

## **President's Report: from 2016 to 2014**

World Methodist Council Meeting, 13-14 August 2024

Gothia Towers, Gothenburg, Sweden

Greetings in the name of the triune God! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Beloved delegates of the World Methodist Council!

It has been eight years since we have embarked upon our pilgrim journey since 2016 in Houston, TX, USA. We have delayed the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Methodist Conference from 2021 to 2024 because of the COVID 19 Pandemic. As Portuguese sociologist Boaventua de Sousa pointed out, the 21<sup>st</sup> century started with the COVID in 2020, not on Jan.1, 2000. When the management team of WMC met with the host church leaders of Nordic countries in March, 2017, they proposed a theme for the next Conference which was further articulated as “On the Move: Migration, Pilgrimage, and Guiding Light.”

I would like to reflect on my apostolic ministry for the Church on the Move consisting of the three following periods along with the three subthemes of the Conference (pilgrimage, migration, guiding light): From Conflict to Communion: 2016-2018, Decoloniality and Methodism: 2018-2022, Social holiness and Ecumenical synodality: 2022-2024.

### **From Conflict to Communion: 2016-2018**

“Reconciled at last! Reconciled at last! Thank God Almighty! We are reconciled at last!”  
(from the final words of keynote speech at the 19<sup>th</sup> World Methodist Conference in Seoul, 2006)

The moment of truth occurred when I gave my keynote speech at the 2006 World Methodist Conference held in the divided Korean Peninsula. The theme of the conference was “God in Christ Reconciling.” It was in the same conference that the World Methodist Council and its member churches affirmed their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the landmark ecumenical document, “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (JDDJ) signed at Augsburg on October 31, 1999, on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church.

In 2016, exactly 10 years later, the keynote speaker became the first Asian president of the WMC. The very first agenda I brought up was the formation of the Roundtable for Peace in Korea among the Korean Methodist Church, the United Methodist Church, and the World Methodist Council. This agenda was born out of “Seoul Theological Declaration: *Status Confessionis* 2016” which states: “The nuclear threat on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is putting at risk God’s creation, the peace of Christ, and the life that lives through the Spirit. We, the Methodist theologians, cannot stay silent while the people of God are living with the reality of suffering and anxiety. Thus, we declare the following confessions to the KMC General Conference, UMC General Conference, and World Methodist Conference of 2016. The members of the KMC, UMC, and WMC must contribute to the peace of the Korean Peninsula and the world by renewing the covenant before God in creating a denuclearized zone.”

Remarkably the JDDJ-Lund event in Sweden on October 31, 2016, both commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> year of the Protestant Reformation and celebrating the JDDJ, was an ecumenical milestone on the path from conflict to communion. The Joint Statement of the Lund event claimed: “Our common faith in Jesus Christ and our baptism demand of us a daily conversion that impede the ministry of reconciliation.”

The second Roundtable for Peace in Korea was held on 25 March, 2017 at the KMC headquarter in Seoul, Korea. It set up the following three agendas: 1. To construct a theology of peace and reconciliation, 2. To discuss on a process of peace treaty, 3. To collaborate further with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) on humanitarian projects.

The third Roundtable for Peace in Korea was held in Cater Center and the GBGM in Atlanta, GA, USA from 9 to 11 November, 2018. It sought to strengthen the church’s role of mediation in the matters of the normalization of DPRK-USA relations, and in the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, alongside the church’s longstanding call for global denuclearization. The Roundtable invited to Atlanta the top church leaders of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) from Pyongyang. However, their participation was prevented by the US travel ban. **Atlanta Statement (appendix 1)** declared by the second Roundtable includes the following content: “We commit ourselves to the peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula in order that we may help create a civilization of *sangsaeng* (mutual living) in and beyond South Korea and North Korea, including all North-East Asia and eventually the whole world.”

The fourth Roundtable for Peace in Korea was held at Kwanglim Methodist Church and Ambassador Hotel in Seoul from 28-29 August, 2023. Given that 2023 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean Armistice agreement, the Roundtable reemphasized the importance of dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and peaceful process, supporting the global Korea Peace Appeal, promoted by the churches in Korea and the Korea Peace Action, co-convened by UMC-GBGM and KMC-GBM along with numerous civil organizations. It also proposed the Korea Peace Night during the upcoming 22<sup>nd</sup> World Methodist Conference as well as **the Resolution for Peace in Korea (appendix 2)** in the World Methodist Council meeting.

Indeed, the Roundtable for Peace in Korea has been instrumental in calling for the Kairos Korea which will transform the people of both North and South Korea who have been the victims of the East-West Cold War in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the agents of the South-North *sangsaeng* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Decoloniality and Methodism: 2018-2022**

“The historical reconciliation, monumental and important as it is, cannot remain only an end itself. A breakthrough to a new ecumenical spring can appear only when our ecumenical partnership strengthens the capacities of our churches to respond to the world’s needs. Therefore, our ongoing work of reconciliation needs to decolonize the structures of the imbalance of power in the international systems.” (Bishop Dr. Munib Younan’s address in the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, 2017, in Windhoek, Namibia)

Having consecutively participated in the post-Oxford Institute Conference on “Empire and Decolonization of the Wesleyan Tradition” in 2018 at Wesley House in Cambridge, UK and in the WMC-OAIC (Organization of African Instituted Churches) Conference on “Theological Education and Decolonization” in 2019 at KwaZulu-Natal University, South Africa, I have started reflecting on the new realities facing Methodist churches at the crossroads of global migration and economic nationalism on the one hand and of religious fundamentalism and secular humanism on the other.

Despite the end of historical colonialism based on foreign territorial occupation, we should never fail to recognize colonialism as a form of capitalist and patriarchal domination. There is ‘the abyssal line dividing metropolitan and colonial societies.’ (Boaventura de Sousa)

We need to be keenly alarmed by the fact that the fast rise of rightwing extremism and economic nationalism in Europe and North America would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God, namely, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who have been made into cultural and political targets. We are living in times when our shared life is threatened, uncertain, fragile and fragmented. In the midst of unprecedented geopolitical shifts, widespread violence and war in and among nations and peoples disrupt the livelihoods of families in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Central America, setting millions of people fleeing for refuge or migrating to more promising locales. Many people from the global South have been already crossing the abyssal line dividing metropolitan and colonial societies. They are on the move. Therefore, God is on the move with the people of God. Yes, of course, we the Church have to be on the move, too.

Forced migration leaves the vulnerable subject to trafficking. 70% of North Korean women and girls in China are being victimized, sometimes being sold as little money as \$200. They are threatened by Chinese government to be repatriated to North Korea particularly when they attempt to defect to South Korea. We are living in the ‘Walled World’ in which the 73% of world’s income is own by the 14% of world’s population in the global North while the 27% of world’s income is own by the 86% of world’s population in the global South. (TD Vrij Nederland) The six prominent walls are DMZ-Korea, Australian Northern Approach, The United States-Mexico Wall, The Melilla Border Fence/ The Ceuta Border Fence in Northern Africa, Schengen Border in Europe and The Palestine Wall. The rise of a system of militarized global apartheid has created a racialized world order to securitize the global North and foster violence in the global South and to gate North while imprisoning South. A critical discernment of the abyssal line goes beyond a mere identification of the two separate worlds with their parallel worldviews. “The gulf between those two worlds now constitute the most pressing challenge to the unity of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” (Wesley Granberg-Michaelson)

I participated in “the Global Conference of Human Fraternity” held in Abu Dhabi, Feb. 3-4, 2019. More than two hundred leaders of world religions came to have open dialogue and discussion on the role of religion facing our contemporary dichotomy between secular humanism and religious extremism. “Document on Human Fraternity for world peace and living together” pointed out, in modern civilization “there exists both a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. All

this contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and desperation leading many fall into “religious extremism, national extremism and also intolerance” “in the world, be it in the East or West, what might be referred to as signs of a ‘third world war being fought piecemeal.’”

It has been a great blessing for Wesleyan scholars, pastors, and activists worldwide during the Pandemic that ‘the World Parish Webinar (WPW) on Decolonizing Wesleyan Theologies’ started on January 14, 2020. At the first webinar I presented a paper entitled ‘The New Realities of World Christianity: The Church on the Move in the Walled World of Apartheid.’ Prof. Filipe Maia edited the papers of the WPW for the publication of the book. *Decolonizing Wesleyan Theology: Theological Engagements from the Underside of Methodism* (2024). Prof. Pablo Guillermo Oviedo wrote the second chapter, “A Decolonial Physics: Medical Science, Healing, and the Ecology of Knowledge in Methodism.” Reinterpreting John Wesley’s Primitive Physics in the light of the epistemologies of the South, Oviedo’s work provokes a prophetic as well as therapeutic reimagining of Wesleyan theology from the underside of Methodism in the midst of Pandemic crisis.

It is my great honor to receive a book dedicated to me by Dr. Upolu Vaai and other Methodist theologians from the Pacific as well as from the West: *Decoloniality and Methodism: A Commitment to Ecological Justice* (2024). Upolu’s thesis question is “If ‘the gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness,’ as Wesley believed, would that include the ecological as well?” The great hermeneutical lesson we can and should learn from this volume is a challenge for us to imagine a critical (decolonizing) and creative (interfaith) recapitulation of the ancient and native consmotheandric (world-God-human) visions in order to rethink Wesleyan theology not as a regression from logos to mythos but as both a necessary inculturation of the Church on the Move and a promising progression from logos to the Spirit.

My second visit to the Holy Land from 11 to 19 Oct., 2022 challenged me to encounter ‘Christ at the checkpoint.’ Having been to Hebron, the Tent of Nations, and even Gaza, the evening party at the Wi’am Center in Bethlehem after the celebration of 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Methodist Liaison Office (MLO) at St. George’s cathedral in Jerusalem was most impressive. Besides 12 delegates of MLO from UMC, BMG, and WMC there were scores of Palestinian Christian leaders and peacemakers. Under the evening shadow while smelling the tear gas from a nearby refugee camp I preached on Luke 13:1-9 (text on ‘Repent or Perish’).

The Spirit of God illumined my heart and mind so that I read the text in the light of Koreans' colonial experience during Japanese occupation. The way Jesus interpreted the sacrifice of those Galileans executed by Pilate and the death of 18 persons in Jerusalem because of the fall of Siloam tower helped me to see the complex reality of Palestinians in their occupied land. Having visited the market place torn down by the Israeli soldiers and settlers in Hebron, the MLO delegation revisited the Tent of Nations, recipient of the WMC Peace Award in 2018. For the last 100 years of farming and the last 32 years of struggle to remain in their own land, Mr. Daoud Nassar and his family with the multinational ecumenical friends of deep solidarity have been practicing non-violent resistance, refusing to be enemies against anyone. We had a brief yet unforgettable 'holy conferencing' on the 'hope against hope' among the Palestinian young people. Without being judgmental against either desperate armed resistance of the extremists (like the Galileans!) or collaboration of the common people through the Israeli labor market (like the Siloam laborers), I realized that we should rather focus on our own repentance of sin to bear the fruits of justice and peace in the Holy Land.

This is our Wesleyan imperative for the perpetual repentance of believers who commit sin of either commission or omission. Our sin of commission is caused by being uncritically coopted by Christian Zionism. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." (Isa. 11:9) Only the true vision of Zion can overcome the abused ideology of Zion. Our sin of omission is our silence about the injustice of occupation causing a new form of apartheid. We are obliged to discern the difference between antisemitism and Jewish ultra-nationalism. Since my last visit in 2019 the space of freedom and human rights of Palestinian people has dramatically shrunk. The COVID-19 Pandemic has further damaged the conditions of health, education, and livelihood and economy. I felt indignant in the depth of my soul because of the sheer reality of the ugly walls and the cursed checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza. Then, the voice of God came to me: "Shrinking space for Palestinians will bring about shrinking of Israeli time for the day of the Lord. Repent! The judgment of God is at hand!"

Despite the horrible tragedy of war between Hamas and Israel in Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023 I feel urged by the Spirit to witness what 'we' at the Wi'am party experienced together. After a short devotion with my sermon we had a wonderful Palestinian dinner. We ate, drank, heard music played by a Palestinian music professor with a native instrument. While people were still talking, I suddenly got up and started dancing! Doud's elder brother who was sitting

beside the musician shouted with joy as he saw a dancing Korean old man apparently looking drunk with spirit (Yes, with the Spirit!). It took for a while to get the dance going with the rest of people. Now almost all of us were dancing, immediately learning and practicing Palestinian group dance. What a wonderful night! After all, doesn't the peak of Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son end with "eat and celebrate" (Luke 15:23) as well as "music and dancing" (Luke 15:25)?

### **Social holiness and Ecumenical synodality: 2022-2024**

"How would our 'peace flow as a river' (Isa. 48:18), when we thus 'followed peace with all men!' (Heb. 12:14)!" (John Wesley, Sermon 49, "The Cure of Evil-speaking," III. 5)

"If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea." (Isa. 48:18)

"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

In the third year of global Pandemic (2022) I joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe, Germany. The assembly theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity" was paradoxically relevant as we recalled young Dietrich Bonhoeffer's prophetic vision at the historical juncture of new Cold War in Europe: "There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared. It is the great venture. It can never be made safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to mistrust and this mistrust in turn brings forth war." (Address to Fano Ecumenical Conference, 1934)

In 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurance against the use of force against the territorial integrity of Ukraine was also signed by Russia. In 2014 Russia breached the Budapest Memorandum by the annexation of Crimea. Both NATO and US were not able to play the role of 'restrainer against the lawlessness' (2 Thess. 2:8) of Russia because they, particularly US had been waging war in Afghanistan. As a reaction to the Russian invasion, neutral EU states Sweden and Finland were pushed to join NATO. In a parallel development Australia, UK, and US launched the AUKUS strategic alliance, while Australia, US, India, and Japan increasingly worked together in the Quadrilateral Dialogue. Both AUKUS and

Quad were designed to contain China's perceived expansion, but also contributing to an increasingly polarized world order.

I condemn a new Cold War which is the great sin of our times, and its despicable propaganda with nuclear weapons in hand really must stop. It can any times force small countries at the boundary of super powers to break into proxy wars which can eventually cause sleepwalking into the world nuclear war three. I reject that Feb. 24, 2022, which is the day of Russian invasion, has any apocalyptic significance neither in European history nor in world history because "by the cross God disarmed and triumphed over the principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them." (Col. 2:15) Facing unholy alliance of Christianity and political power in the context of nationalism, populism, and new forms of totalitarianism, we need to seek an ecumenical theology after Christendom. Ironically rejoicing, Bonhoeffer claimed in his *Ethics*, "The *corpus christianum* is resolved into its true constituents, the *corpus Christi* and the world. The *corpus Christi* confronts a hostile world."

The form of Christ resulting from a new awakening of the Church on the Move will bear the sacramental and eschatological inheritance of the *corpus Christi* as the later Bonhoeffer witnessed in his prison cell: "A new language of Jesus will be the language of a new righteousness and truth, proclaiming God's peace with men and the coming of his kingdom." (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 300). This affirms the influence of Christological surplus of Dostoevsky's works upon the early Bonhoeffer: "Dostoevsky let the figure of Christ appear in Russian literature as the idiot. He does not separate himself, but clumsily causes offence everywhere. He does not go around with the great ones, but with children." (*Christ the Center*, 35) Bonhoeffer's notion of 'universal responsibility' which owes to Dostoevsky's use of Russian verb *vinit* meaning "either something like being guilty for all, or being guilty in relation to all" was fundamentally grounded on "the wholly undefended humanity of Jesus, his willingness to be company of children, outcasts, people with no status or claim." (Rowan Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation*, 214-215)

I thank God Almighty that my final year from September, 2023 to August, 2024 has been most revealing and most blessed for me as disciple of Jesus Christ, seeking social holiness as *syn-hodos* (walking with) the least, not with the greatest, in the world. Before attending the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, First Session, Oct. 4-29, 2023 at Vatican City, I was invited to a panel discussion by the Waldensian church in Rome to respond to the question related to Matt. 15: 21-28 ('The Canaanite Woman and Jesus'):



“What is Christ trying to tell us by placing the little ones at the center of the community of disciples? How does he show that a fulfilled life is found via our vulnerabilities?”

Appropriating Ignatius’ method of imagining Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite mother, I talked about Jesus’ empathy awakened by the mother reminding him of his own who cared for him from the earliest time of being born naked, and also deeply rooted in his vulnerability from his birth to his death ending as the image of Pieta. And I shared my own sense of vulnerability in relation to my personal witness in the 2<sup>nd</sup> WMC Consultation on Migration, Sept. 4-7, 2023, Manila, Philippines.

When I read the following prayer at the Eucharist of the closing worship service, I was profoundly touched and could not help witnessing my story: “Today, you allow us this banquet, undeserved by our actions, an open table you serve us with love and kindness, not rejecting our lives and providing the refuge we seek and so long to find. We come to you naked, exposed and with no excuse to present.” Here is my witness: “Last night (Sept. 6, 2023) in my dream I was walking naked on a street in Manila. I felt shame because I was completely naked. I tried to cover myself in vain with a familiar looking briefcase which I used for a long time. Then I desperately sought refuge by entering a shabby shop in a shanty town. There were a few middle aged Filipina women. To my surprise they covered me with a blanket.” During the consultation three Filipina migrant workers shared their suffering and appealed to us for advocacy because even their government could not help them. As their eyes stare at me, I felt pain and immediately remembered North Korean refugee women in China most of whom have been trafficked and forced to both productive and reproductive labor.

I was sitting at the outdoor platform in St. Peter’s Square along with Pope Francis and many other senior church leaders (Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew I, and Lutheran World Federation general secretary Anne Burghardt, as well as leaders from Oriental Orthodox, Pentecostal, Baptist, Old Catholic, and Evangelical churches) during an ecumenical vigil of prayer organized by the Taize Community on Sunday afternoon October 1. I was one of more than 18,000 people who were invited to such a solemn moment of silence in adoration of three symbols at the altar: Crucifix of naked Jesus at the center, Scripture on the right, and Madonna and Child icon on the left. Meditating on the meaning of Jesus’ own nakedness and vulnerability made me to cry almost. The Crucifix reminded me of what the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lateran Council in 1179 at which “an

opponent of the Waldensians gave probably the best definition of the group's intention – 'Naked, they follow a naked Christ.'" (from Letter of Invitation to the 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Waldensian movement, Moderator of the Waldensian Board representing the Waldensian Evangelical Church – Union of Methodist and Waldensian churches in Italy, Oct. 12, 2023)

From the evening of Oct. 1 to Oct. 3 a three-day retreat of the Synod took place. As one of fraternal delegates I belonged to a small group of 12 persons consisting of a Catholic cardinal, bishops, priests, and lay women. In the first session of Conversation in the Spirit we were guided by a moderator to share one's prayer concern and what one felt spiritually. My Methodist DNA in me made me dare to expose my remaining 'sin in believer': particularly the carnal temptation I felt and my sin of unquenchable pride thirsting for vain glory. I also heard a young intelligent and prudential Catholic theologian's intense experience of desolation as he was informed of the '*dubia*' presented by a few Catholic elderly leaders criticizing Pope who opened the door of the Synod to lay leaders. He was one of a few persons in the group who expressed the appreciation of my presence as fraternal delegate.

As the Synod started on Oct. 4, everyone was placed at one of roundtables which consisted of 12 persons. One was required to prepare a four-minute talk on the topic of the week. Every session followed the order of Conversation in the Spirit as a dynamic of discernment in the synodal Church: personal preparation – silence, prayer and listening to the Word of God – taking the word and listening - silence and prayer – making space for others and the Other – silence and prayer – building together – final prayer of thanksgiving. I felt powerful consolation of the Spirit as I meditated on the Psalm 22: "To you they cried out and were saved, in you, they trusted and were not put to shame. I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you." (Psalm 22: 5, 22)

Among the assembly of more than 300 delegates and in the presence of Pope Francis I was the last speaker of 3-minute free intervention in the evening of Oct. 6. With fear and trembling I read my prepared text as follows:

"My greetings on behalf of the People called Methodists, people of holy conferencing! I would like to begin with the paragraph 23 of *Instrumentum Laboris*: 'The synodal path is necessarily a penitential one.'

I feel I am a prodigal son coming back to the Father at home probably not with angry elder brothers, but rather with welcoming brothers and sisters like you here and now. I would

like to express my heartfelt gratitude for Pope Francis, *buon pastore* of the universal Church, for two reasons.

First, I am grateful for my ecumenical homecoming through this synod of synodality: communion, participation, mission. I feel at home with my roundtable working group. As my nakedness before God is covered by the righteousness of Christ, my vulnerability as a human being has been particularly covered by the love of my two sisters from Asia in Christ, Momoko and Anna Teresa, in between them I have privilege to sit.

Second, I am grateful for my ecological homecoming as we celebrate Pope Francis' another Exhortation *Laudate Deum*. If our ecumenical homecoming is our turning to the Heavenly Father through the mediation of the Son, our ecological homecoming is our *synhodos* with the Mother Earth through the intercession of the Holy Spirit.

I would like to share three questions. 1) As the prodigal son coming back to the Father can be anyone, are we genuinely open to the victims and the least of our secular society? 2) As the migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are crossing the abyssal line dividing metropolitan and colonial societies, can we be the people of God on the move as a synodal Church? 3) As an indigenous leader of the Amazonian region said, 'Mother Earth is bleeding,' how can we 'accompany the pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home?' (*Laudate Deum*, 69) Thank you!"

Upon entering the Vatican's Paul IV Audience Hall, Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome director Rev. Matthew A. Laferty who was accompanied by Mr. Justin McLellan journalist of Catholic News Service heard the applaud for my speech. Here is what Mr. McLellan wrote in his report entitled "Ripple effect: Delegates discuss synod impact beyond Catholicism" (Oct. 17, 2023): "The Rev. Jong Chun Park, president of the World Methodist Council, said that although the Catholica Church is 'catching up' to other Christian communities in listening to the laity, 'at the same time it may give us a new path, because primacy and synodality could be well-balanced to give a good model even for Methodists.' In the Methodist discussions, known as holy conferencing, 'we do the decision-making and –taking at the same time,' he said, whereas in the Catholic Church's synod, discussions are held among all while final decisions are made by the pope.' That can give you a sense of order, a sense of authority, but in the Methodist tradition and other Protestant denominations, the sense of order and authority is sort of diluted, because the popular voice, the majority, rules,' said Rev. Park. 'We need to recover the sense of ecclesial leadership,' he said. 'The success of this synod on

synodality has great implications for the future church, not only for the Petrine Catholic Church but also for us Evangelical Catholic Churches and other forms of ecclesial communities.””

The most precious treasure bestowed on me by the grace of God was not so much of getting a nickname ‘patriarch of fraternal delegates’ as of sharing social holiness as the form of *syn-hodos*, a sign of which was clearly manifested when a dignified cardinal from UK told at my last roundtable meeting, “At first time I didn’t know why I came here and felt that I was wasting my time of a whole month. However, through the means of grace in this group sharing, particularly through Jong’s presence I experienced a conversion.” Social holiness as synodality means walking with people of God from the least to the greatest in conformity to Christ.

“If we suffer persecution and affliction in a right manner, we attain a larger measure of ‘conformity to Christ’ (Rom. 8:29)

To abandon all, to strip one’s self of all, in order to seek and to follow Jesus Christ naked to Bethlehem where he was born; naked to the hall where he was scourged; and naked to Calvary, where he died on the cross, is so great a mercy, that neither the thing, nor the knowledge of it is given to any, but through faith in the Son of God.” (from John Wesley’s *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*)

Here are my final words to share with you. The legendary Wesleyan theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Dr. Albert Outler appealed to people called Methodists in his address on Vatican II in 1966 which still rings true: “Vatican II has taken Roman Catholic Church a giant step toward the recovery of this same evangelical tendency. (Then,) non-Roman Christians will be confronted with hard choices of shaping up or falling behind.” (“Vatican II: Charter for Change”)

“Speak the second time, - Be clean!

Take away my inbred sin;

Every stumbling-block remove;

Cast it out by perfect love.”

(Charles Wesley, “Saviour of the sin-sick soul”)

Sincerely submitted by

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