

Chinese Methodist Church in Australia
22nd Annual Session of the Annual Conference

Episcopal Address

Bishop Milton Nee

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Introduction

During my first year as Bishop, I am grateful for the opportunity to act as a liaison between the Annual Conference and congregations. To achieve this, I have visited local churches, preaching centres and preaching points, delivered sermons in Sunday worship services, as well as in evangelistic and revival meetings. Additionally, I have provided training, given talks in leaders' forums, and communicated with PPRCs to better understand the ministries of each local church. I have visited pastors, offered encouragement, prayers, and support, which are essential components of the role as Bishop.

I am grateful for the support provided by AC Lay Leader, Thomas Ling, in AC ministries and for his dedication to the Lay Ministry and ministries at the Conference level. His promotion of Safe Church Awareness training is particularly noteworthy, as it facilitates the Church's on-going development in the present Australian setting. We extend our thanks to Jason Ling, the associate lay leader of the Annual Conference, for his role as vice-chairperson of the English Ministry Task Group established by the Annual Conference. The group's focus is on developing strategies for the English ministry, having initiated its first-year of study with District West as its case study. We anticipate receiving a statistical report on the current status of the English ministry in the near future and will proceed with developing practical strategies for the years ahead.

We extend our thanks to the chairpersons and members of the various boards of the Annual Conference, together with the principal and board members of LAMM, and additionally the director and committee members of the Methodist Medical and Missions (MMM), for their unwavering commitment and prudent advancement of the ministries across various boards, which will support the constant development and advancement of the Annual Conference in its ministries for the year 2023.

Quadrennial Theme

After thoughtful reflection and prayer throughout the year, I have established a set of objectives for the next four years, intending to offer guidance for the future.

Each year is associated with a specific theme.

2024-2027 Quadrennial Theme: Revitalise the Church, Advance the Gospel

2024 Theme: Be Steadfast in Prayer, Spread the Gospel - Nehemiah (Prayer and Revival), 1 & 2 Timothy (Refute Heresies, Guard the Pure Gospel)

2025 Theme: Be Equipped to Serve, Use Spiritual Gifts - Ezra (Return of the people, Building together), 1 Corinthians (The Greatest Spiritual Gifts)

2026 Theme: Persevere with the Mission, Be a Blessing to the Community - Proverbs (Compassion for the Poor), 2 Corinthians (Fundraising for relief)

2027 Theme: Obey God's Command, Go Into the World - Jonah (Mission to the Gentiles), Acts (The Mission of the Early Church)

Churches need constant renewal amid changing times. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." It is clear that the church's mission extends beyond safeguarding unchanging biblical truths and proclaiming the gospel to the world. To flourish, the church must demonstrate

shrewdness and flexibility in conducting its ministries, even amidst constant changes in society and its people. Therefore, we need the renewal of the Holy Spirit in our practices, forms, systems, and even in our mindset. This will facilitate the establishment of a church founded on biblical truth and the purity of the gospel that is relevant and modern, yet does not compromise on its biblical truth and gospel purity. Moreover, it should be effective, different, and appropriate in bringing people to the Lord.

Apart from that, the primary objective of the church is to spread the gospel. Jesus said in John 9:4, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work." And in the Great Commission he said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." (Mt 28:19, Mk 16). (Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:47-48, Jn 21:24-25, Acts 1:8). John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation, words of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches. One noteworthy aspect of these words is the call for churches to maintain the purity of their faith, preach the true gospel, and combat heresies and cults. Those who are persecuted for the sake of the gospel will be remembered.

Our church should prioritise spreading the gospel by becoming more missional. As we are in the final days, there is a pressing need to share the gospel without delay. It is imperative to follow the Apostle Paul's example of evangelism in response to the Lord's calling, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor 9:22).

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Since the Mission Conference was formed in 1994, CMCA (Chinese Methodist Church in Australia) will soon celebrate its 30th anniversary. The church has experienced significant growth since then, expanding from 8 to 23 congregations, including one in the Solomon Islands, with one preaching centre, and two preaching points, resulting in a total of 26 congregations. In addition to Mandarin or bilingual services, ten churches offer an English service every Sunday, resulting in a total of 36 weekly worship services.

Prior to the formation of the Mission Conference in 1994, Methodist churches were autonomously established in the five major cities of Australia. The vast majority of congregants during that period were of Malaysian Methodist descent. Since then, we have forged a single entity as CMCA and subsequently, sprouted more culturally diverse local churches.

The church's diversity includes a congregation of Chinese Christian immigrants from various countries and backgrounds, as well as seekers who were subsequently baptised. In addition, Chinese worship services have developed from being solely using one language to becoming bilingual or holding separate services in Chinese and English. Moreover, most churches offer distinct Chinese and English fellowships or small groups. Currently, the majority of local churches have both Chinese and English ministries.

With such diversity among our congregation, meeting the needs of our English-speaking worshippers presents a challenge. English Services were initially intended for non-Chinese speaking worshippers but now encompass those from non-Asian backgrounds and younger generations – including children, teenagers, and even young adults - who have been raised within the Australian culture and education over the past four decades. It is necessary to place more emphasis on our English ministry to better cater to this group. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account their distinctive requirements when planning and implementing (organizing and executing) ministry projects. Most of the young people in our congregation have grown up in our children's Sunday school. Australian education and culture have significantly impacted their conduct in relationships, worship, service, thinking, and outlook, leading to a deviation from our Chinese immigrant community's norms and practices. We are currently observing an age disparity wherein some churches are

progressively aging, with very few leaders in the congregation who were born or raised in Australia.

Consequently, our churches are presently encountering a period in which we need to be revitalised. Language presents an obstacle to the passing on of our faith to the younger generations. In addition, it is indisputable that the traditional Chinese immigrants and generations who were born or raised in Australia possess unique ways of thinking, living, and approaching church ministries. Preaching with a Chinese background presents a range of cultural challenges for ministers, such as preaching style, shepherding and relating to the younger congregation. Objective approaches that address these challenges are essential.

How can we enable the transition from one generation of churches to the next within church systems? How can we support future generations in recognizing and appreciating the distinctiveness of the Methodist Church while also implementing necessary modifications and adaptations?

These are some of the challenges encountered by the church at present. Over the years, numerous churches have been established in Australia, with CMCA having carried out extensive evangelistic work in Mandarin aimed at Chinese migrants of diverse backgrounds. The development of CMCA, particularly in its English ministry, requires recognition of the challenges encountered as we endeavour to improve the Chinese ministry. The rejuvenation of our English ministry in the forthcoming generation is crucial for the expansion of CMCA in the future.

Over the next four years (2024-2027), CMCA should seek a revival through prayer. We must acknowledge our faults, ask for forgiveness and identify areas that require improvement and transformation. It is important to increase our prayer efforts and engage more people through evangelism. We should actively seek and support potential candidates who are interested in pursuing full-time theological training and dedicated to serving in ministry. Prioritising our spiritual health is essential for fulfilling our role as a church. Part of this involves nurturing believers to discover their gifts and encourage devotion to ministry, serving the community through healthcare, education, and poverty relief. It is imperative to uphold the rich legacy of previous generations while fulfilling the Great Commission from the Lord, through spreading the Gospel and teaching the Word of God to the world.

We are thankful for having overcome the challenges presented by the Covid 19 pandemic over the past three years. In the sphere of evangelism, we face the post-modern humanism trend, compounded with the challenges brought about by the ongoing economic downturn, national political factors, and the influence/sway of immigrant culture. As faith in God increasingly becomes less central or even antagonistic, how will we communicate the gospel effectively in this environment?

In the last three decades, there has been a significant outflow of our young people, and our church now lacks a new cohort of emerging preachers who are better suited to lead the next generation. How can we build a church that continues to thrive across generations in Australia and serve our community and nation? Is it not time for us to do more to educate believers on promoting evangelism and missions?

Theme: 2024 Be Steadfast in Prayer, Spread the Gospel

In the Old Testament, Moses prayed for God's guidance in leading the people of Israel. Similarly, in the New Testament, the apostle Peter's prayers revealed a vision of the gospel. He accepted an invitation to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile. Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, he consistently requested that the church pray for him, asking for divine opportunities to preach the message of Christ.

Without prayer, there can be no gospel vision, no evangelistic power, and no discernment of God's leading. Therefore, it is certain that prayer and evangelism go hand in hand, and evangelism and church revival are interconnected.

Our Situation

We acknowledge that there is a low number of baptised individuals and conversions through evangelism in our churches annually. To bring people to faith and baptism, we need to increase our evangelistic efforts.

This entails identifying those individuals who require our urgent prayers and be reached with the Gospel.

Does the church have a prayer renewal strategy? How is the church encouraging active participation in prayer, which enables individuals to perceive that God receives and answers prayer? Our members should strengthen their faith through prayer experience, while our churches must pray for the growth of the church through gospel proclamation.

What can we do?

1. A preacher exemplifies prayer and preaching. A preacher is a person who preaches the truth and prays. Besides leading the weekly prayer meetings, preachers should increase personal prayer time, visit members more frequently, pray for them before and after worship service, and evangelize to seekers.

2. Christian Prayer Life. The Christian education of the church must have plans to nurture believers to have a daily devotional time with God, because revival begins with personal prayer.

3. The Power of Group Prayer. To train a group of individuals to become prayer warriors and intercede for others, they could either read a book on prayer together or take a course on prayer.

4. Establish a culture of prayer within the church. Following gatherings such as fellowships, small groups, and worship services, brothers and sisters come together to share and engage in communal prayer.

5. Corporate Prayer. Encourage the reinstatement of in-person prayer meetings, commencing with the return of ministers and leaders to church for prayer meetings, and urge all individuals to actively engage in prayer ministry.

6. Experience God's provision. Invite friends, siblings, relatives, and acquaintances who are experiencing difficulties or are in need to join the prayer meeting and experience the power of prayer together.

7. Prayer is Pastoral Care. Pastors and prayer warriors equip and be prepared to reach out to or visit those requiring prayer and to intercede on their behalf.

8. Proclaimers of the Gospel. Children's Sunday Schools, Youth Fellowships, Young Adult Fellowships, Adult Fellowships, Seniors Fellowships, and Women Fellowship should arrange training courses on how to personally share the Gospel. Develop a team of individuals for personal evangelism, incorporating

representatives from each age group and each fellowship. Once trained, they can share the Gospel with those of various age.

9. Prayer and Evangelistic Campaigns. Organize two evangelistic campaigns annually, with one in the first half of the year and the other in the second half of the year. The keynote event of each campaign will be an evangelistic meeting. Commence planning four months prior to the event, encompassing content, programme, posters and invitations. Ask the congregation to start praying for their non-churchgoing families and friends. Complete intercession cards and bring them to the church prayer meetings. Compile and present a list of all the names collected for prayer and distribute invitations two weeks ahead of the evangelistic event.

10. Church activities and evangelistic mission. Evangelism is more than just holding evangelistic meetings and promoting personal evangelism. In a church whose mission is the gospel, all activities of the church and its fellowships can be planned with evangelism in view. Such events may include camps, outings, barbecues, film shows, high-tea, and others, all with the aim of outreach to a wider audience.

11. Organize Gospel camps. Camps can be organised for various age groups, including children's holiday camps, teenage camps, youth camps, and church life camps. It is essential to focus only on the fellowship of believers but also on inviting new members to the camps and establishing positive relationships during the camps. The message should be gospel centred with altar call, giving non-believers an opportunity to receive Christ.

12. Relationships and Evangelism. In addition to training evangelist, believers should be equipped with the knowledge to demonstrate care and compassion in their daily relationships, reach out to others, offer love, and form friendships. Whenever appropriate, Christians should introduce Jesus to them or extend invitations to evangelistic gathering. The church should pray often for Christians to be witnesses in their daily lives, to be filled with love and to live a holy life.

13. Children can be evangelists. We need to train Sunday School teachers on teaching children that, aside from learning the Bible and nurturing their faith from a young age, they can also lead lives with a gospel mission. They can foster good friendships within their school community and serve as witnesses of Christ to their peers, family and elders. Additionally, they can encourage

their friends to attend Sunday school and participate in activities offered to children by the church.

14. Seekers Class and Baptisms. The Membership and Care stewards, combined with the Evangelism Committee and the Fellowship's Witnessing Officer, should pay more attention to individuals who attend church gatherings as seekers. They should find opportunities for personal evangelism, invite them to attend seeker and baptism classes. The prayer meetings should continually include prayers for and care towards those who have not yet been baptised.

Theme: 2025 Be Equipped to Serve, Use Spiritual Gifts

The New Testament's four gospels provide insight into Jesus Christ's model for Kingdom ministry. He recruited disciples, travelled with them, trained them for many years, and ultimately commissioned them to preach the gospel worldwide before His ascension.

The Book of Acts records that Paul, who persecuted the church, was summoned by the Lord to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. This occurred after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. As he preached the gospel and established churches, he mentored the younger generation, including Titus and Timothy, to become followers of the Lord. In addition, he charged Timothy with the task of teaching others who can in turn teach others themselves. Paul's strategy for spreading the gospel was to train disciples who would then make further disciples, ensuring the continued spreading of the gospel and the teaching of truth for generations to come.

Equipping believers cannot be fully accomplished through a single discipleship course or Bible study. All courses within the church aim to instruct believers in the pure faith and gospel, discovering and improving their gifts, cultivating their spiritual character to become new creations in Christ, and ultimately becoming disciples of the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, these courses encourage members to take part in church ministries and serve as witnesses of the gospel in the wider society.

Our Situation

We acknowledge that Bible study courses in the church primarily aim to develop knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and awareness of the purity of faith. However, to what degree do these courses influence a Christian's commitment to ministry?

The majority of those who attend small groups, fellowships, and worship services in churches are often only engaged at the level of attending meetings. The question at hand is how we can guide them to transition from a Christian congregational life to one of discipleship through active involvement in ministry.

There is considerable room for enhancing the quality of children's ministry. It encompasses more than just enabling parents to attend worship services with ease or imparting the fundamental tenets of faith to children. Primary school children attending Sunday school present a significant challenge for churches as they possess the potential to become the future heirs of the Kingdom of God. What are effective strategies for fostering a robust Christian faith in children from Christian families before they start formal schooling?

Also we are well aware of the dearth of young people being edified in God's Word in fellowships and churches. We have a shortage of English-speaking young preachers and a shortage of youth mentors. So far, we are still ineffective in our efforts to produce youth ministers and to encourage commitment to theological studies as preachers.

We are aware of the lack of youth being educated in the teachings of God in churches. Our shortage of English-speaking young preachers and youth mentors complicates our striving for better youth ministry programs and fostering theological studies for future preachers. This inadequacy poses a challenge that we aim to overcome.

What can we do?

1. The preacher exemplifies the utilization of spiritual gifts and ministry. The pastoral responsibilities of a minister who is appointed to a church by the Annual Conference comprise of regular preaching, sacrament administration, pastoral visits, counselling, prayer and intercession, conducting Bible studies, evangelism, mentoring new believers, membership training, church

governance, and increasing the number of followers of Christ. Ministers have received extensive seminary training, providing them with the necessary skills for their church duties. They should utilize these skills consistently in their ministry, focusing on improving weaker areas through diligent study. Demonstrating a positive attitude and a mature spiritual life under the guidance of faith in God is essential for setting a good example to others.

2. Aim to shape the spiritual character of believers. We must provide training for the leaders responsible for small group Bible studies, instructors of disciple classes, and Sunday school teachers. In addition to providing training on leading Bible studies, class preparation and content delivery, we also strive to impart a deep understanding that the classes serve not only to teach the Bible and help students grasp fundamental truths of the faith, but also to help them discover their spiritual gifts through God's word, to actively engage in ministry and exemplifying the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

3. Encouragement and recruitment of children educators. We need to enlist Christian teachers who are dedicated to teaching children and provide them with effective training in Christian education. This training will enable them to identify the characteristics and needs of children of different ages and teaching methodology, develop proficiency in planning and delivering lessons, maintain effective classroom management, and abide by safety regulations, thereby strengthening the basis of faith and nurture healthy character in children. This lays the groundwork for a proper mindset of belief and a sound character prior to the child commencing their education in the wider world.

4. Appreciate and affirm those involved in youth ministry. We must acknowledge and commend the abilities of the next generation of English-speaking youth in their ministry roles. It is vital that we grant them enough flexibility to operate to the best of their capabilities, and where they may need guidance, we must tread patiently, supporting them towards realising their potential and providing positive feedback. It is imperative that we establish trust with them, ensuring that they have the encouragement required for continued collaboration.

5. Identify and encourage suitable candidates to be trained for full time ministry. Discover and support gifted youth or adults within the church who have the aptitude for preaching and encourage them to undertake theological education. During their theological studies, whether full-time or part-time, arrange internships within churches and provide guidance from the minister-in-

charge as they learn the responsibilities of a pastor in the church. It would be helpful for the church to allocate funds to support individuals who have chosen to leave their professional careers to study theology, easing their financial burdens. We pray for more suitable individuals to dedicate their lives for full time training and ministry in the future, which will help to address the issue of lack of pastors replacing retired ministers.

6. Employ English-speaking youth workers. When a church is without a youth minister, they should consider employing either a part-time or full-time youth worker. It is not crucial for this person to have completed formal theological training. As long as they uphold the true gospel, are devoted to youth ministry, exhibit abilities directing the youth ministry, and are agreeable to acquiring fundamental theological education throughout their ministry, they can be considered for the youth worker position. The role of the youth director is to direct and provide guidance to young people, attend meetings, activities, and lead devotionals and Bible studies, as well as praying with them. In addition, this person may serve as a Sunday school teacher for an older class, facilitating a more effective transition of children from Sunday school into the youth fellowship.

7. Promote LAMM courses. We encourage Sunday school teachers, fellowship committee members, LCEC members, brothers and sisters to enrol in LAMM courses. The courses aim to produce more local preachers, and enable some students to pursue full-time theological studies in the future and become our full-time pastors. With theological training, church leaders will be better equipped to serve and some may become mentors for young people.

Theme: 2026 Persevere with the Mission, Be a Blessing to the Community

The Gospels document the multifaceted service of the Lord Jesus Christ in meeting the needs of people daily through his incarnation. Paul, during his various evangelistic travels, observed the needs of many individuals and urged the churches to contribute towards assisting those in need. There are numerous individuals documented in the Bible who dedicated themselves to serving the community. Examples include Dorcas, who carried out good deeds, Cornelius, who assisted the destitute, and even Zacchaeus, who, after repentance and conversion, became a blessing to the poor.

Jesus taught his disciples through the parable of the Good Samaritan that pious beliefs alone are insufficient without corresponding acts of service. The scribes and Pharisees witnessed a poor man robbed and wounded by bandits lying by the roadside, but they passed by without offering assistance. It was only the Samaritan who showed compassion and provided aid to the man. James also stressed the importance of combining faith and deeds, stating that faith without works is dead.

We can observe from the history of church development and missions that, when missionaries reach an unreached people group, their initial focus is on serving the needy in society. This includes providing medical care, education, and support for those living in poverty. The act of serving others has consistently preceded the preaching of the gospel. This unbreakable sequence involves addressing the physical and material needs of people's lives before introducing them to the gospel for the salvation of their souls.

Our Situation

We thank the Lord that many of our churches undertake social concerns ministries on an annual basis, including blood donation drives, visits to nursing homes, aiding the homeless, provision of food to those in need, and more. We have also initiated efforts to concentrate our attention on various rudimentary/basic social services.

Furthermore, our church engages in occasional social service initiatives, such as organizing fundraisers to aid the victims of floods, fires, and earthquakes in specific regions.

We have churches that regularly provide financial support to Christian organizations that serve the community. Currently, some churches also support the MMM under our Annual Conference. In the years ahead, we aim to encourage more local churches to contribute by providing fixed annual allocations to support these organizations.

However, some local churches face financial struggles, leading to the exclusion or restricted provision of funds for community services in their annual budgets.

What can we do?

1. Continue with regional social services. Local churches are encouraged to provide ongoing social services in their respective areas, including existing programs and the creation of new ones. Consistency in this effort is key to its success.

2. Budget for Social Services. Encourage the Christian Social Concerns Committee of every local church to allocate funds each year towards social care, including support for our MMM.

3. Plans to set up Methodist Community Services. We need to explore the possibility of setting up Methodist Community Services, either nationally, by district or by city. The range of services offered could include elderly home care, disability care, psychological counselling, marriage and family counselling, vocational counselling, and services for new immigrants.

4. Continue to develop service projects in mission areas. Internationally, the Board of Missions, Board of Christian Social Concerns, and the MMM provide services needed in the mission fields that we have started. We can establish educational centres, schools, medical clinics, orphanages, homes for the elderly, and women's centres.

5. Extend our caring ministry to the AC Mission District. We should provide direct support to further the social service work in our Mission District. Apart from Nepal, Cambodia and India, we can provide assistance to the social concerns ministries of the Methodist churches in PNG and Solomon Islands by financially supporting them to carry out their work, or by organising short-term mission teams to provide services directly, such as Christmas boxes, food deliveries, schoolbags, household items and other items.

Theme: 2027 Obey God's Command, Go Into the World

The final instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ, prior to His ascension, was the proclamation of the Great Commission, commanding His disciples to make disciples of all nations, by baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Subsequent to His ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples, empowering them to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles, and many came to the Lord. Paul, chosen by the Lord

Jesus to be an apostle to the Gentiles, proclaimed the gospel of Christ to non-Jews with wholehearted dedication. He affirmed that he would do whatever was necessary to bring some to salvation, even if he was unable to save all. Paul also professed that he no longer lived for himself but for Christ, who lived within him. He had the mindset of a missionary to the entire world. Yes, our Lord Jesus commissioned us to bear witness to the Lord from Jerusalem, across all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. He has promised to be with us personally until the end of the age as he fulfills His mission in the world.

Our Situation

Most of the local churches within CMCA have existed for over a decade, meeting weekly and contributing enough to support church operations, including the salaries of at least one and possibly up to four pastors. With increasing numbers of local churches emphasizing missions, many have established an annual budget for missions while also providing regular support to both missionaries known to us, as well as those we support through missions organisations. Additionally, the majority of our pastors have facilitated short-term mission trips lasting one or two weeks in areas where mission work is needed. Our churches have largely progressed from the early days of focusing on church planting, recruiting members, establishing worship and fellowships, and sometimes facing financial difficulties.

In addition to the Board of Missions, MMM was established under the Annual Conference to carry out missions work. Through the missions work of the Board of Missions and the missions organisations, we have been able to expand our missions platforms in Nepal, Cambodia, India and beyond. However, additional medical and administrative personnel are needed to participate in the medical teams, and more financial resources are needed. We are thankful for the more than 30 pastors and local churches that our Board of Missions is supporting in Nepal. Both human and financial resources continue to grow with support from local churches and individuals.

Over a decade ago, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (PNG) were designated as CMCA Mission Districts under the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches (WFCMC). At that time, we partnered with Sarawak, Malaysia, and the Methodist Church in Taiwan. Currently, we continue

to oversee the missions work within these areas. The Methodist Church in PNG has now become a Mission Conference, with one local church, four preaching centres and four mission points. The conference is led by Superintendent Rev Pang Kee Kong, along with 4 ministers and an administrative co-worker who maintain and develop the ministries of the church. The Solomon Islands Methodist Church is still our Mission District and currently has one local church and a few meeting points under the pastoral care and leadership of missionary, Ps Esther Yeung.

We face the challenge of expanding our missionary work in the future. To grow and advance our overseas missions in the current mission fields and explore new ones, we must promote missions education in churches and boost awareness and commitment among members. A bold spirit will be crucial to this effort in the upcoming years. It is hoped that the Board of Missions will achieve its goal of deploying seven long-term missionaries and raising \$550,000 in missionary funds by 2030 through concerted efforts.

Also, in Australia, although there are churches in major cities, it might be worthwhile to examine the increase of immigrants in rural areas in recent years, to determine whether there is potential to establish new churches in these regions. Examples include Darwin in the Northern Territory, Gold Coast and Cairns in Queensland, Newcastle in NSW, Mandurah in WA, Geelong in VIC, and elsewhere.

What can we do?

1. Strengthen Annual Conference's current missions ministries. District Superintendents of each district, along with ministers of local churches, are tasked with promoting greater participation from members in the programmes and ministries organized by the Board of Missions and MMM. This includes engaging in missions month, short-term mission teams, and short-term medical missions carried out throughout the year. Each local church is encouraged to set a fundraising target for the AC Missions ministry, and to inspire individuals to contribute during yearly Mission Month fundraising activities. We hope that the Annual Conference Missions Fund will receive regular financial and manpower support from local churches and fellow believers. Moreover, local churches are urged to organize short-term teams to improve the missions work

of CMCA, focusing on areas developed or affiliated with Board of Missions and MMM. Priority should be given to these areas to enhance the missions work.

2. Expand the scope and scale of Methodist Medical and Missions. This organisation functions as the helping hands of our Annual Conference, serving the community. The power and effectiveness of this ministry depend solely on the backing from congregations and fellow members. Since this is our own organisation, it is crucial to support it. God has blessed us with a registered charity organization in Australia, and we must plan for its future growth. Our objective is to appoint a full-time Director General, an Administrative Secretary, and establish an office to enable our expansion from a small Christian social care and missions organisation to a larger one.

3. Promote missiological courses and forums. The missions programme can consist of a series of two-hour Bible study sessions held once a week, either in conjunction with or alternatively to the current discipleship programme. Local churches may organise missions camps or missions revival meetings during the annual missions month. It is envisaged that these courses and forums will equip committed brothers and sisters to participate in the missions work of the Annual Conference and potentially be sent as missionaries by the Annual Conference in the future.

4. Recruit professionals for Missions ministry. Pastors of local churches are urged to seriously consider talented professionals working in fields such as medicine, nursing, teaching, administration, childcare, women's ministry, elderly care, agriculture, animal husbandry, engineering, and computer networking, among others. Encourage these professionals to attend missions courses, participate in short-term mission teams, join the MMM, and become missions partners with the Annual Conference. The aim is that some individuals would become short-term (a few months to a year) or long-term (four years) missionaries.

5. Establish/set up long-term missions funds. The Board of Missions should seek mission partners who can provide monthly, quarterly or yearly contributions to the mission fund for more than five years. This will supplement the occasional donations received from congregations and some individuals. (The partners should have a long-term commitment to the cause.)

Furthermore, we can consider carrying out missions and evangelism in cities where churches have not been established.

Looking Ahead: There's still a lot to be done

The scope of the 2023 Episcopal Address is limited, and guidance from the Holy Spirit is needed for wise decision-making, so that subsequent Annual Conferences may build upon it. My aspiration is to further explore CMCA's future direction in the years ahead.

1. Administrative staff employed by the AC office – to enhance the management at AC level.
2. AC website and platform for communications - to keep up with the pace and needs of the times.
3. AC Board of Development's direction for long term development - to formulate and promote the future development of the church.
4. Establish Annual Conference Safe Church Council - to ensure a Safe Church environment.
5. Explore the possibility of establishing a Methodist Care Organisation in Australia - to provide care for Australian residents.
6. Explore the possibility LAMM becoming a fully-fledged seminary - to train the new generation pastors for the Chinese church.
7. Embracing the future of the English ministry – preparing the church for renewal, so that it can meet the needs and priorities of a new generation.
8. Potential District Reorganization - to improve task allocation and pastoral care.

In closing, I would like to encourage you with Psalm 90:16-17, " May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us-yes, establish the work of our hands."