

1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Dear All,

We would like to clearly express the facts surrounding the issue of the former part-time President of ETS. Unfortunately, there are false statements and accusations being made that are not truthful and disrespectful of individuals connected with ETS and EML.

In **2014** the Hong Kong Assemblies of God churches gathered together to celebrate the 100-Year Centennial Anniversary of the Assemblies of God around the world. This celebration was more than just an event but was the beginning of an opportunity and a platform for the AOG churches in HK to work together. Over the following years there were gatherings for pastors, sectional groups, workshops, relief and development agency projects, WAGF (World Assemblies of God Fellowship) conferences and local church seminars. The goal was to establish a platform for cooperative ministries to build on the AOG core values and to develop a future direction for the next generation of pastors, Christian leaders and church workers.

The result of these activities was the recognition for a new Association to be formed despite the challenges. In **May 2019** the establishment of a new Association was announced. Changes, adjustments and challenges would come but the main goal was having the HK-AOG churches cooperatively work together. ETS would continue to be the primary ministry for the Association.

The following By-Laws describe the relationship between the EML Directors and ETS Governors:  
*The Board of Directors shall appoint a Board of Governors for the purpose of sound administrative and academic management of Ecclesia Bible College. The Governors shall be accountable to the Board of Directors for the effective governance of the College.*

This is a clear understanding of the accountability of the Governors under the authority and direction of the EML Directors.

In **mid 2018**, both the ETS Governors and EML Directors began discussions for a Full-time President to lead and guide the Seminary into the future. Rev. Cheung had faithfully led the Seminary for many years in his position of "Part-time" President and it was agreed that the next step in the growth and development of ETS would be to have a Full-time President.

Over the past two years there have been many meetings and discussions concerning the position of the Full-time President. A Timeline of these meetings and decisions is included below.

In summary, Rev. Cheung was offered the position of Full-time President but after discussions between Rev. Cheung and the Governors, an agreement was Not reached.

As a result, in the Board of Governors' meeting (**July 2019**), there was a Resolution that was approved by the Governors stating: "*Rev. Edmund Cheung will be appointed as ETS president under the present conditions for one year, effective from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020.*"

There was a Letter of Agreement between PCHK Tai Po Church and ETS that Rev. Cheung would be the ETS President in a “part-time” capacity for One Year until 31 August 2020. The agreement was for one-year because the issue of a Full-time President was still being considered. This was understood and accepted by all.

The Resolution, also approved by all the Governors, stated that a Searching Committee would be formed with representatives from ETS Governors, EML Directors and a Pastor. As a result of several objections from some ETS Governors concerning the membership of this Committee, the Searching Committee was unable to proceed and the search for a Full-time President was suspended.

Both the EML Directors and former ETS Governors understood the transition to new Directors was in process during this past year. They knew that the terms of appointment for the Governors and President Cheung were ending on **31 August 2020**. This was not a secret plan or a hidden agenda by EML Directors. This was a clear and known process of transition that was understood over one year ago.

In the first week of **August 2020**, letters were sent reminding both the former Governors and the President of the conclusion of their term of appointments at the end of the month. This was done with sincere thanks and appreciation for their ministry work and contributions to ETS over many years.

On **21 August** there was an Emergency BOG meeting with 75% of the Governors to discuss the issue of the President. A detailed explanation was given concerning the end of Rev. Cheung’s appointment which was understood and accepted. They were also informed that a Leadership Team will be set up.

On **29 August** some Governors posted a message concerning a discussion in a Board of Governors’ meeting. While some may not have agreed with the decision, they have broken the “Rule of Confidentiality” that is the foundation of all Board meetings. This is disappointing that internal disagreements were revealed in public. A lack of confidentiality will destroy trust and honesty.

The concern of EML was to respect the upcoming election and the responsibilities of the new Directors so it was decided that the new Directors should appoint and approve the new Governors and for the new Governors to appoint the ETS President. They should have the flexibility and authority to select the individuals to lead ETS in the future. The appointment of the ETS President should be made by the incoming ETS Governors and Not by the outgoing former ETS Governors.

During this period of transition, the EML Directors have put in place a Leadership Team to provide effective governance and to insure the continuing operation of the Seminary. The teaching, training and equipping of the students is our highest priority. We are fully committed to the growth and development of ETS in the long-term. We believe in moving forward in positive ways to do something greater for God.

We are aware of an Email message claiming to be sent by four former ETS Governors. They have stated they did not write that message, and someone impersonated them. One of them has expressed his intention to investigate this matter and to clear their names. This is very important, and we are awaiting clarification and correction publicly about this false message.

Finally, we have serious concerns that Rev. Cheung issued an open letter on 27 August 2020 describing internal matters, using ETS letterhead and using his position as ETS President and ETS address lists without receiving approval of the content from the ETS Board of Governors and EML Board of Directors. We hope this matter will come to an end. The ETS leadership, faculty and staff will work hard for the future advancement of the Seminary.

Sincerely,

EML Directors

- In 2007 Rev. Cheung became President of EBC/ETS. Due to his responsibilities as the Senior Pastor of his church, he was only available to serve part-time (3 days per week) in the College. An agreement was made between EBC/ETS and PCHK Tai Po Church as they graciously allowed Rev. Cheung to work for EBC/ETS. This agreement was renewed every two years between the two parties for the past 12 years.
- **July 2018:** Governors prepared a proposal and package for the selection of a Full-time President. Rev. Cheung would first be offered this position and given time to think and pray about the proposal.
- **November 2018:** Four Governors met with Rev. Cheung to discuss with him the possibility to become full-time and explore the salary/benefits package.
- **April 2019:** Three Governors met with Rev. Cheung and invited him to consider the package and reply within one-month time.
- **May 2019:** Rev. Cheung verbally replied his acceptance but needed more time to make arrangements.
- **June 2019:** Rev. Cheung sent an Email to the Governors that he was willing to be Full-time and work 5 days in ETS.
- Later four Governors met with him to discuss the details. Rev. Cheung expressed that he wanted to work Full-time in ETS and Part-time in his own church. This was not the proposal and understanding of the Governors as it was important that the Full-time President should fully represent ETS and avoid any conflict of recognition and interest.
- After further discussions, an agreement for Full-time President was Not reached with Rev. Cheung.
- **July 2019:** Board of Governors' meeting with a Resolution that was approved by the Governors stating: *"Rev. Edmund Cheung will be appointed as ETS president under the present conditions for one year, effective from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020."*
- A Letter of Agreement was made with PCHK Tai Po Church and ETS for the ETS President in a "part-time" capacity for One Year until 31 August 2020. The agreement was for one-year because the issue of a Full-time President was still being considered. This was understood and accepted by all.
- In addition, the Resolution, approved by all the Governors, stated that *"Meanwhile, a Searching Committee will be formed from BOG together with EML, which will take the lead, to proceed on the searching for a Full-time President. The responsibilities of the Searching Committee are: (1) to work through all the details for a full-time president at ETS; (2) to search for a president candidate to be proposed to BOG and EML."*
- **August 2019:** The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Searching Committee started with Five Committee members, (2 ETS Governors; 2 EML Directors; 1 Pastor). An advertisement for Full-time President was posted in September with the approval of Governors and the Searching Committee. The progress of the Searching Committee was reported during the BOG meeting in October. This was not done in secret.
- **December 2019:** The Committee held its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. There were discussions and several objections were made by some ETS Governors concerning the membership of this Committee which eventually resulted in no agreement about Committee membership. Consequently, the Committee was unable to proceed and the search for a Full-time President was suspended.