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## PRESS RELEASE

6 July 2015

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# HARMONY IN DIVERSITY CONCERT, THE FIRST-EVER LARGE SCALE MULTI-RELIGIOUS, MULTIRACIAL CONCERT

**Singapore, 6 July 2015:** Buddhists and Bahai's, Christians, Hindus and Muslims plus the Indian, Chinese, Malay and Eurasian communities of Singapore will share the stage in song and dance at The Star Performing Arts Centre in a show of harmony at 8pm on Monday, 6 July 2015.

2. Together, they will put up Singapore's first-ever multi-religious and multiracial concert of this scale. This event, aptly named "Harmony In Diversity: Concert in celebration of Singapore's religious and racial harmony", is co-organised by the New Creation Church and Taoist Federation (Singapore). The venue is sponsored by The Star Performing Arts Centre.

3. Said Deacon Matthew Kang, Chairman of New Creation Church, "As Singapore celebrates the 50th year of its independence, we give thanks for one of the most precious legacies that has been handed down to us – our racial and religious harmony. It is something worth celebrating and New Creation Church and Taoist Federation are happy and honoured to be co-organising this meaningful event."

4. Mr Tan Thiam Lye, Chairman of Taoist Federation (Singapore), added, "We are very happy and encouraged that every race and religion represented in Singapore is involved in some way in tonight's celebration event. Through this event, the relationships between the leaders of different faiths and races have been strengthened. This is a wonderful outcome."

5. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will be the guest of honour at this concert which is expected to attract some 5,000 people. Tickets have been allocated to members of the various religious and racial groups, and these have been enthusiastically snapped up.

### The concert programme

6. Our Buddhist friends from the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery will give us a thunderous opening with their drum performance. The piece, entitled "Yokoso", opens with a tranquil and peaceful blend of *xiao* (Chinese vertical end-blown flute), Chinese singing bowl (a type of bells), rainstick and high-pitched drum. This leads you into the tranquility of the Zen forest before you emerge from it.

7. This will be followed by the sweet voices of a 150-strong children's choir. The combined choirs of Canossian School (for the hearing impaired), Canossa Convent Primary School and St Anthony's Canossian Primary and Secondary Schools will perform the song "Let There Be Peace On Earth" as a call to acceptance and harmony across different countries, peoples, languages, races and religions.



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8. A solo Indian classical dance will follow.

9. Next up, a multiracial group of singers – Bubur Cha Cha – comes together to sing us a fusion of some of the well-known tunes we grew up listening to.

10. Singapore's weather is hot and wet all year round and the VA dancers with their yellow umbrellas give us their take of what it means to be "Singing In The Rain".

11. Continuing with the umbrella theme, the co-chairmen of the concert, Deacon Matthew Kang and Mr Tan Thiam Lye, will render a popular Hokkien hit, "One Little Umbrella" (一支小雨傘). The song talks about two people sharing a small umbrella under the pouring rain. This is a picture of the closeness and co-operation between the two parties, leading to strength and the ability to withstand the trials that come their way.

#### **Theme song and performances of unity**

12. The next performance is an original song specially composed and sung by New Creation Church. Entitled "Open My Heart", it is also the theme song for the concert. In Singapore, we can live harmoniously for so many decades because we choose to open our eyes to see things from our neighbours' perspectives and open our hearts to embrace our differences. This song celebrates our differences and diversity in this place we call home.

13. Then, we have a special joint martial arts display by Wudang Sheng Hong Health Preservation Centre and Perguruan Sim Putih. Back in 1964, tensions between the Chinese and Malay communities led to riots that threatened the peace and stability of our nation. Today, we have indeed come a long way to achieve harmony and understanding in Singapore. This cross-cultural martial arts display by the Chinese and Malays certainly demonstrates the bonds of friendships that have been forged.

14. The Baha'i Community of Singapore will present the "Unity" song and a lovely dance item by young ballerinas.

#### **Tribute to Mr Lee Kuan Yew**

15. After that, we have a tribute to Singapore's founding Prime Minister, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who envisioned a Singapore where all races are equal and all religions are respected. We remember and pay our heartfelt tribute to the man who championed harmony in diversity.

16. The song, "You First Believed", was specially written by 20-year-old Dominic Chin and his friend for Mr Lee Kuan Yew and uploaded on YouTube last year to honour Mr Lee when he was still alive. Dominic had received a thank-you letter from Mr Lee who said he enjoyed the song very much and that "it took the determined effort of successive generations of dedicated Cabinet Ministers, public servants and the support of Singaporeans to build up what we enjoy today".

17. On this note, the recurring theme of harmony in diversity is revisited in a rousing finale of the songs "Open My Heart" and "Home" by performers from the various groups on stage together.



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18. The night will end with everyone reciting the National Pledge of Singapore, a fitting reminder that “we, the citizens of Singapore” are “one united people, regardless of race, language or religion”.

### **A meaningful logo**

19. The logo designed for the concert is inspired by how ropes are made. Fibres are spun into yarns, yarns are then twisted together to form strands and strands are twisted together to lay the rope.

20. This intertwining of relatively weak fibres to form a strong rope beautifully illustrates how much stronger a multiracial, multi-religious society can become when we are united as one people. Religious and racial harmony in Singapore is also symbolised by the linking of hands in a circle. The multicolours represent the major faiths and races in Singapore.

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### **About New Creation Church**

New Creation Church is an independent, non-denominational church. Jesus Christ takes centre place in the church, from the focus of its services, outreach efforts and worship to its day-to-day operations and volunteer activities.

An elected council has general oversight of the church and is led by Deacon Matthew Kang, its independent chairman. Senior Pastor Joseph Prince preaches regularly in the church in a voluntary capacity, and his Christ-centred messages are broadcast to millions around the world daily.

The church has a congregation of 31,000 that meets at The Star Performing Arts Centre at Buona Vista and various venues in Singapore. It is a member of the National Council of Churches of Singapore.

For more information, please visit [www.newcreation.org.sg](http://www.newcreation.org.sg).

### **About Taoist Federation (Singapore)**



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The Taoist Federation (Singapore) was founded in 1990 as the umbrella organisation to represent all Taoists in Singapore. There are currently over 500 Taoist temples and institutions affiliated to the Taoist Federation.

It promotes Taoism locally and regionally through education and research on Taoist culture and tradition, setting up the Taoist Federation Youth Group in 2007 to develop youths and young Taoist leaders, and also the Taoist College in 2008 to promote the understanding of Taoist philosophy.

The Federation is also involved with community and welfare projects and services, often working closely with various organisations and government agencies to serve the people of Singapore regardless of race or religion.

For more information, please visit [www.taoistfederation.org.sg](http://www.taoistfederation.org.sg)