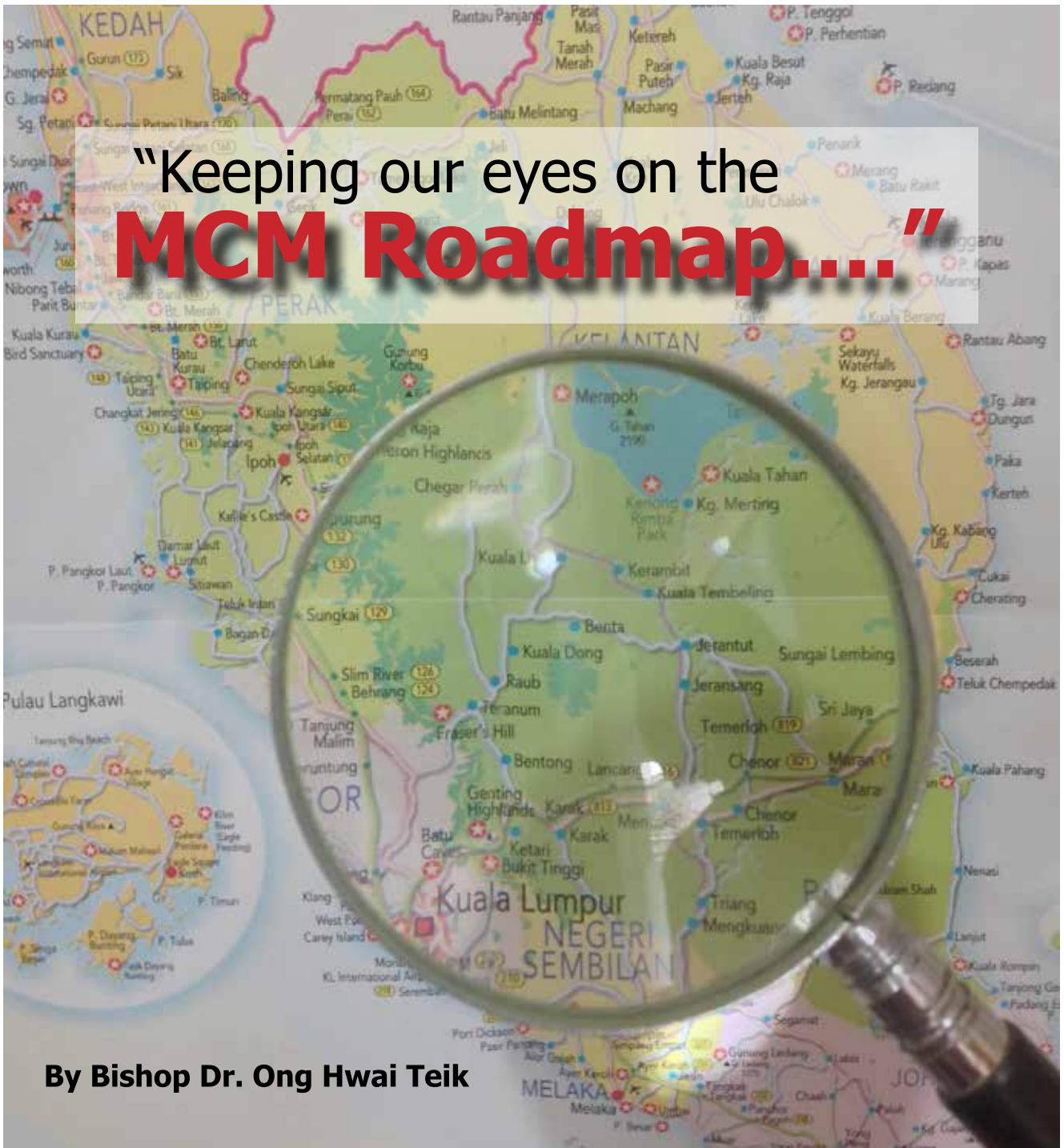


PELITA METHODIST

VOLUME 40, NO. 3
MARCH 2014



“Keeping our eyes on the
MCM Roadmap....”



By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

Moment



Rev. Ong Chin Hin — The newly appointed Manager of the Trustees Office

Rev. Ong Chin Hin, is an Elder of the Chinese Annual Conference, was seconded to the Peninsular Malaysia Area Executive Council to serve in the Trustees Office at the 38th Session Chinese Annual Conference.

Having served in the Pastoral Ministry for 29 years in the Chinese Annual Conference, Rev. Ong considers this Seconded Ministry as his second calling from God.

Rev. Ong was married to Madam Tan An Mooi and they have a son, Benedict, a Veterinary Officer and two daughters, Charis and Anna who were respectively a Teacher and a Master program student of a Taiwan University.

Rev. Ong had served for two quadrennial as member of the Peninsula Malaysia Council of Trustees from 2001—2008 and served as member of the Peninsula Malaysia Area Executive Council from 2009- 2012 . He also served in the Board of Property of the Chinese Annual Conference as Secretary of Property from 2005-2008.



翁进兴牧师—新委任之信托办事处经理

翁进兴牧师，华人年议会长牧，经于第卅八届华人年议会受委派借用于西马区域理事会在信托理事会办事处服务。翁牧师经于在华人年议会担任牧养事奉达廿九年，他认为此次的事奉乃上帝给予他在事奉上的第二个呼召。

翁牧师已婚，师母为陈雅妹女士，并育有一位儿子，怀恩，目前担任兽医及两位女儿，敏慧及文慧，分别为教师及台湾交通大学硕士班学生。

翁牧师曾于2001至2008年担任两届西马信托理事会理事，并曾于2005-2008年担任西马区域理事会理事。他也曾于2005—2008年担任华人年议会产业部之干事。

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"A Call to Pray"

Dear brothers and sisters in the Methodist family

As we continue to journey into the season of Lent, let us as a Methodist Church family unite with the wider community of Christ in Malaysia in seeking our Sovereign God for the restoring, cleansing and healing that leads to a deeper relationship with Him personally, congregationally and nationally.

- Let us especially remember the missing flight MH370 with 239 people on board and all their loved ones, that the Lord in His mercy will intervene in the search and rescue operation to locate the missing aircraft and passengers.
- Let us call on God, the Maker of heaven and earth, for His merciful blessing of "opened heavens" of rain, and "blue skies" once again - cleared from the severe haze.
- Let us gather in solemn assemblies to pray in our churches either on the **12 or 19 April 2014**, joining many others from across all the denominations in this land to do the same in crying out to the Lord together in unity of penitence and dependence on our Lord [see Prayer United 1 March 2014 Announcement to the Churches, *A Call to Repentance*].
- Let us humble ourselves and be opened to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our nation, willing to hear and respond appropriately to what He is saying - through all that we are going through in life and experiencing in our nation.

**"Then if my people who are called by my name will
humble themselves
and pray and seek my face and turn from their
wicked ways,
I will hear from heaven
and will forgive their sins and restore their land."
[^{NLT} 2 Chronicles 7:14]**

Sincerely in Christ our Lord

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik
The Methodist Church in Malaysia

14 March 2014

“Keeping our eyes on the MCM Roadmap....”

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

We as a Methodist Family in Malaysia continue to ask the questions –

- *What does it take to be a **Church after God’s own heart** in a season such as this in the global context of our generation?*
- *What does a living and authentic Church of Jesus Christ look like today- especially when we are experiencing the erosion of religious rights and the growing pangs of persecution of being a religious minority in our own land?*

While we do not wish to promote the “sacred-secular” division, we must also “disentangle” the temporal from the eternal. We as God’s people called Methodist, must never lose sight of the eternal plan of God for the Church as revealed through His apostle Paul, who declared in Ephesians 3:8-11: Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.⁹ I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.¹⁰ **God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.**¹¹ **This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.**

As such we must not give in to the temptation of being too trapped by our own political and social predispositions and views, and to the current prevailing and powerful stream of events – so that we lose sight of the fact that God is still unshakably in charge of history, and that He is sovereignly above all of humankind’s transient affairs.

We remain on course with this Road Map for the Methodist Church in Malaysia which was launched by the General Conference Executive Council during our 125th Anniversary on the 12 August 2010 at the Chinese Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur. The GCEC team had started work on formulating this Road Map in 2008 under the Episcopal leadership of Bishop Emeritus Hwa Yung. We thank the many who have prayed, gave input and worked on making this Road Map possible.

It was the intention of the General Conference to have this Road Map guide us as a Methodist Church together for the next 10 to 20 years, with periodic reviews and updating taking place as necessary – consonant with the leading of the Holy Spirit, and new and changing contexts. We affirm the truth that Scripture

is unchangeable, but culture is not – even as we seek to remain faithful and relevant.

The Road Map seeks to help our members and churches to be an authentic and living Church after God’s own heart, empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a living witness to the salvation message in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is reflected in the 4 key areas which follow that of the very first authentic and living Church of mainly found in Acts 2:42-47.

- **Evangelism and church planting:** they were not living in a siege community – but were related to the world so that “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”. It is a shame that some of our churches have not had a single convert for years! But it is a joy that all our 6 Annual Conferences have made strategic plans and established goals to plant churches in the 2013-2016 quadrennium.
- **Discipleship:** they were a *worshipping community* that was inseparably linked to the apostles’ teaching. A living Church is an apostolic Church that lives by absolute and holy discipleship – so that such genuine hearts will more easily encounter the presence and visitation of the living and holy God in their midst, filling worshippers “with awe.” Our prayer movement has been strengthened with the 3rd Methodist Prayer Conventions organized for 2014, and the establishment of the Methodist Intercessors Gathering which brings together praying together by intercessors at the GC level in a regular, systematic and more coordinated way.
- **Church and Society:** they were a caring and generous people of God that were effective “salt and light” for the Lord – “giving to anyone as he had need” – not only within but without the body. They had a tender social conscience; we too must be salt that preserves our society from decay, and light that brings enormous good to our total nation, especially at this time in the history and life of Malaysia. One key area we are “redigging” is the well of education, dug by our Methodist missionary forefathers, so that we can contribute to nation building today by healing the soul of our nation by nourishing spirituality, build character, supply academic and vocational excellence among the young.
- **Cross-cultural Missions:** this same Church in Jerusalem then “scattered”, triggered by persecution under Saul

(Acts 8:1-4), crossing geographical and cultural boundaries as they brought the Gospel to peoples and places beyond Jerusalem. The missions work in our Methodist Family has grown substantially and we have adopted a common missions ground (in Asia) at the General Conference level for this quadrennium. For the first time our Council of Missions was able to host a mission training school for the key pastors and lay leaders of The Upper and Lower Methodist Church in Myanmar in October 2013.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide, deepen and strengthen us as we seek to be **a Methodist Church that is after God's own heart**, a living and authentic Church that

- identifies and incarnates the life and way of Jesus, the eternal Lord of the Church;
- lives in true and genuine community as a demonstrably holy and beautiful bride of Christ, breaking free by the

Holy Spirit and a willing heart from “enculturated blockages”; and

- transforms “secular” space and touches lost people.

All for the greater glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

Together in His kingdom, by His grace

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

19 January 2014

The Methodist Church in Malaysia

The new Introduction of the newly reprint of the MCM Roadmap.

Note: Copies of the Road Map can be obtained at The Methodist Church in Malaysia.

METHODIST PRAYER CONVENTION 2014
PERHIMPUNAN BOA METHODIST
卫理公会祷告大会 (தேவனுடைய இருதய மாதிரி)

A CHURCH AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART
体贴上帝心意的教会
GEREJA YANG IMPIKAN HATI NURANI TUHAN
தேவனுடைய இருதயத்திற்கேற்ற சபை

29-30 AUGUST 2014
Sunway Convention Centre

SPEAKERS
REV DR STEPHEN SEAMANDS
2ND PRIMEY SPEAKER
REV DR JOSHUA TING

31 AUGUST 2014
Putra Stadium, Bukit Jalil
By July, gathering of all Methodist churches for a time of prayer and celebration

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 BOYS' BRIGADE & GIRLS' BRIGADE OFFICERS AND YOUNG LEADERS
 PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS,
 SCHOOL ALUMNI
 CHURCH LEADERS AND MEMBERS
 AND ANYONE ELSE CONCERNED FOR OUR MISSION SCHOOLS

<p>SEMINAR PROGRAMME 1.30 pm Registration 2.00 pm Opening Address: "Reclaiming our Mission" by Mr Khor Hong Yin, COE 2.30 pm Session "Leadership in Challenging Times" by Dr Manfred Kohl 3.45 pm Tea Break 4.15 pm Parallel Session I. "Leadership and Conflict Management" by Dr. Manfred Kohl II. "Teen Sexuality" by Dr. Barbara Kohl 5.30 pm End</p>
--

SPEAKERS



DR. MANFRED W. KOHL

is born in Germany during the Second World War, and was educated in Germany, England, and the US. He earned Master's degrees in Divinity and Theology, and doctorates in Historical Theology and Ministry. After serving as a pastor in Massachusetts, he had various leadership positions at World Vision, serving as field director in West Africa, establishing support offices throughout central Europe, and completing service as a VP of World Vision Int'l. From 1993 Manfred served as a VP of Overseas Council, an organization that partners with more than 100 theological seminaries and Bible colleges in the non-Western world, equipping indigenous Christian leaders. He now serves as Ambassador for the organization. He still does extensive traveling, speaking, and writing. See more at: <http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBpH/b.931457/#sthash.IHu9XDFb.dpuf>



Mrs (Dr) Barbara Kohl

is a native of Nova Scotia, Canada, and a former high school teacher, counsellor, and youth leader. After living and serving in the United States, the Ivory Coast (Africa), and Germany, she returned with her husband to her home village of Blandford, Nova Scotia. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and the Ontario College of Education (both in Toronto, Canada) and received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, USA. Her doctoral thesis was entitled "Teenage Sexual Morality." Her passion is to challenge and equip parents and Christian leaders, and give them the confidence, to help their teens to recognize sex as our Heavenly Father's good gift and to make wise decisions as to what to do with their hearts and their bodies in their teen years. See more at: <http://barbarakohl.com/>

PERAK REGION	PENANG & NORTH	KLANG VALLEY & SOUTH
DATE: SATURDAY, 24 MAY 2014	DATE: SUNDAY, 25 MAY 2014	DATE: WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2014
TIME: 1.30-5.30 PM	TIME: 1.30-5.30 PM	TIME: 1.30-5.00 PM
VENUE: SMK (P) METHODIST (MGS), IPOH, NO.2, JALAN RAJA PERMAISURI BAINUN, IPOH, PERAK	VENUE: SMK (P) METHODIST (MGS) PENANG, NO.42, JALAN ANSON, PENANG	VENUE: METHODIST COLLEGE KUALA LUMPUR (MCKL), BRICKFIELDS, KUALA LUMPUR

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The Lord is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens.

Psalm 113:4

Devotion

DEVOTION

Amazing Grace

The grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so.
(Augustine)

IN WORD:

There's scarcely a better summary of the plan of salvation than Ephesians 2:1-10. Not only is it the spiritual history of mankind, it's also ours individually. We were dead in our sins—thoroughly dead—and God rescued us. We were, as Paul tells us, without hope in this world (Ephesians 2:12), completely helpless and unaware of the way out of our condition.

And what a dreadful condition it was. Paul's assessment of the human condition is nothing like the "I'm okay, you're okay" philosophies of our culture's gospel of tolerance. In fact, he's terribly blunt in his political incorrectness: we were compatible with the spirits of disobedience, living in our lusts and deserving of God's wrath. We were destined for judgment if God had not intervened. We may not like to admit that, and we may shudder at the harshness of the idea, but we cannot deny that this is a soundly biblical assessment. Humanity, in its rebellion, was completely, utterly lost.

One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

This was the gradual realization of the early Christians. In light of the Cross, the human condition could not be sugarcoated. One does not observe the agony of Jesus, interpret it as a payment for sin, and then minimize the sin. If a bloody, beaten Savior hanging from a crude, splintery stake is a picture of judgment, the sin under judgment must have been enormous, catastrophic, and deadly.

IN DEED:

Why is that important to know? Because we don't understand grace until we understand sin. Most early Christians had been content to follow Jewish law or Greco-Roman deities, not knowing their desperate condition. But the Cross was not only a statement of God's great mercy; it was also a statement of how much that mercy was needed.

The Christian who remembers the dreadful nature of sin is the Christian who understands the magnitude of grace. Only then are we equipped to live, breathe, and share the gospel of salvation. Meditate on your salvation, and let the mercy of God sink in.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.
Ephesians 2:1

教会面对各项课题，卫理公会如何回应？

近期，教会接获我国有史以来最多来自个人及团体的呼吁，要求教会对目前国家所面对的各种课题，发表谈话，表明立场。相信许多基督徒不禁会问，“面对这许多呼求，教会，尤其是马来西亚卫理公会，将如何回应呢？”。撰写此文的目的乃是提供一些基本资讯，让读者知道卫理公会在必要时刻，的确有作出适当的回应。

马来西亚基督教卫理公会是透过三个团体机构向外发表公开声明。第一个机构是马来西亚基督教联合会 (CFM)。马来西亚基督教联合会是由马来西亚基督教会协会 (CCM)、马来西亚福音联谊会(NECF)及天主教教会(CC)所组成的一个咨询机构。这机构代表了几乎所有马来西亚基督教教会群体就某些重要课题发表谈话及与政府沟通并转达基督教社群集体的意见。一直以来，马来西亚基督教联合会代表基督教社群向外发表公开声明，这是一贯的做法，也是各个教会所认同接受的。这样可以确保各教会社群的团结合一，并向外表明我们对各种课题所持有的立场是一致的。

当一个涉及基督徒及所有马来西亚人民的国家课题产生及引起大家的关注时，那就是要决定是否要发表声明的开始。这时，基督教联合会的执行秘书就启动了作出适当决定的正式程序。若会议讨论结果是发表声明，就会按照正当程序就有关课题所持意见及立场撰写文告。有关文告经批准后就会转发给报社，教会团体及其他有关部门。马来西亚基督教卫理公会是基督教联合会的教会成员之一，因此此文告也代表了马来西亚基督教卫理公会的立场。马来西亚各个基督教社群原则上也赞同基督教联合会为他们的代言人，向外发表谈话。总的来说，隶属基督教联合会的三个肢体教会及其宗派，是不会就某个国家课题个别发表声明的。

然而有时候马来西亚基督教联合会理事会 (CFM Council) 也许会决定不发表文告而让个别肢体教会自行决定是否要就某个课题发表文告。在此种情况下，如果马来西亚基督教会协会决定要发表声明，表明立场，那马来西亚基督教会协会总秘书将邀请其教会成员的领导者开会决议有关文告。一旦获得教会成员领导者的一致同意，总秘书就会发放文告予各有关肢体机构及其教会成员。卫理公会及所有年议会都是基督教会协会之教会成员之一。会督与各年议会会长都是“教会领导者”这个肢体的代表成员。按照一般惯例与做法，教会成员各宗派是不会各自发表文告以维护大家对某课题的一致看法，并同心持守相同立场。

有时候在某种情况下，根据卫理公会法规 511 条文及 357.8 条文所赋予权力下，马来西亚卫理公会是可以独自向外发表声明的。卫理公会法规 511 条文说，“按照卫理公会宪法，除了总议会外，没有任何人，文章或机构有权利代表马来西亚卫理公会向外发表任何谈话与声明。”

除此之外，马来西亚卫理公会法规 357 条文-会督的职责，权力与限制-，在 357.8 条文中亦提到会督“在与会长理事会 (Council of Presidents) 商讨咨询后，他在所有事务上有权代表卫理公会教会向其他教会团体及政府发表谈话。然而会督的声明，态度与立场是必须符合卫理公会法规与宪法中的原则与方针。”此宪规的确给予会督办事处 (Episcopal Office) 在必要时发表声明的空间。他们是依照法规行事，非常谨慎，经过与各年议会会长商讨咨询后才发表文告声明的。在此种情况下，会督办事处经过深思熟虑，多次祷告，多方咨询后才向各有关组织，所有年议会及教会成员发表文告。除了知会年议会，会督同时也会向总议会执行理事会 (GCEC) 报告有所发表之文告。

我恳切希望全能的上帝继续引领马来西亚所有教会，包括其教会成员之一的马来西亚卫理公会，在这历史性时刻，赐予我们能力智慧，能辨别是非，刚强壮胆，同心发表声明，表达心声，为我国带来祝福。让我们在祷告中纪念扶持为我们担负此重要且艰巨职责的马来西亚基督教教会的领导者。

Anthony Row

马来西亚基督教卫理公会总秘书

Notice

10 March 2014

Seminari Theoloji Malaysia invites applications for the position of Chair (Lectureship) of Mission and Evangelism. We are looking for a missiology practitioner who will be able to offer courses which include the following: mission history and theology, evangelism and church growth, cross-cultural mission, cross-cultural discipling, church planting, personal evangelism, effective communication, global Christianity, cultural anthropology, missional leadership, church development, church renewal, and inter-religious dialogue. A PhD, ThD, or equivalent and relevant ministry experience are the basic requirements. Qualified individuals are encouraged to apply by sending a recent curriculum vitae and cover letter via email addressed to The Principal, Rev Dr Ezra Kok (ezrakok@stm.edu.my). STM will continue to receive applications until the position is filled.

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CONFESSION OF FAITH

PART 1

FOR THE LORD WE LOVE

The Cape Town Confession of Faith

4 WE LOVE GOD THE SON

God commanded Israel to love the LORD God with exclusive loyalty. Likewise for us, loving the Lord Jesus Christ means that we steadfastly affirm that he alone is Saviour, Lord and God. The Bible teaches that Jesus performs the same sovereign actions as God alone. Christ is Creator of the universe, Ruler of history, Judge of all nations and Saviour of all who turn to God.¹⁴ He shares the identity of God in the divine equality and unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Just as God called Israel to love him in covenantal faith, obedience and servant-witness, we affirm our love for Jesus Christ by trusting in him, obeying him, and making him known.

A We trust in Christ. We believe the testimony of the Gospels that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the one appointed and sent by God to fulfil the unique mission of Old Testament Israel, that is to bring the blessing of God's salvation to all nations, as God promised to Abraham.

1. In Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, God took our human flesh and lived among us, fully God and fully human.
2. In his life Jesus walked in perfect faithfulness and obedience to God. He announced and taught the kingdom of God, and modelled the way his disciples must live under God's reign.
3. In his ministry and miracles, Jesus announced and demonstrated the victory of the kingdom of God over evil and evil powers.
4. In his death on the cross, Jesus took our sin upon himself in our place, bearing its full cost, penalty and shame, defeated death and the powers of evil, and accomplished the reconciliation and redemption of all creation.
5. In his bodily resurrection, Jesus was vindicated and exalted by God, com-

pleted and demonstrated the full victory of the cross, and became the forerunner of redeemed humanity and restored creation.

6. Since his ascension, Jesus is reigning as Lord over all history and creation.
7. At his return, Jesus will execute God's judgment, destroy Satan, evil and death, and establish the universal reign of God.

B We obey Christ. Jesus calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow him in the path of self-denial, servanthood and obedience. 'If you love me, keep my commandments,' he said. 'Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say?' We are called to live as Christ lived and to love as Christ loved. To profess Christ while ignoring his commands is dangerous folly. Jesus warns us that many who claim his name with spectacular and miraculous ministries will find themselves disowned by him as evildoers.¹⁵ We take heed to Christ's warning, for none of us is immune to such fearful danger.

C We proclaim Christ. In Christ alone God has fully and finally revealed himself, and through Christ alone God has achieved salvation for the world. We therefore kneel as disciples at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth and say to him with Peter, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' and with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.' Though we have not seen him, we love him. And we rejoice with hope as we long for the day of his return when we shall see him as he is. Until that day we join Peter and John in proclaiming that 'there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.'¹⁶

We commit ourselves afresh to bear witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching, in all the world, knowing that we can bear such witness only if we are living in obedience to his teaching ourselves.

5 WE LOVE GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We love the Holy Spirit within the unity of the Trinity, along with God the Father and God the Son. He is the missionary Spirit sent by the missionary Father and the missionary Son, breathing life and power into God's missionary Church. We love and pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit because without the witness of the Spirit to Christ, our own witness is futile. Without the convicting work of the Spirit, our preaching is in vain. Without the gifts, guidance and power of the Spirit, our mission is mere human effort. And without the fruit of the Spirit, our unattractive lives cannot reflect the beauty of the gospel.

A In the Old Testament we see the Spirit of God active in creation, in works of liberation and justice, and in filling and empowering people for every kind of service. Spirit-filled prophets looked forward to the coming King and Servant, whose Person and work would be endowed with God's Spirit. Prophets also looked to the coming age that would be marked by the outpouring of God's Spirit, bringing new life, fresh obedience, and prophetic gifting to all the people of God, young and old, men and women.¹⁷

B At Pentecost God poured out his Holy Spirit as promised by the prophets and by Jesus. The sanctifying Spirit produces his fruit in the lives of believers, and the first fruit is always love. The Spirit fills the Church with his gifts, which we 'eagerly desire' as the indispensable equipment for Christian service. The Spirit gives us power for mission and for the great variety of works of service. The Spirit enables us to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel, to discern the truth, to pray effectively and to prevail over the forces of darkness. The Spirit inspires and accompanies our worship. The Spirit strengthens and comforts disciples who are persecuted or on trial for their witness to Christ.¹⁸

C Our engagement in mission, then, is pointless and fruitless without the presence,

guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. This is true of mission in all its dimensions: evangelism, bearing witness to the truth, discipling, peace-making, social engagement, ethical transformation, caring for creation, overcoming evil powers, casting out demonic spirits, healing the sick, suffering and enduring under persecution. All we do in the name of Christ must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament makes this clear in the life of the early Church and the teaching of the apostles. It is being demonstrated today in the fruitfulness and growth of Churches where Jesus' followers act confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit, with dependence and expectation.

There is no true or whole gospel, and no authentic biblical mission, without the Person, work and power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for a greater awakening to this biblical truth, and for its experience to be reality in all parts of the worldwide body of Christ. However, we are aware of the many abuses that masquerade under the name of the Holy Spirit, the many ways in which all kinds of phenomena are practised and praised which are not the gifts of the Holy Spirit as clearly taught in the New Testament. There is great need for more profound discernment, for clear warnings against delusion, for the exposure of fraudulent and self-serving manipulators who abuse spiritual power for their own ungodly enrichment. Above all there is a great need for sustained biblical teaching and preaching, soaked in humble prayer, that will equip ordinary believers to understand and rejoice in the true gospel and to recognize and reject false gospels.

6 WE LOVE GOD'S WORD

We love God's Word in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, echoing the joyful delight of the Psalmist in the Torah, 'I love your commands more than gold... Oh how I love your law.' We receive the whole Bible as the Word of God, inspired by God's Spirit, spoken and written through human authors. We submit to it as supremely and uniquely authoritative, governing our belief and our behaviour. We testify to the power of God's Word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. We affirm that the Bible is the final written word of God, not surpassed by any further revelation, but we also rejoice that the Holy Spirit illumines the minds of God's people so that the Bible continues to speak God's truth in fresh ways to people in every culture.¹⁹

A *The Person the Bible reveals.* We love the Bible as a bride loves her husband's letters, not for the paper they are, but for the person who speaks through them. The Bible gives us God's own revelation of his identity, character, purposes and actions. It is the primary witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. In reading it, we encounter him through his Spirit with great joy. Our love for the Bible is an expression of our love for God.

B *The story the Bible tells.* The Bible tells the universal story of creation, fall, redemption in history, and new creation. This overarching narrative provides our coherent biblical worldview and shapes our theology. At the centre of this story are the climactic saving events of the cross and resurrection of Christ which constitute the heart of the gospel. It is this story (in the Old and New Testaments) that tells us who we are, what we are here for, and where we are going. This story of God's mission defines our identity, drives our mission, and assures us the ending is in God's hands. This story must shape the memory and hope of God's people and govern the content of their evangelistic witness, as it is passed on from generation to generation. We must make the Bible known by all means possible, for its message is for all people on earth. We recommit ourselves, therefore, to the ongoing task of translating, disseminating and teaching the scriptures in every culture and language, including those that are predominantly oral or non-literary.

C *The truth the Bible teaches.* The whole Bible teaches us the whole counsel of God, the truth that God intends us to know. We submit to it as true and trustworthy in all it affirms, for it is the Word of the God who cannot lie and will not fail. It is clear and sufficient in revealing the way of salvation. It is the foundation for exploring and understanding all dimensions of God's truth.

We live however, in a world full of lies and rejection of the truth. Many cultures display a dominant relativism that denies that any absolute truth exists or can be known. If we love the Bible, then we must rise to the defence of its truth claims. We must find fresh ways to articulate biblical authority in all cultures. We commit ourselves again to strive to defend the truth of God's revelation as part of our labour of love for God's Word.

D *The life the Bible requires.* The Word is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it.² Jesus and James call us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only.²⁰ The Bible portrays a quality of life that should mark the believer and the community of be-

lievers. From Abraham, through Moses, the Psalmists, prophets and wisdom of Israel, and from Jesus and the apostles, we learn that such a biblical lifestyle includes justice, compassion, humility, integrity, truthfulness, sexual chastity, generosity, kindness, self-denial, hospitality, peacemaking, non-retaliation, doing good, forgiveness, joy, contentment and love - all combined in lives of worship, praise and faithfulness to God.

We confess that we easily claim to love the Bible without loving the life it teaches - the life of costly practical obedience to God through Christ. Yet 'nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life, and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We are charged to behave in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ and even to 'adorn it' enhancing its beauty by holy lives.²¹ For the sake of the gospel of Christ, therefore, we recommit ourselves to prove our love for God's Word by believing and obeying it. There is no biblical mission without biblical living.

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NOTES (Part 1)

14. John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:15-17; Psalm 110:1; Mark 14:61-64; Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 5:9-10; Romans 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:9-12; Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:30; Acts 4:12; 15:11; Romans 10:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 7:25; Revelation 7:10
15. Luke 6:46; 1 John 2:3-6; Matthew 7:21-23
16. Matthew 16:16; John 20:28; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 3:1-3; Acts 4:12
17. Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 104:27-30; Job 33:4; Exodus 35:30-36:1; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 13:25; Numbers 11:16-17, 29; Isaiah 63:11-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Micah 3:8; Nehemiah 9:20, 30; Zechariah 7:7-12; Isaiah 11:1-5; 42:1-7; 61:1-3; 32:15-18; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Joel 2:28-32
18. Acts 2; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 4:3-6; 11-12; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 14:1; John 20:21-22; 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-15; Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:10-18; John 4:23-24; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 14:13-17; Matthew 10:17-20; Luke 21:15
19. Psalm 119:47; 97; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21
20. Deuteronomy 30:14; Matthew 7:21-27; Luke 6:46; James 1:22-24
21. *The Manila Manifesto* Paragraph 7; Titus 2:9-10

Forum on Church Growth

MIRI – Church Growth was the central theme for the SCAC English Forum organized in Miri from Feb 7 - 8.

Held at a local hotel, the event drew participation from Trinity Methodist Church (Kuching), Faith Methodist Church (Kuching), Wesley Methodist Church (Sibu), Nyelong Park Methodist Church (Sarikei), Emmanuel Methodist Church (Bintulu), Senadin Methodist Gospel Campus Centre and the host church, Grace Methodist (Miri).

The SCAC English Forum is a biennial event for the English-speaking Sarawak Methodist churches congregation with the purpose of discussing and implementing church growth plans and strategies, training and developing leadership, providing ministry skills and the election of office bearers.

An election was conducted during the closing session of the last day. The newly-elected office bearers for 2014-15 are shown below.

In her welcoming speech, Rev. Lisa Ting warmly thanked the participants for their attendance. She then commended those from outstation for taking the effort to attend the Forum in spite of their busy Chinese New Year schedule and festivity.

The pastor-in-charge of Grace Methodist Church also commented on the Forum’s theme, Church Growth. “The theme chosen is timely as we now live in uncertain and unpredictable times.”

“I do pray that these sessions will have an impact on all of us and when we return to our own respective churches, we shall able to convey and put into practice what we have learned during these two days,” she added.

Rev. Lisa concluded her speech by thanking the Organizing Committee, praising them for a job well done.

SCAC President Rev. Dato’ Dr. Su Chii Ann was invited to give his exhortation to the participants.

“We should be mindful of our purpose on why we are attending this forum,” he began.

The SCAC President gave pointers on how to accomplish the most for the event. “We need to evaluate what we are doing for the Lord and be accountable,” he told the participants.

“I hope the three talks will empower you, and you in return will encourage one another to do better. Enlist the right people for the right job. The elected committee will have to fulfill our Methodist quadrennial theme, that is - Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation,” said Rev. Dato’ Dr. Su.

SCAC English Committee Chairman Rev. James Chin in his opening message gave a background on the formation of the English Ministry.

He recalled that in the year 2000, a group of Pastors from the English-speaking churches got together with the mutual purpose to network, support, encourage one another, and to share resources.

This led to the formation of the English Liaison Committee and eventually, the English Ministry Committee was formed under the umbrella of SCAC.

The good Reverend also fondly reminisced that the first Forum was hosted by Emmanuel Methodist Church in 2008 held at the Sibu Methodist Centennial Park.

Rev. Chin also mentioned the subsequent Forums and the acknowledged the respective serving Chairmen of the English Ministry Committee. Following that, he presented the report card of events initiated or organized by the English Ministry Committee.

“We have produced the Connection, a fortnightly station of the Chinese Methodist Message. We also organize the biennial Youth Convention, the Methodist Heritage event, and initiated the Short Term Missions (STM) Course in English at Sibu Methodist Theological

Chairman	Rev. James Chin	Wesley MC, Sibu
Dy. Chairman & Auditor	Dr. Wong Sung Ging	Emmanuel MC, Bintulu
Secretary	Dr. Gracia Tiong	Trinity MC, Kuching
Treasurer	James Law	Trinity MC, Kuching
Committee on Worship & Music	Bryan Hii	Wesley MC, Sibu
Committee on Christian Education	Lau Mee Ting	Trinity MC, Kuching
Committee on Lay Activities	Jason Siew	Nyelong Park MC, Bintulu
Committee on Missions	Rev. Lenita Tiong	Trinity MC, Kuching
Committee on Social Concerns	Pastor Tiong Huong Ong	SMCGC/GMC, Miri
Committee on Evangelism	Rev. Samuel Law	Emmanuel MC, Bintulu

School,” he summed up.

SESSION 1 - Equipping disciples in our churches; growth from a clergy’s perspective by Rev. Dr. Lau Hui Ming. Reference - Streams of Living Water (Richard J. Foster), Invitation to a Journey (M. Robert Mulholland Jr.).

“Is the issue here that we have not done enough to disciple our congregational members for church growth? asked Rev. Dr. Lau.

“The goal is about being conformed to the image of Christ. Growth is the outflow of this transformation and maturity in Christ,” explained pastor-in-charge of Trinity Methodist Church Kuching. “Life transformation is not just informing of minds but transforming of lives.”

Rev. Dr. Lau also quoted Mark 1:17 to illustrate the meaning of sitting loose to the world and forsaking everything that is against our duty to Christ.

Other main points of Rev. Dr Lau’s talk included maturity of the church members, confusion by congregation over the word Discipleship, congregation’s eagerness for instant growth and resistance to long term growth, holistic spirituality, and finally total obedience and surrendering to God.

“We must let go our ego and follow the Covenant Prayer of John Wesley,” concluded Rev. Dr. Lau.

Session 2 - Equipping disciples in the marketplace; growth from a Lay Perspective by Chang Jih Ren.

Chang Jih Ren began his session by quoting The Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20).

He then showed the statistics of 2013 SCAC church attendances, various ministries and fellowship groups attendances. “Though there is a slight increase in the overall figures, the data shown in these slides are worrisome,” he warned.

“There is good reason to be greatly concerned because of the drop in numbers in some of our church-based ministries and fellowship groups.”

“What is discipling? Is it teaching a new believer? Holding his hand? Showing him how to read the Bible? Telling him how to overcome temptation? Teaching him how to obey God?” Chang asked the attendees.

He went on to explain why discipling is so difficult.

“Not only you must know the know-how; you also need time, commitment and sacrifice.”

“Jim Peterson (Author, Lifestyle Discipleship) says America has 40 years of Discipleship programs and yet they are not disciplined,” Chang said.

Chang also showed a chart of Marketplace Culture versus Disciple’s Counter-Culture and bemoaned about today’s Christians’ attitude.

“You know when we are too comfortable, we think we don’t need God. Many Christians today don’t have compassion for the lost soul which means God’s salvation is no longer important to them.”

From Relativism to Marketplace Lifestyle Trends, Chang touched

on Faith Privatisation and Detached Behaviour which are obstacles to getting closer to God.

Chang then showed the steps of how Jesus disciplined his followers by showing His intimacy with God, integrity and love for them.

His session ended with a touching story of Taiwanese Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-Tsi (1923-2012) who in the face of life and death, showed great foresight, turning a difficult time in life as an opportunity at the service to all.

SESSION 3 - Facilitating the Two: Christian Growth Strategy from EMC Perspectives by Dr. Wong Sung Ging.

For the opening, Dr. Wong asked the floor: “Many are Christians but few are disciples? There is no difference between a Christian and a Disciple? There is a real difference between a Christian and a Disciple? All disciples are Christians? All Christians are disciples?

“Our objective is to understand the challenges we face in disciple-making today, to confirm our focus on growing people with a process and to introduce Christian Growth Strategy and share our Christian Education experiences,” said Dr. Wong.

Dr. Wong also reiterated that disciples are made in all spheres of life, within and outside the church. Christlikeless is the true mark of Discipleship, he declared.

“Disciple deficit, losing the next generation, materialism, secularism, consumerism, relativism and syncretism are challenges we face today and in the future,” warned Dr. Wong.

He also touched on spiritual growth, saying that it has to be an intentional effort.

“It requires developing habits. It is a process and is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs. It also needs relationship and takes a variety of spiritual experiences.”

The Associate Lay Leader of Emmanuel Methodist Church Bintulu outlined the Christian Growth Strategy into Basic, Intermediate and Advanced.

Under each category, growth objectives, expression in Life and Ministry, Short and Long Term programs were given with suggested curriculum.

After the Forum, feedback were sought from the participants on the two-day event.

Daniel Cheng from Sibu said, “It reinforces again the importance of a Christian transforming a life. Discipleship is a journey with Christlikeness attributes; it’s not about programs but relationships.”

Medical doctor from Kuching Simon Wong commented, “The Forum has allowed me to catch up with my friends. It was well-organized. More importantly, it helped me to re-ponder on the issue and the cost of discipleship at the marketplace.”

Chairman Rev. Chin summed up the Forum by reiterating on the importance of disciple-making. “We need to get back to the basics that are so important.”

*By James TC Wong,
Grace Methodist Church*

Dedication of Sengoi Methodist Library

Mrs. Nathalie Means widow of the late Dr. Paul B. Means, one of the pioneer missionaries who was instrumental in the planting of the Sengoi mission in Malaya was present at the official dedication ceremony of the Dr. Paul B. Means Memorial Library on Monday, 17th March, 1981, at the Sengoi Methodist Workers' Training Centre in Kampar, Perak.

Dr. and Mrs Means were missionaries in Singapore and Malaya from 1929 to 1939, and they had written a book, entitled '*And the Seed Grew*', which is about the Methodist Missionary work among the Sengois in Malaya/Malaysia, during the past fifty years. Mrs. Means has recently been working in this region for the past six months, putting the final touches to this fine piece of work.

This missionary couple first learned about the evangelisation of tribal people when they were posted to Medan, Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies, in 1927. A Toba Batak pastor, Rev. Lamsana L. Tobing, told them about the marvellous transformation of the Toba tribe by the Rhenish Mission. Later, Dr. Means accompanied Rev. Carel Hamel on several trips to the Asahan jungle, where the Methodist Church had opened work among the Simalungan tribe of Bataks and he was greatly thrilled to see the effects of the Gospel in certain villages and became deeply concerned for those who had not yet been reached in the vast jungle of Asahan.

This concern for tribal people developed while in Sumatra and when they were transferred to Singapore at the end of 1929, they discovered that there were tribal people in the Malay Peninsula also. The opportunity to meet these tribal people came when Rev. J.J. Kingham, a fellow missionary, invited them to accompany him on a trip to Kuantan, Pahang. They located a man with a rowboat to take them down river to the place where the aborigines lived. When

they came to a small clearing where a single house on stilts stood about eight feet above ground, they found it deserted, the occupants must have gone into hiding when they heard them coming; but the Sengoi women had evidently never seen a European woman before and their curiosity overcame their fear and finally two of them crawled through the waist-high grass to have a closer view. When Dr. and Mrs. Means returned to Singapore from their exploratory trips to Pahang, Dr. Means proposed to Bishop E.F. Lee of the Methodist Church a plan to open work among the Sengoi; many people at that time felt that the tribal people should either be ignored and allowed to live in their pristine and innocent state of nature or be left to be absorbed into the Malayan complex of cultures and civilisations; on the contrary, Bishop Lee was anxious to have government approval for this philanthropic Christian approach to the neglected tribes of the hills.

The general objective of the programme was to bring the blessings of the Christian life in its widest and deepest implications to the tribal people who had been living in physical and spiritual darkness and ignorance.

Alexander Simanjuntak, a Batak Christian worker, who was a hill tribesman from Sumatra had volunteered to go as a Christian missionary to work among the hill tribe in Perak. He planned to start a school programme, by which he would have a real opportunity to make contact with the Sengois, and help them to meet some of their basic needs.

First Sengoi Evangelist

The first school was officially opened on 21st October, 1930 at the 16th mile Pahang Road, with only three pupils. Similar schools were opened in other areas later on. Alexander introduced a pleasant Sengoi youth, Bah Prah, to Dr. Means. Bah

Prah had accepted Christ as his Saviour and Alexander felt that he would make a good evangelist if he could have proper training and suggested it to Dr. Means. Later Bah Prah went to Singapore where he was given Bible instruction and Mrs. Means coached him in his reading and writing. He was also invited to speak at church services in Singapore and after a period of three months he returned to his settlement to serve his people.

Newspaper Controversy

Shortly after the Methodist Church celebrated her 50th anniversary in Southeast Asia, a special article appeared in the Straits Times, Singapore, about the Sengoi Mission and the good work the Christian missionaries were doing, in spite of the deeply-rooted customs inspired with the native religion which embraced animism and demonology, the fear of disease and death. A strong reaction to this article appeared shortly afterwards, accusing the missionaries of interfering with the "real children of the jungle". Probably the best answer came from the government ethnographer, Mr. Noone, who expressed appreciation at the way the Methodist Missions operated.

"And the Seed Grew" traces every major phase of the Methodist Mission's endeavour to educate and evangelise the tribal community in this part of Malaysia. According to Bishop T.R. Doraisamy, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore from 1973 to 1976, "hardly any name associated with the Sengoi work has been left out. The student of missions will look at it as a case-study and identify principles, motives, issues, philosophies and theologics in action. The Methodist Church owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. and Mrs. Paul B. Means for their example of Christian obedience in the planting of the Sengoi mission."

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