遇、三分钟领人归主、伊斯兰的挑战、营商宣教、香港教会之家佣宣教、创意漫画与宣教、在基督里如何营造“活跃老化”的社区、福音劳工事工的机遇和挑战等等。

除了联合会事工委报告；美国、英国、缅甸、新西兰华人教会和尼泊尔教会的代表，亦分享其事工前瞻的发展计划，向会众发出宣教的炽热呼声。

主日（16/7）是敬拜上帝的圣日，所有与会者获安排到不同堂会崇拜。大会下午安排四条路线的“城市游踪”，有太平山顶、赤柱；崇基神学院、船湾淡水湖堤坝；香港单车馆；屏山文物径和流浮山市集。各国代表开心地体会香港种种风土人情，傍晚在各地享用地道的佳肴。

17日，第七届华宣大会来到宣教培灵会和闭幕典礼的尾声，香港的林崇智会长在培灵信息中，鼓励众人前行，踏上实践整全宣教的旅程。他从三方面谈到如何成为宣教的教会：教会必须复兴，才能委身于宣教事工；信徒需要上帝赐下保罗般的宣教心志，为远离主的世界着急，不愿再等待；所有信徒都要亲身实践，成为宣教士。大会始于圣餐，终于圣餐。第八届华宣大会（2022年），由新加坡接棒！



一、坐落于小山岗上的九龙堂，是香港循道卫理联合教会中历史最久和最具规模的堂会，左为循道中学，是牧区的福音伙伴。



三、台湾的陈建中会督在开幕礼中证道

## 华宣第八届执行理事会

主席	香港首长—林崇智会长（博士）
副主席	新加坡首长—吴乃力会长（博士）
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二、吾会会长—郭汉成牧师，担任华宣大会开幕礼的主席。



四、在大会第二晚的“欢迎晚宴与文化之夜”，吾会代表们换上民族服装，兴奋地载歌载舞，带出“Rasa Sayang”和“Lengang Kangkung”愉快的节奏。



五、钟志邦教授曾任新加坡三一神学院院长、新加坡总统宗教理事和多所知名大学的客座教授，海人无数。在三场讲座中，他讲解清晰，所述皆发人深思。



六、吾会的万富奇教区长担任华宣大会“查经三”的讲员



七、黄迪华牧师主讲两堂“循道卫理宗恩典观会晤时下成功神学”的工作坊，提及约翰·卫斯理的教导，以应对成功神学，或富裕福音带来的冲击。



八、吾会会友领袖—李祖国主讲两堂“进入灾区：马来西亚的经验”之工作坊，分享教会在本土回民乡镇/原住民乡村、尼泊尔、缅甸和印度等国展开人道援助和服侍的过程。



九、“城市游踪”路线之一：崇基神学院圣堂内部的风格质朴、沉实，是香港中文大学校园中“安静的绿洲”。



十、郭进明牧师在“宣教工场分享”的环节中，介绍我国总议会（由吾会主催）在缅甸南板建校的福音事工，获华宣大会闭幕礼之奉献。



十一、香港循道卫理联合教会会长兼大会主席——林崇智牧师，在闭幕礼崇拜典礼中证道。



十二、林会长将“世界循道卫理宗华人教会联合会”的旗帜，移交给新加坡华人年议会会长——吴乃力牧师（左），右为陈建中会督。

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- 地点：诗巫乌驿路30公里
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- 设施：湖滨宿舍（可容纳120人）、食堂、会议厅、课室、环湖走道（2公里）
- 活动：退修会、静修、以马忤斯之旅、恩爱夫妻营、读经祷告营

联络人：吴恒慷弟兄016-8610655

### SCAC Centennial Park

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- Area：6 acres
- Facilities：Lake side hostels (can accommodate 120 people) dining hall, conference hall, classrooms, lake side jogging track (2 km)
- Activities：Retreat, Silent Retreat, Walk to Emmaus, Marriage Enrichment Camp, Bible Study & Prayer Camp

Contact person: Mr. Ngu Heng Kong 016-8610655



Lake side view of SCAC Centennial Park (百周年纪念园)

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# The Indigenous Church

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article written by the Rev. R. A. Blasdel is the last of the series which Mr. Blasdel has prepared as a short digest of the book by Dr. Kraemer "*The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World.*" In view of the Madras Conference we believe that all our readers will be particularly interested in this material.

The first step in the consideration of the indigenous Church, in the opinion of Dr. Kraemer, author of *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World*, is to consider well what the Church is. This we have already done in the first of this series of articles, but for convenience we here restate its essential characteristics. The Christian Church is the community or fellowship of those who have accepted for themselves the revelation of God in Christ and have associated themselves with God in His redemptive purpose for the world in the announcement of salvation through Jesus Christ. The function of the indigenous Church, then, is to express this revelation or to make the announcement in terms which the given local community can understand. The essence of the message will be the same for the whole world, the forms and colour will vary as each indigenous Church interprets the message intelligibly to its own group.

This conception of the indigenous Church applies not only to the thought-forms, but also to the social forms adopted. The social forms of the West, involving denominationalism and many other factors which have no meaning for the East, should not be arbitrarily imposed upon the new Churches. Holding fast, then, to the primary function of the Church, the most serviceable of the existing social forms will be employed in the indigenous Church, "because the indigenous has the right to be considered seriously and sympathetically as the vehicle of life-expression before any other possible vehicle." As in speech a man expressed himself

best in his own language, so in social forms the ones with which he is most familiar will be of greatest service. The ability to render best service should determine whether a given form should be adopted or abandoned. "It ought to become a fundamental law in missionary work that alien forms and methods of spiritual and ecclesiastical life are viewed with the same scrutinizing criticism as indigenous forms and methods are usually subjected to." "The primary aim in building an indigenous Church, then, must be the fostering of a creative, spiritual life, so that the richness of the knowledge of Christ and the fruits of the spirit may develop ever more fully." In some cases the Western forms may prove more serviceable. In that case they should be used. But Western forms should not be used merely because they are Western, and local forms should be used increasingly as they are found to be serviceable.

The author draws attention, however, to the great difference between *being truly indigenous and being considered* by the non-Christian Community as indigenous. Many have hoped that if the Younger Churches could sufficiently assume the local forms of their people, they would be accepted as indigenous. This is not the case, and will not be, until the Christian community acquires large proportions in the local population. The mere fact of clothing a strange message with local forms, however skilfully it may be done, cannot eliminate the strangeness of the message, or win unqualified acceptance for the group who have received the strange message into the total life of the com-

munity. That status can be won only with the passing of time, the increase of the numbers of Christians, and the permeation of the whole community with the Christian thought.

What of the vexing question of the degree of missionary control? In answering this question in the past finance has figured largely. The standpoint has been taken that ability to attain self-support should be the basis for deciding the question. There has been the added feeling, too, that if such a basis should not be adopted, there would be a tendency for indefinite leaning on foreign support which would operate against the welfare of the Younger Churches. Again, from the standpoint of the administrators of the funds from missionary societies, there devolves upon the administrators the duty of controlling the expenditure of the money entrusted to them by a great number of contributors.

While recognizing all these conditions, the author takes the view that "there are both practical and theoretical reasons for taking the standpoint that the measure of independence from missionary control should not depend upon the amount of financial support that is still granted by missionary agencies to self-governing indigenous Churches." In many cases the Churches have had no control over the situations which would impose an impossible financial burden on them if they assumed it alone. "The cost implied in self-support, therefore, is still partly determined by a machinery that has been set up without a thorough consideration of

the indigenous economic foundations.” In this period of transition, it is scarcely just to withhold the right of self-governance from people who are otherwise prepared to exercise it. Furthermore, to determine the degree of independence by the ability to attain self-support, or “to distinguish between mission money and Church money” is psychologically unsound and spiritually irritating. The Younger Churches are the “fruit of missionary labour, but not the possession of missions, and it is on the side of missions a serious and fatal misunderstanding of the nature of the Church to consider any indigenous Church in any stage of development to be in an inferior position because it receives financial support.” The financial aid coming from Churches abroad to local churches is “no charity but fraternal help.”

One thing more which should be kept in mind in considering the indigenous Church is the unity of various Christian bodies. It is the author’s opinion that “the Christian Churches in the non-Christian world are by their many divisions much weaker than need be the case.” Although the Younger Churches are in their communities vigorous forces, they are decidedly in the minority, and much more so than they would be if the existing Christian groups could be united to make their joint influence more widely and strongly felt. “It is certainly no exaggeration to say that one of the cardinal problems of the Christian mission in the non-Christian world is whether Western Missionary agencies will find their faith and the courage to derive their orientation, in regard to these problems of denominationalism and unity in the mission field,

neither from ecclesiastical indifference nor from ecclesiastical bias, but from confronting themselves with the dynamic conception of the Church as set before us in Biblical realism.”

“The heartening lesson,” the author says,” is that the gospel can be spread under any circumstances, provided a living and ardent faith burns in the hearts of men.” In this task, the indigenous Churches with an ever-increasing degree of independence to work out their own forms, should have a greatly enlarged participation.

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## Features

## World Methodist Council News

# A.M.E. Church Response to Las Vegas Shooting

At the 2016 Women’s Missionary Society Executive Board Meeting, the AME Council of Supervisors, supported by the AME WMS and AME Social Action Commission renewed their focus on the A.M.E. Church’s resolution on gun violence.

Sadly, the language still applies today. As AMEs we are still traumatized by the 9 who were killed at Mother Emanuel. Today we are again jolted by the killing of at least 50 who gathered for a concert, and untold numbers who were wounded physically and emotionally in that area. The toll of millions of human beings who face senseless killings daily is staggering and will only end when we make this focus our relentless push. It must trump business as usual!

### What Now in 2017?

- Pray every day for those persons affected by gun violence. Pray for the uncaring who fight to keep assault weapons in the hands of the general public. Pray for those whose lust for profit from the sale of these weapons keeps. Pray for timid legislators who place contributions to their campaigns above duty to their constituents. Pray for all leaders to find clear voices of intolerance of gun violence. Visit: [www.faithsunited.org](http://www.faithsunited.org) to keep updated for action.
- Contact your local, state and federal legislators in support of common sense gun legislation. Join with Faiths United Against Gun Violence. Tell your Congressperson to vote “no” on H.R. 3668, the Sportsman Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act, Share Act; vote “yes” on universal background checks.
- Vote and encourage your neighbors, friends and work colleagues to vote for candidates who support common sense gun legislation. Let’s “un-elect” those who support no controls over gun purchases, background checks and other prudent measures.
- Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath will be on December 6 and 17, 2017. Consider special emphasis during that period or another timeframe that addresses the anniversary of gun violence incidents in your community. The goal is to Shine A Light On Gun Violence ... and the need to stop it!! AME Social Action Commission.

Bishop Frank Madison Reid, III, Chair  
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