



Jan 2003

Mr Roland Poon, a member of CHC, first alleges that church funds have been misused to finance the music career of Ms Ho Yeow Sun, wife of CHC founder Kong Hee. Mr Poon eventually retracts his statement and apologises.

Long, winding road of City Harvest trial

The City Harvest Church (CHC) saga reached its final chapter yesterday, with the High Court reducing the jail terms for six senior church leaders convicted of criminal breach of trust and falsifying accounts. The Straits Times looks back at key milestones of the case.



KONG HEE, 52

CHC founder and senior pastor

Convicted of: Three charges of criminal breach of trust

2015 sentence: Eight years

What prosecution asked for: 11 to 12 years

Reduced sentence: Three years and six months



CHEW ENG HAN, 56

Former CHC fund manager

Convicted of: Six charges of criminal breach of trust and four charges of falsification of accounts

2015 sentence: Six years

What prosecution asked for: 11 to 12 years

Reduced sentence: Three years and four months



TAN YE PENG, 44

Deputy senior pastor

Convicted of: Six charges of criminal breach of trust and four charges of falsification of accounts

2015 sentence: 5½ years

What prosecution asked for: 11 to 12 years

Reduced sentence: Three years and two months

Oct 2015

After a marathon 142-day trial, the six are convicted of all charges levelled at them – varying counts of criminal breach of trust and falsifying accounts.

May 2013

Deadline for the eight to make their case to the commissioner as to why they should not be removed. On the 15th, criminal trial into the alleged embezzlement of funds by six church leaders begins.

Nov 2015

All six are sentenced to jail terms ranging from 21 months to eight years. On the 27th, the prosecution files notices of appeal against the prison terms for all six, describing them as “manifestly inadequate”. In turn, the six submit appeals against their convictions and sentences.

Sept 2016

The five-day appeal hearing closes, with Justice Chan Seng Onn calling the Crossover Project a “very extravagant” way of spreading the Gospel.

Yesterday

The three-judge panel reduces the jail sentences for all six to between seven months and 3½ years.

May 2010

The Commissioner of Charities (COC) and police Commercial Affairs Department begin investigations into CHC after the COC receives complaints about the misuse of church funds.

Feb 2011

The inquiry report is completed. It finds that church funds have been misused.

June 2012

The COC suspends eight church leaders, including Kong and Ms Ho.

July 2012

The COC also suspends Serina Wee, then CHC finance manager, bringing the number of suspensions to nine.

Dec 2012

The COC proposes that the nine collectively agree to extend their suspensions, so that the commissioner may defer the next stage of regulatory action, which is to remove them from office.

Feb 2013

By this time, eight have agreed to voluntary extension.

April 2013

The COC gives notice of his intention to remove eight individuals, excluding Ms Ho, from their positions in the church.



SERINA WEE, 40

Former CHC finance manager

Convicted of: Six charges of criminal breach of trust and four charges of falsification of accounts

2015 sentence: Five years

What prosecution asked for: 11 to 12 years

Reduced sentence: Two years and six months



JOHN LAM, 49

Former CHC finance committee member

Convicted of: Three charges of criminal breach of trust

2015 sentence: Three years

What prosecution asked for: Eight to nine years

Reduced sentence: 18 months



SHARON TAN, 41

Former CHC finance manager who took over from Serina Wee

Convicted of: Three charges of criminal breach of trust and four charges of falsification of accounts

2015 sentence: 21 months

What prosecution asked for: Five to six years

Reduced sentence: Seven months

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