

## 2021 Episcopal Address

My dear co-workers, delegates in Christ, we thank God for the grace and mercy, that we can all attend this year's Annual Conference safely. It is a pity that this year we still cannot meet physically to have our meetings. In May this year, when I saw that the air tickets were on promotion, I immediately sent messages to the pastors and the members of Executive Board and urged them to purchase air tickets to Perth. Subsequently, due to the unpredictability of the Covid-19 pandemic, the person in charge of the venue in Perth allowed us to cancel our booking and has returned us the rental deposit in full. The Executive Board decided that, once again, the Annual Conference for this year shall be held on online platform, similar to that of last year. I hope that next year we can return to physical meeting.

Last year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our church ministry has undergone great changes, with most of the ministries not being able to be carried out in church but on online platforms. In last year's episcopal address, I was worried that our brothers and sisters would lose the sense of commitment towards the church that they belong, and that believers may feel distant due to lack of physical worship. In fact, participating in online worship, especially watching Youtube live, does not bring any sense of participation for brothers and sisters, even more so when they could freely stop their worship by disconnecting themselves. A number of brothers and sisters did not attend online worship on time, and some were doing other activities simultaneously during online worship. Such half-hearted worship is not constructive for believers' spiritual lives.

Sending off Year 2020 and welcoming Year 2021, we had hoped that this year would be better than the last. However, the Covid-19 pandemic is getting more serious and more dreadful. The coronavirus has been evolving constantly. With the existence of the highly contagious Delta variant, it has spread across the globe causing spikes in Covid-19 cases in multiple areas. The virus is gravely lethal with a number of youths losing their lives to it. The number of young children who have caught the virus has also been increasing. This year is another restless year, with the States of New South Wales and Victoria spending the majority of days under lockdown. Most of the church ministries were conducted online. We are thankful that vaccination has to a great extent reduced the risk of one contracting the virus and has been proven effective in the prevention of complications, hospitalisations and death.

### 1. Reflection and Thanksgiving

Looking back at AC's ministries this year, I continuously give thanks to the Lord for His abundant grace and love. I would like to share some with you:

(1). The pandemic situation has caused us to be unable to visit all the different churches. However, to date we could still visit 2 cities: Sydney and Adelaide. AC Lay Leader Brother Thomas Ling and myself have on 10<sup>th</sup> April organised "Leadership Camp: Arise, Spiritual Leader" and "Methodist Night: Vision Sharing of Annual Conference Ministry" in Sydney, with around 50 participants; the next day, I preached at Carlton Methodist Church (LP Thomas Ling preached to the English Congregation) and Redeemer Methodist Church. On 15<sup>th</sup> May, we held "Leadership Seminar" and "Methodist Night: Vision Sharing of Annual Conference Ministry" in Adelaide, with more than 20 participants; the following day we preached separately at Holy Methodist Church and Goodwood Methodist Church.

(2). Redeemer Methodist Church successfully acquired a building at 3, Hartley Road, Seven Hills, NSW 2147 to be used as a church on 16<sup>th</sup> February, at a purchase price of \$626,000. Mercy Methodist Church has also acquired a church building on 19<sup>th</sup> May at 13, Plumbs Road, Tanah Merah, QLD 4128 at a purchase price of \$850,000. I am especially thankful that these two churches do not need to obtain bank loan for the acquisitions. Besides, in September this year, Faith Methodist Church has also fully settled the loan for the acquisition of 65, Kingston View Drive, Kingston, TAS 7050. During the pandemic, we could still see God's abundant provisions.

(3). The Church has an urgent need to raise theological students. Training theological students needs funds. Last year our Theological Education Scholarship Fund was in deficit. This year, the situation has greatly improved. I thank our God for touching the hearts of individuals and churches to make offerings to support the training expenses. May our Lord reward those who gave offerings. In February this year, this Board received 2 substantial offerings totalling \$86,000. In addition, offerings from this year's Theological Education Sunday, from local churches and a few brothers and sisters amounted to \$35,000.

(4). This year there were 5 churches that had their anniversary thanksgiving celebration, of which I have written Bishop's Exhortations to be published in the memorial publication, namely for Carlton Methodist Church (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), Kingsway Methodist Church (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), Immanuel Methodist Church (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), Gospel Methodist Church (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) and Calvary Methodist Church (8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary). On these occasions of celebration, we must not forget all the grace of our Lord. We thank our Lord for His guidance and blessings. I hope that each and every local church will leave behind a beautiful trail as they march on year after year.

(5). Some church ministries have expanded their scope through the usage of online platforms. The participants of worship sessions included not only local church members but also involved overseas family members and friends. Recently, one of our churches could not hold physical Mid-Autumn Festival evangelism gathering, but they switched to hold it on Zoom with 203 participants logged in. More than 70 were new friends; 13 accepted Christ (half the spot, the other half in break-out room sessions after the event). In addition, for 2 consecutive years, we have had brothers and sisters from different local churches attend our Family Discipleship Seminar and be equipped online concurrently, unlike previously, when a speaker would have to spend a week to fly to different cities to hold many sessions of the same seminar. This year, our Board on Christian Education also rolled out online Sunday school for our brothers and sisters with every unit lasting 8 hours and to be conducted online on 4 Sunday evenings. To date, 3 sessions have been completed and with positive responses.

(6) This year the Methodist Medical & Mission's planned ministries in places such as India, Nepal, Cambodia, Sri Lanka have been carried out successfully. Thank God for touching the hearts of many brothers and sisters, and friends of MM&M to generously offer funds to support these works. Special mention has to be made of the India Covid19 Crisis Appeal whereby we managed to raise more than the initial target of \$150,000 within a short span of 4 weeks, to help the victims in Oorugonda Village and Gujarat Methodist District, and to help to purchase ventilators for Nadia Methodist Hospital. The victims who benefited from the fund have started to attend church services and some have even accepted Christ and were baptised. (For more details, please refer to MM&M's report.)

(7). Thanks to our Lord's guidance, 3 churches that have employed English-speaking pastors:

Camberwell Methodist Church has employed Pastor Allan Quah in August this year. Eight Mile Plains Methodist Church engaged Pastor Clarence Koh, and Carlton Methodist Church has employed Pastor Philip Ng in October after having no English-speaking pastor for 2 years. May the Lord advance the English Ministries of these local churches through these English-speaking pastors.

## **II. Evaluation & Reflections**

The 2019-2022 CMCA Theme is “Building a Church after God’s own heart.” From the teaching of our Lord Jesus, I think a Church that is after God’s own heart is: (1) A church that pursues unity in one spirit; (2) A church that prays together in one spirit; (3) A church that nurtures disciples; (4) A church that lives out the love of God; (5) A church that actively involves in global missions. I really hope that all the pastors, LCEC members and members of local churches will build our churches by following these factors.

In order to achieve the theme of “Building a Church after God’s own heart,” we have drafted four sub-themes in 2019-2022: 2019 – Abiding in the Lord to bear much fruit; 2020 - Building healthy families to serve the Lord; 2021 - Caring for the Community to reach the lost; 2022 - Equipping the church for cross-cultural missions. In last year’s Episcopal Address, I mentioned that these sub-themes are not just for the goal of that year’s ministry, but also to provide direction for our Annual Conference in these few years.

### **(I) Individual Spiritual Growth**

Participation in building a church after God’s own heart is a starting point in the training of every person who serves to establish a good relationship with God. It is also the foundation of our faith. We must seriously build a firm foundation for our faith. Otherwise, whatever we do in our families, in the church, as well as in the community would merely be like building on sand, and they would not be able to withstand the test of “rain, torrent and wind”. In this busy era, Christians can easily be influenced by the burdens of vocation, temptation of materialism and the pursuit of trends and fashion, thus throwing our spiritual life out of balance. Whilst God values all that we do, He is more concerned about our being. Of course, serving God is important, but to be like the Lord is even more important.

At times Christians would encounter unforeseen storms of life. Under such circumstances, how would one stand firm and live a Christ-like life? The key lies in the daily training of our spiritual life. Training in spiritual growth is about training our spiritual life in a way that would enable us to understand the will of God in our lives and would enable us to derive the power from God to accomplish what we cannot do in our own strength, thus manifesting the beauty of Christ. Dallas Willard once said: “Spiritual training is emulating Jesus Christ who is the mentor of our spiritual life as well as the mentor of our whole personality.”

In order to assist brothers and sisters in all Methodist churches to be grounded and rooted in spiritual faith, the Board on Christian Education drafted a blueprint on Spiritual Growth of Christians in the Annual Conference in 2019. The blueprint enables a believer to grow progressively from being a hearer of the Word to being a learner of the word, from being a learner of the word to being a doer of the word, from being a doer of the word to being a preacher of the word. The Board has also offered different courses (Edification for young believers, Edification for believers, Edification for disciples and workers’ training). If we were to

use these materials earnestly, they would definitely be of help to the spiritual growth of believers. Apart from this, our daily personal devotion, quiet time and listening to God's voice are part and parcel of our spiritual growth. We should exemplify John Wesley's attitude in reading the Scriptures. He once said, "I'm sitting alone far from hassle, only God is here. Before him I open his book and read to find the way to heaven." As far as John Wesley was concerned, to be in solitude with God and His word, one must set aside the time and maintain a reverent attitude.

## **(2) Family Discipleship Seminar**

Having established a firm foundation for our faith, we should be disciples after God's own heart in the family and in society. The church-family relationship is very close. From the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's epistles, we notice that many churches began from families. After God has given His Word to the church, God's people must put the Word into practice in the home. The moment we affirm and master this connection, there will be effectiveness in the life of the church. Hence "Establishing the family, Serving God faithfully" should be the objective of every Christian family.

This year the Board on Christian Education organised the second national Family Discipleship Training. Through internet live-streaming, brothers and sisters in all local churches were invited to attend. The Chinese seminar and English seminar were conducted on 13<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> September, respectively. Each seminar was comprised of 4 sessions. The speaker of the seminar was Rev Moses Tey and the topic was "God's Blessing: The Gospel and the Family". Total number of participants was more than 400. Hopefully those who had attended would adopt Deut 6:1-9 as the principle of nurturing their children and thus pass on their faith to the next generation.

Apart from this, this year the conference has designated 12<sup>th</sup> Sept as "Family Day". The purpose of this is to strengthen the knowledge of the importance of family ministry. The Board on Christian Education has invited Bishop to prepare a bilingual exhortation video clip on establishing loving families. On the occasion, apart from the speaker's theme talk on family, the Board also suggested each church share a family testimony or song presentation by a family. Unfortunately, quite a few churches did not take up the suggestion. Moreover, if families in every church observe family altar, our children do not only learn the truth in the church but will live out the faith in the family. Through family altar and sharing, members in the family will interact in the Lord and will learn to intercede for one another. Spouse relationship strengthens and becomes a good role model for the children. A healthy family can lead a church to renewal and revival.

## **(3) Christian Social Concerns Ministry**

In my Episcopal addresses over the last two years, I have repeatedly used examples from the Bible and John Wesley to illustrate that the social concerns ministry is an important church ministry. The chairman of the Board of Christian Social Concerns, Rev Elijah Chew and his board members have planned a series of programs for this year. Although not all the programs could be completed, hopefully pastors, church leaders and fellow brothers and sisters will have a greater burden for Christian social concerns ministry. In order to allow brothers and sisters to have a better appreciation of the social concerns ministries for this year, we have set Feb 21<sup>st</sup> as

“Annual Conference Day” to be observed in every church, with the speaker’s message about this year’s secondary theme of “Caring for community to reach the lost”. The Board of Christian Social Concerns has also prepared a video clip to introduce the ministries of the Board. Bishop also provided a bilingual PPT slide-show based on the same theme. At the beginning of the year, the Board published a bilingual booklet ‘Board of Christian Social Concerns’, introducing the ministry plan of this board.

Due to the failure of getting a suitable speaker, Christian Social Concerns Awareness Day originally scheduled for the month of April was cancelled. The Commission of Christian Social Concerns of Australia South District organised an online forum on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Pastors and the chairpersons of Christian Social Concerns committees from various churches share their respective plans of social concerns ministries. “The church and Social Concerns” online seminar originally scheduled for the month of July was postponed to September. There were 110 participants in the Chinese session and 50 in the English session. The joint effort with MM&M in launching social concerns activities overseas has received strong support from various churches. More than AUD\$100,000 was raised to support ministries of helping the poor overseas. Please refer to the reports from MM&M and the Board of Christian Social Concerns for further details.

In last year’s plan, there is an item about encouraging each church to implement an activity which is related to social concerns every 2 months. In October, I invited all ministers and pastors in charge to list down one or two of their main social concerns activities. Their responses are recorded in the appendix 1. For further details please refer to the reports from the various local churches. A word of thanks to all local churches for executing the ministries. Hopefully, each church will thoughtfully build a bridge with its local community.

#### **(4). Nurturing English-Speaking Youths**

Nurturing English-speaking youths is a pressing ministry. However, we have encountered huge challenges and obstacles, leaving me with a sense of helplessness and frustration. Two ministries were launched by the Annual Conference. However, these two ministries were not met with the level of participation we had hoped for from our English-speaking youths. The first ministry was accomplished through LAMM which provided preliminary theological courses for the second-generation youths. The plan for this year was to launch 4 courses, namely Biblical Interpretation, Christian Leadership, Church History, and Christian Worship. There were 22 participants in the first course. There were too few participants in the second course and so it was cancelled. There were 7 participants in the third course and 11 in the fourth course (these numbers included some adults). Three other courses are being planned for the year 2022, but whether these courses will be launched according to plan would depend on the response of the participants.

The second ministry was Ministry Training Strategy: Two Year Internship. The plan was to train believers who are interested or who understand their calling. Such candidates would undergo training in the local church under the mentorship and guidance of the pastor. Thanks be to God because this year we have 2 youths participating in this programme - one from Camberwell Methodist Church and the other from Glory Methodist Church. Hopefully both of them would receive good training.

Perhaps the leadership of the Annual Conference do not sufficiently understand the needs of the English-speaking youths, the problems they face and the influence from other non-Methodist

English-speaking denominations. Hopefully, the Youth director and Annual Conference Youth Committee will have constructive communications. What worries me more is that some of our youths may not be interested in getting to know about the origin and history, faith and theology as well as the characteristics and organisation of Methodism. They may also not approve of our administrative structure. We can only pray that the Lord will raise up God-loving Methodist youths.

### **(5). Online Sunday Worship**

Due to covid-19 pandemic, our Sunday Worships, Fellowship Meetings, Bible Studies, Ministry Training and all other meetings moved online since March 2020. On the topic of online Sunday worship, I would like to give my personal opinions and suggest some avenues for improvement. In the beginning, I participated in online Sunday worship or preached to my computer (Because I could not see the congregation) with a sense of helplessness. Nevertheless, after a year of reflection, I have accepted this new normal.

I have been thinking about how the way of worshipping God had changed from Old Testament times to New Testament times: Firstly, there was the Tabernacle Worship during Moses' time. Secondly, there was Holy Temple Worship during David's kingdom. Thirdly, there was Synagogue Worship during the time of captivity. In the New Testament, Jesus said clearly: "A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24) Therefore today, regardless of worshipping physically or online, what is most important is to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Most of our churches use Youtube live-streaming for online Sunday Worship. Personally, I feel this is not ideal because Sunday worship via Youtube live-streaming is not able to deliver the effect of congregational worship. The participants merely watch the proceedings without any sense of participation or any sense of commitment. Participants are probably not punctual or may also be performing other activities whilst the worship is in progress. Some may even leave during the worship. After all nobody is watching them. Hence such online services lack the authentic experience of a physically gathered community.

If we have to run online Sunday Worship, I suggest churches consider using ZOOM instead. Doing so, everyone would sign-in on time and turn on video cameras. Every Sunday we can also have different people rostered for prayer, scripture reading and testimony. Even the speaker can interact with the congregation during sermon. New friends could be introduced during announcement time. After the worship, I would encourage members to interact online for 10-15 minutes. In so doing brothers and sisters would experience a fuller sense of online community.

## **3. Vision and Plans**

### **(1) Implementing the 2022 plan "Equipping the Church for Cross-cultural Missions"**

As we continue to practice "Abiding in the Lord to bear much fruit," "Building healthy families to serve the Lord", and "Caring for the community to reach the lost," next year we will also move toward "Equipping the Church for cross-cultural missions". A church after God's own heart should be concerned with the ministry of universal missions. As I have mentioned, Christians are not

only concerned and involved in their own church, but God wants us to spread His salvation of love for the world to the ends of the earth.

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, we can see that the God we worship is the God of “all nations of the earth,” and He is also the God of missions, and He wants the nations of the earth to be blessed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr, a renowned Old Testament professor, spoke of God’s great message of redemption after the fall of man, the flooding of the earth, and the failure of the ambition to build the Tower of Babel. (cf. Gen. 3:15, 9:9-27 and 12:1-3) For Kaiser, there are three important Old Testament passages (Gen. 12:1-3, Ex. 19:4-6 and Ps. 67) that make it clear that God has a missionary mandate for all the people of Israel. God, in His eternal plan and will, has often entrusted Israel with the responsibility of proclaiming His grace to the nations, and He has purposed for Israel to be a nation that proclaims His salvation.

In the New Testament, God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled through Christ and His Church. The New Testament begins with a reference to Abraham. Matthew’s Gospel begins with the words, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac .....”. For Matthew, the promise is not necessarily of Abraham’s bloodline descendants, but of spiritual descendants who will meet the Messiah in repentance and in faith. Matthew records that Jesus said, “I say to you that **many will come** from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 8:11).

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His disciples to receive power from the Holy Spirit and commanded them to “be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It was Jesus’ desire that all nations on the earth would have a part in His kingdom. The Book of Revelation records that John saw in a vision “a great **multitude** that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Rev. 7:9). The multitude here are referring to the Gentiles who believe in the saving power of Jesus.

How can the church be equipped for missionary work? In my 2019 Episcopal Address, I suggested some possible actions, such as: nurturing believers with a vision and mission for ecumenical mission; organizing church evangelism teams, practising personal evangelism ministry; commissioning short-term mission teams to experience overseas mission work; reserving funds for long-term missionaries; and commissioning suitable missionaries to mission fields. We may also consider participating in cross-cultural mission work in Australia.

In order to achieve our involvement in ecumenical mission work, I believe that the most fundamental thing we can do is to equip our pastors, leaders, brothers and sisters to have the same love for the lost that Jesus had - “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Mt 9:35-38)

How can we have the same kind of love for the lost that Jesus had? First, we need to make the

mission of Jesus our own. In Luke 19:10, Jesus declares that He came to “seek and to save the lost”. God desires for everyone to be touched and reached by the power of the Gospel that changes lives. Just as Jesus sought the lost when He walked the earth, He is still seeking the lost today, and we are His ambassadors. As Jesus’ ambassadors, Jesus’ mission should be our mission as well. Second, we are to envision a ripe harvest. In John 4:35, Jesus said, “Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Jesus used the growing crops in the field as a practical lesson to illustrate the urgency of reaching out to the lost. When the wheat is ripe, the harvest cannot be delayed, or it will fall to the ground and be lost. As disciples of Jesus, we need to ask the Lord to help us have mercy on the lost souls and to use us to go out and harvest the ripe harvest. Third, we need to understand the horror of hell. This is true about God’s final judgment because it is clearly taught in the Bible. Jesus talks about hell more often than any other person in the Bible. In the Gospels, He talks about hell more than heaven. When unbelievers die, they are immediately aware of the pain, suffering and torment of hell as described by Jesus in Luke 16:22-24. Such knowledge should surely inspire us to love the souls of the lost, hoping that they will have the opportunity to hear and receive the Gospel.

Our Board of Mission plans to send one full-time long-term missionary (in partnership with a mission agency) in 2025, fully funded by the Board of Mission, with one additional missionary each year thereafter. By 2030, we expect to have seven long-term missionaries sent and funded by CMCA to the world. This is a very large project and I believe it presents a great challenge to the conference, especially with regard to long-term missionary candidates and the source of funding to support missionaries. For missionary candidates, we ask God to send His own workers. Regarding missionary support, we hope that local churches will be willing to increase their support from the current 2% for missionary work to 10%, with 1% increment yearly. (Most churches currently support mission ministry at 2% of their total income.) Please see the detailed report from Board of Mission. Let our Annual Conference be actively involved in ecumenical mission work in obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus.

## **2) The urgency of raising pastors**

Among the 22 elders currently serving in our Conference, based on the retirement age of 65, 2 will retire at the end of this year, 4 will retire in 2022-2025, and 6 will retire in 2027-2030. We hope that our pastors and leaders will see the urgency of nurturing workers and that we can actively discuss and provide feasible policies and plans to achieve this.

In addition to active prayer, we pray that the Lord will raise up more pastors in our congregation, and that each congregation will look for dedicated Christians among its members and encourage them to take some theological courses in our “LAMM” or local seminaries. In the past, the Annual Conference Youth Fellowship held the National Methodist Youth Conference every year and called young people to dedicate themselves in full time ministries in their theme talks. In fact, we can now use Mission Week or special Sundays such as Youth Sunday or Junior/Adult Sunday to deliver the message of “Who can the Lord send?”

Board on the Ministry or District Commission on the Ministry can plan two-day, one-night “devotion camps” in different cities to explore “Why should I consider full-time ministry? and “How do I understand God’s calling?” and so on. We also invite our theological students to share their testimonies. Pastors of churches should regularly gather these devoted Christians to



encourage and guide them in the path of full-time ministry. If every pastor and retired pastor is willing to spend one hour every two weeks to nurture these devoted Christians, the number of theological students in our conference will certainly increase.

In addition, we must strengthen the “LAMM” operation. It is hoped that the institute will have more credited students, more online classes, and full-time or part-time teachers and administrative staff. To run a good institute, not only do we need sufficient manpower, but we also need adequate financial resources. In fact, for the past nine years, we have been short of manpower and financial resources. Thankfully, we have trained several local preachers, and one of our graduates has been ordained as a pastor in a church in Melbourne. I hope that the new Board of Directors will have a more thorough and long-term plan so that this institute can train preachers with the characteristics of our church one day. We also hope that the brothers and sisters of the conference will recognize the importance of theological training and be willing to support the ministry of this institute financially.

### **3) Withdrawal from World Methodist Council (WMC) and joining Global Methodist Church (GMC)**

First of all, a brief introduction of these two organisations: (1) **The World Methodist Council (WMC)** is made up of 80 Methodist, Wesleyan and related Uniting and United Churches representing over 80 million members in 138 countries. It engages, empowers and serves member churches by encouraging Methodist unity in witness, facilitating mission in the world, and fostering ecumenical and inter-religious activities.

(2) **The Global Methodist Church (GMC)** --The United Methodist Church in the U.S. split on January 3, 2020, after a long-standing controversy over same-sex issues. The Global Methodist Church is formed by those who insist on a male-female couple system. The Wesleyan Covenant Association and its 17 members form a Transitional Leadership Council, and the next General Conference of the United Methodist Church (August 10-14, 2022) will formally approve a plan for the denomination’s amicable separation. Local churches will be able to join the Global Methodist Church shortly after it is formally established. “The primary purpose of the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly,” said Keith Boyette, chairman of the Transition Leadership Council, in a statement. Moreover, the GMC will adhere to “the traditional teaching of Christian marriage as a covenant between man and woman and God’s condition for human sexual expression. For more information about the Global Methodist Church, please refer to [www.globalmethodist.org](http://www.globalmethodist.org)

Our conference officially joined the World Methodist Council in 2005 and was accepted as a member of the Methodist family. From the monthly First Friday Letter published by the World Methodist Council in recent years, we have learned that the WMC tends to be inclusive and open in its interpretation of gender issues, which is different from our beliefs. I suggest that CMCA should consider withdrawing from the World Methodist Council (WMC) and joining the Global Methodist Church (GMC). When biblical principles are despised and the authority of the bible is trampled on, staying in such an organization does not make much sense.

### **Conclusion**

I am grateful to the members of Council of Episcopacy for their care and love for me and my wife,

and for remembering our needs in prayers. I am also grateful to those pastors and co-workers who brought my weekly prayer list to the church's prayer meetings so that more members could pray for me and the needs of the conference.

There are other important ministries at the conference, so please read the reports from the respective ministry chairs. Lastly, I would like to call on all pastors and delegates to work together to build a church after God's own heart. Pray that God will help us all to serve Christ, who gave His life for us, with a clear conscience and the right motives.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Albert Wong", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Bishop Albert Wong

### Appendix 1: Main social care activities of CMCA churches in 2021

EMP MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support MM&amp;M India Appeal.</li> <li>• Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> </ul>
Sherwood MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherwood MC sisters made wool beanies and socks and donated to RSL and local community services.</li> <li>• Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> </ul>
Carlton MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with Anglicare, Red Cross, and Uniting Annesley Haberfield through blood donation and caring for those who were homeless, mentally ill, and disadvantaged in our local community.</li> <li>• Sending mission fund and prayer supports for overseas social concern needs.</li> </ul>
Redeemer MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing 40 Days Lent “Fast, Prayer and Give” from 17/2 to 4/4/2021 to participate and to donate money saved from fasting toward Christian Social Concern Fund.</li> <li>• Essential care packs consisting of hand sanitizer, toilet papers and face masks were delivered to elderly families (26x packs) as a way of showing our care for them during pandemic lockdown time.</li> <li>• Woolworth gift cards were mailed to elderly members during the parent Sunday week as a token of our love and care for them.</li> </ul>
Mercy MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported MM&amp;M India appeal (\$9,850.00 was collected).</li> <li>• Raising fund (\$5570) for a missionary who was diagnosed of lung cancer. After he has gone with the Lord on Easter Sunday, Mercy MC raised more fund (\$5600) to assist his wife and two children.</li> <li>• Asking our members to donate food in support of our local foodbank during the Christmas Festive session.</li> </ul>
Canberra PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping Lisa whose husband is suffering kidney failure.</li> <li>• Providing support for Nick’s family as their baby was severely underweight.</li> <li>• Giving care to a person who suffered suicidal thought during Covid.</li> </ul>
Camberwell MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church &amp; members support MM&amp;M in providing Covid aids to India &amp; Nepal (Church supported A\$30,000.00)</li> <li>• August’s Food Drive to support Iranian Church for Christ (raised \$2150.00)</li> <li>• Support HISTEAM, Malaysia in provide social care (partnering with churches in Malaysia) (Church supported A\$20,000.00)</li> </ul>
Trinity MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported MM&amp;M India appeal (\$12,100.00 was collected).</li> <li>• Blood donations drives in April (2 times), 7 participants.</li> </ul>
City Light MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present gifts to two old-folks homes during Christmas and Parent's day. Showing cares and loves towards the old-folks home residents.</li> <li>• Weekly live streaming prayer meet that also prays for the community. Pray for COVID, Victoria legislative situation and etc..</li> </ul>
Preston MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In December 2020, Preston MC donated AUD2700 to Nepal churches for providing 500 dinners and distributing 40 winter clothes to homeless people on the streets of Kathmandu, as well as children's Christmas gifts of Nepal churches.</li> <li>• ICC (International China Concern) promoted the donation of red envelopes for China orphanages on Chinese New Year Sunday Service at 14 Feb. 2021. Total raising fund is AUD1260.</li> </ul>

Monash MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organised an online medical talk on 24/07/21. The speaker was Dr Yeng Kwang Tay. There were more than 200 participants.</li> <li>Caring for a single mother family. Thank God that they are willing to join our church and are going to be baptised.</li> </ul>
Glory MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood donation on May 1st. 6 participants.</li> <li>Collected imperishable food from the congregation and delivered to Knox Infolink on 7/7.</li> <li>Encourage member to approach pastor and group leaders for any emotional supports and mental supports during this extended lockdown.</li> </ul>
Goodwood MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted an online auction and managed to raise \$953 for Hutt Street Centre supporting homeless community.</li> </ul>
Holy MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving gifts to elder over 60 yo on Parents Sunday.</li> <li>Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> <li>Caring giving gifts to elder over 60 yo on Parents Sunday: church members take turn to deliver food and accompany her after her operation for two weeks time.</li> </ul>
Praise MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not undertaken any social concern ministry.</li> </ul>
Praise NW PP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community meal and food delivery to the community on every Tuesday evening.</li> <li>Vinnie van at church site to provide hot foods and drink as well as information support to the community on every Thursday.</li> <li>Has setup Emergency food relieve open to the community.</li> <li>Burnie PP is Christmas Operation shoe box Drop-off and collection point in Burnie.</li> </ul>
Faith MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted few English learning sessions since April 2021.</li> <li>Broaden our view of Christian Social Concern Ministry and have a greater idea of the special ministry in Hobart through the Prison Ministry talk by Pastor Norm.</li> <li>Organized Chinese New Year, Dumpling Festival and the Mooncake festival gatherings in outreach and to get to know to the Chinese community in Hobart.</li> </ul>
Kingsway MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study on Methodist Social Creed through small groups.</li> <li>Cyber Security talk was held on 11th Sep.</li> <li>Kingsway Street Party was held on 11th Sep. supported by Local Council with a grant of \$300.</li> </ul>
Immanuel MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brightwater Ministry on 1st Saturday of Every month with restricted visitations only.</li> <li>Salvation Army – Clothing and Goods during 8/8 – 25/8.</li> <li>Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> </ul>
Grace MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural Disaster Relief – Completed Bushfire, Flood, Cyclone (\$1500)</li> <li>COVID Support Relief – completed, India MMM and Compassion (~\$6000)</li> <li>Myanmar Support: \$2000 was donated to Methodist church at Myanmar. in Yangon to help Covid-19 related victims.</li> <li>Caring for Homeless: Red discipleship students made food and gifts for the homeless on 14/08/2021 and evangelises to them.</li> <li>Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> </ul>
Gospel MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feb 2021 Lord Mayor’s Bush Fire Distress Relief Fund.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote MMM India Covid Appeal in May.</li> <li>• October 2021 Salvation Army non-perishable food collection.</li> </ul>
Hope MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To raise fund for the Persian ministry.</li> <li>• Prison Ministry in Korat: To demonstrate Christ's love to prison inmates through toiletries care packages.</li> <li>• Operation Christmas Child Shoebox.</li> <li>• Blood Donation: Encourage members to participate in Sep. Blood drive.</li> </ul>
Calvary MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation Army –Food Bank: Twice a year, Before Christmas and Before Easter.</li> <li>• On April 5th, the church allocated \$500 yuan to help a family in needs during Covid.</li> <li>• Promote MMM India Appeal.</li> </ul>