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† **Fortress Structure with Oriental Roof** †

- ♦ The most distinctive feature of the church building is the rooftop pavilion with the upturned eaves of a traditional Chinese roof, a common feature in Chinese buildings of the same era.
- ♦ The Chinese-roof pavilion was used as a bell-tower for the church, a reflection of the mix of Chinese and Western influences.



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- ♦ This painting follows Leonardo da Vinci's famous composition of the Lord's Supper and was painted by an elder of the Church.
- ♦ It captures how Christianity brought the members of the church into contact with Western culture, such as music and art.
- ♦ There also used to be a trapdoor on the bottom right corner of the wall below the painting, leading to a hideout beneath the present ladies' room. British soldiers hid in this area when they were trying to escape from the Japanese army in World War II.



- ♦ Another interesting window design is featured on the windows along the social hall. They can be pushed outwards and propped up – recalling the old walls of the "Tin Hut Church", which had to be propped up for ventilation and for people to enter and exit the "hut".



† **Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church – Our Heritage** †

Telok Ayer Church ranks as the oldest among Methodist Chinese-speaking churches. Deep in the heart of the old Chinese settlement, the Church was the base from which the Methodist pioneer missionary, Dr. Benjamin West, reached out to Chinese migrants in Singapore. It was in 1889 when Dr. West rented a shophouse in Upper Nanking Street (now no longer in existence) to practise medicine and to work as a missionary. He started two services on Sunday in August that year at the shophouse, preaching to a congregation of 30 people, speaking in Malay which was translated into Hokkien.

Plans to construct the current church building began in 1918, and Swan & Maclaren – one of the oldest architecture firms in Singapore and also responsible for national monuments such as Raffles Hotel, Goodwood Park Hotel and the Victoria Concert Hall – was engaged for the project. The foundation stone for the church building was laid in 1924, with construction completed and the sanctuary dedicated on 11 January 1925. In 1935, Dr. John Sung, a well-known Chinese evangelist from China, conducted revival meetings in the Church. World War II broke out in 1941 and the Church was used as a medical post and bomb shelter. Countless members continued to be encouraged at the weekly Sunday services which did not stop throughout those difficult and trying years.

Amazingly, after so many years, the church building has kept to the original design with little alteration to the exterior look. The basic design is Western: a rectangular main body sitting on arch colonnades. But the architecture added an open pavilion on the roof at the front of the building, with the roof carved in the

traditional Chinese manner. The basically Roman-styled building was thus given a Chineseness that spoke to the migrant Chinese. The Church sanctuary is also located at the second storey level, in line with the practice of the time when it was common for European city churches to locate the sanctuary on the second storey. In Singapore, Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church could be the first church building to adopt this design. Because of our history and the uniqueness of our Church building, the Government announced that Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church would be preserved as a National Monument on 23 March 1989, coinciding with the Church's 100th Anniversary. In response, the Church embarked on a major renovation project to restore the building to its original grandeur. As the Church entered into the new Millennium, a new church-building project was launched at the site of a former branch church at Wishart Road, off Telok Blangah Road. The new church building, completed in 2004, now houses an 800-seat sanctuary with modern audio-visual facilities and an education centre.

For more than a hundred years, many believers worshipped in this Church. Many of our forefathers from China came here to receive the baton of gospel, evangelising to their own friends and relatives. Many migrant Chinese received Christ as their personal savior and were baptized here right in this Church. From the days of the rented shophouse and zinc hut to the present solid brick building and then the new church building, Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church will continue to be a beacon, shining for the Lord in the commercial and entrepot heartland of Singapore.

From Tin Hut
to
National Monument:

Called to Be A
Blessing



卫理公会直落亚逸礼拜堂
TELOK AYER CHINESE
METHODIST CHURCH
235 Telok Ayer Street
Singapore 068656
Tel: 63244001 Fax: 63244002
(Near Tanjong Pagar MRT)

卫理公会直落亚逸第二礼拜堂
TELOK AYER CHINESE METHODIST
CHURCH (TA2 SANCTUARY)
61 Wishart Road
Singapore 098716
Tel: 62781323 Fax: 62781138
(Near HarbourFront MRT)

www.tacmc.org.sg tacmc@singnet.com.sg

Telok Ayer: English Service - 8:30 am;
Youth Impact Service - 10:45 am; Hokkien Service - 1:30 pm;
TA2 Sanctuary: Mandarin Service - 9:00 am;
Hokkien Service - 11:00 am



- ✦ The church building sits at the corner of Telok Ayer and Cecil Street, near the original site of Gan Eng Seng School.
- ✦ The land was purchased in 1913 for \$3,600, and a wooden hut with a zinc roof was erected on the site two years later at the cost of \$900.
- ✦ Plans for the current church building began in 1918, and Swan & Maclaren – one of the oldest architecture firms in Singapore and also responsible for national monuments such as Raffles Hotel and Goodwood Park Hotel – was engaged for the project.
- ✦ The foundation stone for the church building was laid in 1924, and the building was dedicated for use in 1925.

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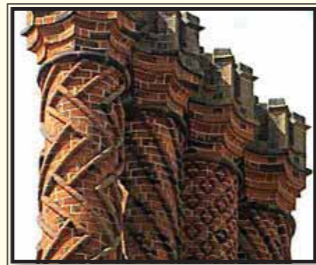


Although now known as “Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church” (TACMC), the sign on the building only reads “Chinese Methodist Church”. This was because she was the only Chinese Methodist Church in Singapore when the building was completed in 1925.



† Restored Original Bricks †

- ✦ The brickworks on the façade of the building are not exposed because of wear-and-tear, but intentionally designed as such for aesthetic reasons. This is known as “fair-faced brickwork” and requires additional care to ensure that the bricks are neatly and beautifully aligned.



† 5 Foot Way †

- ✦ Five-foot ways (Malay: *kaki lima*, Hokkien: *gor ka ki*) are a unique feature of shophouses in Singapore and Malaya to shield pedestrians from the sun and rain.
- ✦ A five-foot way was also constructed along the west side of TACMC so that the building would link up with the other shophouses along Telok Ayer Street.
- ✦ What is also interesting is that the church’s five-foot way features alternating columns and piers, a design of Norman-Romanesque origin commonly found in Europe.
- ✦ While most columns on Chinese five-foot ways feature little red shrines dedicated to Chinese gods, the ones outside the church building are marked with red crosses instead.

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† Reinforced Walls & “National Monument Plate” †

- ✦ The protruding wall is a relic of World War II – as the church was used as a medical post and bomb shelter during the war, the walls were reinforced for protection against flying shrapnel.
- ✦ The wall remains up till today, a reminder of the haven that God provided during those turbulent times.

† “HSBC Doors” †

- ✦ The solid-wood doors of the church, featuring a brass lockset from the 1920s, were originally meant to be installed as the front doors of a HSBC bank. They were installed in the church building instead under the orders of the Colonial Secretary of Singapore in 1925.



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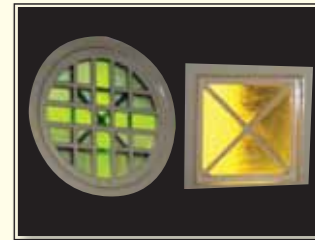


† Chinese Characters †

- ✦ The Chinese characters that surround the walls of the sanctuary demonstrate how the gospel has been appropriated by the Chinese community.
- ✦ The four characters on the front face of the sanctuary proclaim the nature of God as that of Love (1 John 4:16).
- ✦ The other characters on the left and right face convey Chinese cultural virtues which are also reminders of how Christians should respond to the grace of God – “Sheng” (聖 – Holiness), “Qian” (虔 – Devotion), “Gong” (恭 – Reverence); “Xin” (信 – Faith), “Ren(3)” (忍 – Patience) and “Ren(2)” (仁 – Love).

† Cross Symbolisms †

There are a total of 14 different types of windows in the church, and there are two designs in the sanctuary that are worth a closer look.



- ✦ **Circular window:** This is arranged according to the Jerusalem Cross and features 5 crosses within. The four smaller crosses could be interpreted in several ways – the four books of the gospel, the four directions from which the gospel spread from Jerusalem, the four “Distinctive Emphasis of the Methodist Faith” (Conversion, Justification, Sanctification and Perfection) or the four elements of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (Scripture, Reason, Experience and Tradition).

- ✦ **Square window:** The cross-shaped design could symbolise the gospel reaching the four corners of the Earth, or a conscious appropriation of the Cross of St. Andrew, which reflects the legend that the apostle Andrew was crucified on a tilted cross as he deemed himself unworthy to die in the same manner as the Lord.



† Articulated Columns in Colonial Style †

There are beautiful scrollwork designs on the columns and beams of the ceiling throughout the church building. These designs are commonly associated with baroque architecture, but can be traced back to as early as the Bronze Age.