



Welcoming Remark by Dr. Christian Murck

Event: United Board Centennial Celebration Luncheon

Date: 12 November 2022

Dear friends, alumni, fellow trustees, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It's my great pleasure to welcome you all to this luncheon celebrating the Centennial of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. The Board and I are grateful for you to make time to grace this event with your presence. Some of you have travelled a long way to be here. I hope you enjoy this gathering, get to know my colleagues and each other better, and enjoy once again being together in the community that is the United Board.

I am happy to see many old friends; happy also to meet in person colleagues known until this weekend only in a small box on a computer screen; and happy to meet new friends. We are finally emerging from travel restrictions and social distancing required by the pandemic that made it impossible to meet in person. It is good to see you well and in good spirits.

In a short while you will be shown a short video celebrating the Centennial with images from both early days and recent years of the United Board. Think of it as a small dose of institutional memory. If your appetite is whetted or curiosity piqued, watch out for the book-length *Centennial Album* which will form part of our Christmas greetings.

When we planned our Centennial Year, the United Board made the decision to focus fundraising on helping network institutions develop the quality of their educational output and the institutional capacities. We established a Centennial Fund with aggressive targets. I am happy to report we have largely achieved them, in large part thanks to donors in this room. Your generosity has made our celebration more meaningful and encouraging. Thank you.

As we celebrate, we are also taking stock of our pandemic experience and looking ahead. The past three years have been difficult but also full of accomplishment and new skills. Many of our programs were forced online. While that was challenging, we adapted quickly, developed new skills and found a broader audience.

Our network institutions faced the challenge to develop quickly online and hybrid learning capabilities while responding to the needs of students and faculty under extreme stress.

During the pandemic, the United Board strengthened our conviction that it is essential to attend to the education of students intellectually, ethically and spiritually, that is, to focus on education of the whole person, not simply on acquiring skills or credentials.

And our recent experience strengthened our confidence that the Christian heritage and values of the network of institutions we partner with in Asia equip them well to respond to this need. They have come through a testing period well.

I am pleased to report today that the United Board faces the future eagerly but also soberly and realistically. Our mission and values have been renewed, our organizational and financial resilience have never been better, and the collaboration we enjoy with network partners sustains all of us.

Rapid change will no doubt continue in the years ahead and we approach that with confidence.

People are indeed what has empowered the United Board to go from strength to strength over the years.

Today we will be taking this opportunity to express our special thanks to someone who exemplifies commitment to the United Board and to higher education in Asia. After twelve years of service, our President Nancy Chapman has decided to retire at the end of January. Her leadership has been superbly effective and her character has made her a beloved friend and colleague to many. You will hear from Nancy directly later in the program.

While we gather here today and celebrate, we also remember those who for various reasons could not join us. They are missed but not forgotten. Many of them have sent in greetings and good wishes, by which I am deeply moved. And finally, I'm sure each of us has a personal list of those no longer with us who made a deep contribution to the United Board during their lives. We honor them by carrying on their work.

The United Board will continue to rely on the legacy, goodwill and resourcefulness of its community of benefactors, alumni and partners as it enters its second century of service. I wish you all good health and look forward to seeing you again on many other happy occasions.

Thank you again for being with us at this memorable moment in the history of the United Board.

Happy Centennial, United Board!

Thank you.