

Mission Strategy in a Time of Uncertainty:
The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Work in Hong Kong
in view of the Handover of 1997

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Hong Kong Expatriate WELS Missionary Tenures (pastors; some teachers also noted)

(listed chronologically, by arrival year)

Kenneth Seim: 1963-1976
 John Schwertfeger (teacher): 1963-1967
 Conrad Frey: 1964-1965
 Marlyn Schroeder: 1965-1966
 Richard Seeger: 1966-1967
 Howard Festerling (teacher): 1967-1975
 Paul Behn: 1968-1974(5?)
 Gerald Lange: 1970(69?)-1974
 Kenric Peterson (teacher): 1973-1978
 John Chworowsky: 1974-1981
 Gary Schroeder: 1975-2002
 Gary Kirschke: 1976-1991
 Roger Plath: 1982-1997
 Mark Sprengeler (teacher): 1984-2008
 James Krause: 1984-1989
 Thomas Frei: 1992-1996
 Robert Siirila: 2003 - present
 John Lawrenz: 2004 - present
 Karl Gurgel: 2007-2008

(listed chronologically, by departure year)

Conrad Frey: 1964-1965
 Marlyn Schroeder: 1965-1966
 Richard Seeger: 1966-1967
 John Schwertfeger (teacher): 1963-1967
 Gerald Lange: 1970(69?)-1974
 Paul Behn: 1968-1974(5?)
 Howard Festerling (teacher): 1967-1975
 Kenneth Seim: 1963-1976
 Kenric Peterson (teacher): 1973-1978
 John Chworowsky: 1974-1981
 James Krause: 1984-1989
 Gary Kirschke: 1976-1991
 Thomas Frei: 1992-1996
 Roger Plath: 1982-1997
 Gary Schroeder: 1975-2002
 Mark Sprengeler (teacher): 1984-2008
 Karl Gurgel: 2007-2008
 (Robert Siirila: 2003 - present)
 (John Lawrenz: 2004 - present)

Note: Not listed here are many other teachers, a record of the dates of whose tenures is difficult to compile. Also, in the past ten years, many visiting professors from WELS have taught Bible institute and seminary courses in Hong Kong – especially after the establishment of Asia Lutheran Seminary (ALS) in 2005. Most of them stayed for two weeks to five months, with the exception of former WELS president Karl Gurgel, listed above, who was there for one and one half years.

Glossary of Acronyms

- ALS – Asia Lutheran Seminary – 2005 - present (WELS's mission seminary Hong Kong)
- BWM – Board for World Missions (WELS)
- CCLM – Christian Chinese Lutheran Mission – 1956-1965
- CELC – Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church – 1965 - (fellowship with WELS ended in 1977)
- CELC – Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference – 1993 - present (international organization of conservative Lutheran church bodies; WELS and ELS are members)
- CELC-WELS – a property holding company of the WELS in Hong Kong
- DMLC – Dr. Martin Luther College (the former teacher training school of WELS)
- EE – Evangelism Explosion (evangelism program developed by D. James Kennedy)
- ELCA – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- ELCHK – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCA affiliate)
- ELS – Evangelical Lutheran Synod
- HK – Hong Kong
- ILC – Immanuel Lutheran College – 1983 - present (successor of ILEMS; under SALEM)
- ILEMS – Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School – 1963-1984 (predecessor of ILC; under CCLM, CELC, and SALEM)
- LCHKS – Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod (LCMS affiliate)
- LCMS – Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
- LWF – Lutheran World Federation (international organization of liberal Lutheran church bodies; ELCA is a member)
- MLS – Michigan Lutheran Seminary (WELS preparatory school)
- PRC – People's Republic of China – 1949 - present
- ROC – Republic of China – 1912 - present (on Taiwan from 1949)
- SALEM – South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission – 1977 - present
- SEA – Southeast Asia (an executive/administrative committee of the WELS BWM)
- WELS – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
- WLS – Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WELS)

Foreword

It is now 45 years since the first Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastor went to Hong Kong to partner with Chinese Christians there in the work of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the millions in Hong Kong living in the darkness of sin (and, by extension, to the hundreds of millions in neighboring mainland China and Taiwan). In the years since 1963, dozens of WELS pastor- and teacher-missionaries have pastored, taught, and partnered in ministry with hundreds of Hong Kong Chinese brothers and sisters, while the local church body changed names and organization twice, and churches, schools, study centers, seminaries and Bible institutes opened and closed and moved around the territory.

It would be fascinating to research in detail and write a comprehensive history of the work in Hong Kong since 1963, but that is far beyond the current capacity of this seminarian. It is my hope that those who have been involved in the work will one day (soon) each write or otherwise record their own portions of the history, and perhaps one of them take the initiative to stitch it all together. Toward that end, I offer my own meager contribution in this short paper.

I served as vicar in Hong Kong from July 2007 to August 2008, and prior to that as “summer vicar” for ten weeks from June to August 2006. During that time I learned much of the basic history of WELS mission work in Hong Kong from conversations with the expatriate missionaries and national church-workers and members, and from reading various archival documents and reports.

The general topic idea for this paper was suggested by the Rev. Dr. John Lawrenz, president of Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong. I am grateful to him for the suggestion and for his advice in researching the subject. Much of the information for this paper comes from fourteen formal interviews with current or former missionaries, missionary wives, administrative

committee members, and Hong Kong church-workers and members. I am grateful for their willingness to be interviewed and to share with me their perspectives on this period of history. Other information for this paper comes, as mentioned above, from informal conversations with expatriates and nationals who are or were involved with the work in Hong Kong, and from reports and correspondence of missionaries and mission board members, found in the WELS archive at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS).¹ Two resources that were of assistance in giving an overall view of the history are the “Hong Kong Focus,” revised in 1999 by late missionary Gary Schroeder, and the section on Hong Kong in the 1992 WELS World Missions centennial history *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*. For much of the information in this paper upon which a number of personal interviews and print sources concur, I will not give citations.

The focus of this paper is the events and planning in WELS mission work in Hong Kong leading up to 1997, when the United Kingdom gave sovereignty over Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and when also WELS made its daughter church body, the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM), independent. The thing that intrigued me about the topic of 1997 in Hong Kong was a conversation with teacher-trained missionary Mark Sprengeler, who mentioned that in 1984 when WELS Board for World Missions Administrator Rev. Kurt “Korky” Koeplin first telephoned him in San Jose, California (where he was serving as principal of Apostles Lutheran Elementary School) to tell him about his divine call to serve the Lord in Hong Kong, Koeplin said, “How would you like to go on a thirteen-year camping

¹ I have perused a large number of documents in the archive, which have been very helpful in broadening my perspective on the history, but I lack space to cite them all (many of them single-page correspondence) at the end of this paper among the works consulted. Therefore, I will only give full citation (as far as that is possible) for documents from which I quote directly.

trip to Hong Kong?"² Implied in these words was the common assumption at that time that by 1997, when the communist government of China was to assume sovereignty over Hong Kong, all of our WELS missionaries would probably have to leave the territory. I began wondering then for how long the political transition of 1997 had been a concern to the missionaries and the mission board, and how the anticipation of that date had affected mission planning and strategy in Hong Kong. The second section of this paper will explore these questions, after summarizing in the section below the politico-historical causes for the handover of Hong Kong in 1997.

The 1997 Problem – Hong Kong History

Those familiar with Hong Kong know the story. In the early 1800s the approximately 400 square mile region that is now the bustling, densely populated metropolis of Hong Kong with thousands of skyscrapers and high-rise apartment buildings was then a sparsely populated region of rocky, scrub-brush-covered islands and hilly coastlands, with Chinese fisherman and farmers in small villages as the only residents. In the early decades of the 19th century, the British began forcing open the previously closed door of trade with Qing-dynasty China by using opium as the main bargaining currency. It was largely upon these ignominious coattails that the first Protestant missionaries gained access to the mainland.³

The First Opium War broke out in 1839 when Lin Zexu, an emissary of the Qing court in Beijing (Peking), came to Guangzhou (Canton) to enforce the opium ban that was being routinely flouted by corrupt local officials who made great profit in permitting the illegal trade.

² Sprengeler also relayed this account in my interview with him: Mark Sprengeler, interview by the author, Mongkok, Hong Kong, July 4, 2008.

³ One example: "Karl Fredrich Gutzlaff, a Lutheran missionary of Prussian origin, who spoke several Chinese dialects [...] used the [opium trading] voyages to distribute evangelical literature, often passing out tracts from one side of the ship while opium was being off-loaded from the other. By opening China, he wrote, the drug traffic 'may tend ultimately to the introduction of the gospel.'" (Stanley Karnow, "What Will Happen When the Chinese Take Back Their 'Fragrant Harbor'?: Hong Kong and Its Uncertain Future," *Smithsonian* 20 [April 1989], 47.) One wonders if the missionaries then didn't quite understand the full extent of the scourge that opium was.

Lin destroyed upward of 2.5 million pounds of opium and attempted to put the British traders under house arrest. A contingent of the British navy came to the rescue and then retreated 90 miles to the south, to the harbor of Hong Kong at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta.

Reinforcements from British garrisons in India handily dispatched the Chinese opposition and even threatened the capital of Beijing. British soldiers set up a garrison on Hong Kong Island in 1841, and in 1842 the Qing court capitulated to signing the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking), officially ceding the island to Britain in perpetuity, along with the forced opening of five mainland port cities to foreign trade.⁴

At the close of the Second Opium War in 1860 in the Convention of Beijing, the Qing court ceded the Kowloon Peninsula, a finger of the Chinese mainland across the harbor from Hong Kong Island, to Britain in perpetuity. Later, with its rapid development as an entrepot for trade between the West and the Chinese mainland, the British crown colony needed more room to expand, beyond the island of Hong Kong and the small peninsula of Kowloon. So in 1898 in the Second Convention of Beijing, British envoys secured from the rapidly weakening Qing court a 99-year “lease” of the lands to the north of the Kowloon Peninsula (an area now known as the New Territories) and of other outlying islands, which together comprise 365 of Hong Kong’s 426 square miles.⁵ The 99-year lease, of course, meant that in theory the New Territories of Hong Kong would have to be returned to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997 – but at the time the treaty was signed, and for many years after, that date 99 years away must have seemed rather nebulous and would hardly have been cause for concern to the early 20th century traders and businessmen who were amassing vast wealth.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 48. Those cities were Guangzhou (Canton), Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou (Foochow), Ningbo (Ningpo), and Shanghai – all on the southeastern coast of China.

⁵ Gary Schroeder, ed., “Hong Kong Focus,” for the WELS Board for World Missions, 1999.

Although in the early decades of the 20th century Hong Kong remained somewhat of a backwater culturally and commercially in comparison to the cosmopolitan Shanghai, it continued to develop as one of the main points of trade between mainland China and the West. The stable, liberal government of the British colony also attracted many Chinese refugees who were fleeing from the political and social upheavals that swept the mainland periodically throughout the 20th century. The Boxer Rebellion began the 20th century, and the unrest revealed then under the corrupt Qing Dynasty increased over the next decade, culminating in the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, which overthrew the ethnic-Manchurian Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and established the Republic of China (ROC; 1912-1949 in the mainland, and continuing today in Taiwan) with Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian) as its first president. Instability continued throughout the subsequent decades, however, as various political factions and warlords struggled for control; during the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950), as the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) challenged the ruling Nationalist Party (Guomindang or Kuomintang) under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek); during the period of Japanese invasions and occupation from 1931 to 1945;⁶ during the upheavals as the communists overthrew the nationalists and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; and during the social unrest that continued afterward under the communist regime and that peaked during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976.⁷

Throughout these decades, waves upon waves of Chinese immigrants periodically flooded into Hong Kong, causing its population to swell from the thousands in the early 20th

⁶ From 1931 to 1937 the Japanese forces occupied only Manchuria, the northeastern portion of China which borders Mongolia, Russia, and Korea. In 1937 the Second Sino-Japanese War began and resulted in the Japanese occupying much of the northeastern and eastern China by 1940. They were finally forced to retreat from the Chinese mainland at the end of World War II in 1945.

⁷ The Cultural Revolution was Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong's appeal to the youth of China to "continue revolutionary class struggle," basically by opposing anything that Mao perceived as a threat or potential threat to his absolute authority in the waning years of his life. The Cultural Revolution ended with his death in 1976. W. Scott Morton, *China: Its History and Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 171-223.

century to over 5 million in 1980, and 6.4 million in 1996.⁸ Though the vast numbers of Chinese immigrants strained the infrastructure of the colony, the entrepreneurial spirit of Hong Kong and its inhabitants triumphed. Millions of immigrants worked their way out of poverty, and thousands of entrepreneurs amassed small fortunes on the backs of the cheap immigrant laborers.

But as the decades wore on, the expiration date on the lease of the New Territories, which had once seemed so far distant as to be unreal, now loomed as a rapidly approaching specter. What would happen on July 1, 1997? No one knew. Would the United Kingdom honor its agreement and return the New Territories to Chinese sovereignty? Or would it retain control of the colony on the grounds that the lease had been contracted with the Qing emperor, not the Communist Party of China which controlled (and still controls) the current People's Republic of China? Would they negotiate some arrangement to allow the status quo to continue? Would the repressive Chinese communist regime storm into Hong Kong and abolish the free market and many social liberties? Would the communists force all Christians in Hong Kong to join the Chinese state churches for Protestants (the Three-Self Patriotic Movement) and Catholics (the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association), in which the Chinese government has control over doctrine and practice?

No one knew the answers to these questions, but as the date drew closer many people wondered anxiously. One readily apparent non-option was that the United Kingdom could return *only* the New Territories to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.⁹ As the map attached to this paper (Appendix A) shows, the densely populated area of Kowloon had expanded well beyond the boundary of the original Kowloon Peninsula that was leased to the United Kingdom in perpetuity

⁸ Schroeder, ed., "Hong Kong Focus."

⁹ Recall that Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon peninsula were ceded to the United Kingdom in perpetuity, so *in theory* those could remain under British control, even if the New Territories were returned at the end of the lease period.

in 1860. In fact, the old boundary line between Kowloon Peninsula and mainland China became Boundary Street, running right through the busy urban areas of Prince Edward and Kowloon Tong. A significant portion of Hong Kong's total population now resided in "New Kowloon," across the boundary in what was originally the New Territories. Most of the region's industrial centers were located in the New Territories, and several hundred thousand people were living in new towns in the northern and western areas of the New Territories, which had been developed by the government to relieve the severe overcrowding that was endemic in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. So it was clear that simply giving away only the original New Territories was not an option that modern Hong Kong could economically survive, as that would rend much of the industry and workforce away from the colony. Britain also knew that Hong Kong was militarily indefensible, with China's giant People's Liberation Army able to commit millions of men to a cross-border war. But more importantly, most of Hong Kong's water and food supplies came from Guangdong (Canton) Province, across the border in China – a supply that China could cut at any time in order to quash resistance from the colony.

As Hong Kong entered the 1980s with none of the questions about its future resolved, the sustainability of the Hong Kong property market became a chief concern. Mortgages for real estate were generally signed for fifteen-year periods, and there was a real fear that if the situation remained uncertain the real estate market would collapse because no one would want to risk investment, which would lead to the collapse of the entire booming Hong Kong economy.

Finally in 1982, after much speculation and uncertainty, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher met with Chinese Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping to negotiate the fate of Hong Kong. By some accounts, Thatcher had hoped that the more liberal Chinese government under Deng (compared to the reactionary policies of Mao) would allow the United Kingdom to retain

sovereignty over Hong Kong after July 1, 1997, including the New Territories. But during the meeting Deng was resolute that the People's Republic of China would accept no compromise and would strictly hold the United Kingdom to the lease agreement which called for the prompt return of the New Territories of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997 – or else the People's Republic would march its armies in to take it by force.¹⁰

Understanding, as mentioned above, that if the New Territories went under Chinese sovereignty then for practical reasons Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula would have to go with them, Thatcher realized that the best hope for the future of Hong Kong would be to secure a deal wherein Hong Kong would nominally return to Chinese sovereignty, but would retain much of its current freedoms. After protracted negotiations, Deng made just such an offer. He proposed that Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and promised at least 50 years of Chinese non-interference in Hong Kong affairs (五十年不變). To describe this policy, Deng coined the phrase “One country, two systems” (一國兩制), to indicate that although Hong Kong would officially be under Chinese sovereignty after 1997 it would nevertheless retain autonomy in all aspects except defense and international relations. The proposal seemed to be the best possible recourse for Hong Kong and allowed for a dignified withdrawal by the United Kingdom. The two countries signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration on December 19, 1984, formalizing the agreement that the United Kingdom would withdraw from Hong Kong on June 30, 1997, and the People's Republic of China would assume sovereignty on July 1, with the agreement that Hong Kong would retain a high degree of autonomy in domestic affairs for 50 years.

¹⁰ Karnow, 44.

Although this assuaged the worst fears of the business community in Hong Kong and prevented an economic collapse in the booming colony, doubts and fears persisted in many quarters about whether the communist government of the PRC would fulfill its promises of laissez-faire policies vis-à-vis Hong Kong after 1997. During the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong citizens obtained foreign visas and fled the territory, and many businesses moved their official headquarters outside of Hong Kong, to such places as the island tax-haven Bermuda.¹¹

In the spring of 1989 the student-led pro-democracy movements in many mainland Chinese cities raised the collective hopes of Hong Kong for democratizing change in communist China. But these hopes were dramatically and tragically crushed when Deng Xiaoping authorized the use of violent force on June 4, 1989 to attack and disperse the student demonstrators who had been gathered for weeks in Tiananmen Square in the heart the Chinese capital Beijing. Though the Chinese government has repeatedly denied that its soldiers indiscriminately killed unarmed protestors, many Chinese and foreign eyewitnesses corroborate this point. No one knows the actual number of casualties, but the initial report on June 4 from the Chinese Red Cross estimated 2,600 dead. The government soon forced the Chinese Red Cross to retract that figure, and issued its own estimate of 241 dead, including soldiers – stating however that “not one person” was killed in Tiananmen Square, and that all the deaths occurred when soldiers clashed with riotous protesters in other parts of the city. This of course directly contradicted the testimony of many independent eyewitnesses.¹²

¹¹ Ross Terrill, “Hong Kong – Countdown to 1997,” *National Geographic* (February 1991), 124.

¹² “The Memory of Tiananmen 1989,” *Frontline* (PBS, April 11, 2006), <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tankman/cron/>; “How Many Really Died?” *Time* (June 4, 1990), <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,970278,00.html>

The people of Hong Kong were incredulous and terrified. On June 5, the day after the massacre in Beijing, the Hong Kong stock exchange crashed, losing 22 percent of its value, which it would take more than three months to regain. Thousands packed up and fled Hong Kong. Whereas in the years following the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 the emigration rate from Hong Kong had been 20,000 per year, after the Tiananmen Square Massacre a wave of heavy emigration followed in 1989 and 1990, with more than 100,000 Hong Kong citizens leaving the colony, heading primarily to Australia, Canada, and the United States (all three of which had relaxed their immigration policies in the late 1980s, making it easier for Hong Kong citizens to enter). By early 1991 the emigration rate from Hong Kong was about 1,000 citizens per week. Those who left were mostly upper and upper-middle class citizens – doctors, lawyers, businessmen and small-business owners, the college-educated, the wealthy, and those with connections outside the colony. The average citizen, who had no money, no connections, and no recourse, simply had to face the uncertainty of the future by waiting and working.¹³

The CCLM Period: 1963-1997

It is unknown exactly how much – or whether at all – the first WELS missionaries to Hong Kong in the 1960s were aware of or concerned about the nebulous date of July 1, 1997, when a large portion of Hong Kong territory was due to be returned to mainland China. However, this quote from the 1992 WELS World Missions centennial history, *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*, indicates that it was not a significant factor:

Although still a free port and one of the greatest trading centers of the Far East, Hong Kong's ninety-nine-year lease from mainland China expires in 1997, and it appears that the "landlord" is not about to renew it! In 1960, however, when a

¹³ Terrill, 109-128.

call for help from Hong Kong first came to our synod's attention, the threats of a takeover by the People's Republic of China still seemed rather remote.¹⁴

The beginning of WELS involvement in Hong Kong is rather curious, since the first WELS called workers in Hong Kong were not sent under the auspices of the WELS Board for World Missions. In 1963 Pastor Kenneth Seim (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduating class of 1953) and WELS members John Schwertfeger and Ruth Ruege accepted calls from the Christian Chinese Lutheran Mission (CCLM) to come and serve that small established church body in Hong Kong as pastor and teachers.¹⁵

The CCLM itself was organized in 1956.¹⁶ The May 1964 WELS *Report to the Ten Districts* indicates that the CCLM had its origins in the evangelistic activity of one Peter Chang (born 1931) during his days as a student at the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS)-affiliated Concordia Bible School in Hong Kong from 1953-55. After withdrawing from Concordia, he apparently continued teaching and preaching at Spirit of Love and Spirit of Grace Lutheran churches and schools, still with funding from Missouri Synod donors, while pursuing a degree in education from Canton College.¹⁷

In 1960 Chang appealed to the WELS for assistance in theological training, but World Missions Chairman Edgar Hoenecke encouraged him to maintain his ties with the LCMS. Chang was reluctant to do so, and enrolled instead in the Swedish Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle, Washington. He remained there for only a short time, and in 1961 he enrolled at

¹⁴ Harold R. Johne and Ernst H. Wendland, eds., *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People: A Century of WELS World Missions* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992), 245.

¹⁵ "Christian Chinese Lutheran Mission," *Report to the Ten Districts*, WELS (May 1964), 79; also, Johne and Wendland, eds., 249. The information in the following paragraphs comes from these two sources, and the 1999 "Hong Kong Focus," Gary Schroeder, ed.

¹⁶ See note on bottom of page 339 in Johne and Wendland, eds.

¹⁷ The readily available information on the earliest years of Peter Chang and the CCLM is rather cursory and somewhat obtuse.... It is unclear whether Spirit of Love and Spirit of Grace were congregations formed by Peter Chang, or if he had inherited them from LCMS mission workers. See *Report to the Ten Districts*, 77-78; and Johne and Wendland, eds., 247.

Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota, of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), a sister synod of the WELS. He graduated on June 1, 1962, with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. Although he was ordained into the ministry by the ELS on May 31 at Mt. Olive Church in Mankato, ELS leaders indicated that they did not have the means to support him. So, after being called by his churches in Hong Kong (Spirit of Love and Spirit of Grace), he returned and resumed his work with the CCLM.

During his time at Bethany, Chang had befriended fellow student John Schwertfeger, son of a WELS pastor. It was through this connection that Schwertfeger, Seim, and Ruege received and accepted calls from the CCLM. When they arrived in Hong Kong in 1963, Pastor Seim served as pastor of Immanuel Church, on the site of Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School (ILEMS), which Chang had purchased in January 1963. Seim, Schwertfeger, and Ruege all served as teachers at the school. Seim, Chang, and Schwertfeger also taught Bible institute and seminary classes. Realizing their deficiency in instruction capability, and in dire need of financial support, they appealed to WELS for assistance.

WELS began provisional support of the CCLM in late 1963, until a delegation of WELS President Oscar Naumann, Board for World Missions (BWM) Executive Secretary Edgar Hoenecke, and Committee on Relief Chairman Leonard Koeninger made a site visit in March 1964. After receiving assurances of unity in doctrine and a pledge of fellowship, and seeing the great potential of the work and the need for assistance, the delegation recommended to the WELS in Convention in 1995 that they support the CCLM and send a friendly counselor to assist with mission development and to serve as seminary instructor. Conrad Frey (WLS class of 1938), then president of Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), was called in the interim as the first friendly counselor to Hong Kong in 1964, followed by Marlyn Schroeder (WLS 1954) in

May 1965. The WELS in Convention in August 1965 voted to support the CCLM and to send a permanent friendly counselor. Leonard Koeninger was appointed chairman of the newly established WELS BWM Committee for Chinese Missions.

The CELC Period: 1965-1977

In October 1965, the CCLM reorganized as the Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC),¹⁸ with Peter Chang as chairman. In 1966, Richard Seeger (WLS 1956), missionary in Japan, accepted a call to serve in Hong Kong as friendly counselor. Soon after his arrival, seminary graduates Steven Chu and Timothy Lee, who had studied under Conrad Frey and Marlyn Schroeder, were ready for assignment as pastors. The prospect of expanding the ministry of the CELC looked positive, but there was some tension among the national workers:

There was reason to hope that the work would proceed in a satisfactory way. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Previous misgivings concerning certain aspects of Chang's activities began to surface. [...] Several had noted that Chang's lifestyle was considerably above that of his fellow workers. Others had sensed an undercurrent of tense unrest between Chang and the Hong Kong seminary students.¹⁹

Apparently, as deliberations among the expatriate missionaries in 1976 reveal, there was a chronic problem of extra-budgetary funds being solicited from sources other than the WELS BWM, and of heavy reliance on subsidy that came through official channels.²⁰ Whether Chang was still receiving outside funds in the mid-1960s is unclear. But the assertion that "Chang's lifestyle was considerably above that of his fellow workers" is confirmed by later missionaries

¹⁸ The reader is asked to note that in this portion of the paper the initials CELC refer only to the Hong Kong church body and not to the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, the international federation of confessional Lutheran synods in fellowship with the WELS and ELS that was established in 1993.

¹⁹ Johne and Wendland, eds., 250.

²⁰ John F. Chworowsky, letter to the WELS BWM Executive Committee for Southeast Asian Missions, the Rev. Leonard J. Koeninger, Chairman, December 8, 1976; and, John F. Chworowsky, letter to the Board of Directors of the Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church, F. E. Ltd., December 12, 1976.

who note that, among other things, Chang had the regular services of a private limousine and chauffeur, while the other mission workers could not afford automobiles themselves.²¹

Friendly Counselor Seeger and the mission board were uncertain as to how to resolve the situation – whether to confront it directly and risk alienating the national church. Time passed without either confrontation or resolution. Seeger accepted a call back to the US in 1967. That same year, teacher missionary John Schwertfeger also returned to the US, and was replaced by Howard Festerling. Paul Behn (WLS 1926) arrived in February 1968, to replace Seeger in the position of friendly counselor, and in June seven students graduated from the seminary. The tensions among the national workers apparently subsided with the arrival of the new expatriate missionaries.

Other fears were raised, however, as social tensions escalated in Hong Kong, corresponding to the Great Cultural Revolution that was raging across the colony's border, in the People's Republic of China. Communist sympathizing "Red Guards" marched in the streets of Hong Kong, protesting colonial rule and foreign influence. Bombs were placed at the entrances of Festerling's apartment and of Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School (ILEMS). But these social tensions too eventually subsided – without harm to the missionaries – and the mission work of the CELC progressed. A radio broadcast, the *Voice of Salvation*, brought requests for assistance from Taiwan, and two CELC seminarians were sent there to do exploratory mission work. In 1971 land was purchased on Broadcast Drive near Junction Road in Kowloon Tong for a building that would be an administrative headquarters and seminary for the CELC, a new church facility for Grace Congregation, and three apartments for expatriate missionaries.

But in that same year, tensions with Peter Chang came to breaking point. Chang had opened a private school in Kowloon, independent of the CELC, with funds that he had raised

²¹ Gary Kirschke, interview by the author, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, November 21, 2008.

privately. There were disputes regarding the operation of the seminary, the membership of the CELC Board of Directors, and Chang's very independent style of leadership. Then in May 1971 Chang suddenly tendered his resignation as pastor of Grace Church and as chairman of the CELC. Over the decade that followed, there were disputes with Chang about ownership of the church, school, and residential properties of the CELC. Eventually, Chang emigrated to California and entered private business. Thus the "Chang Era" of WELS mission work in Hong Kong came to a close, and the WELS missionaries embarked upon a transition "to change the church from a vest-pocket operation [as it had been under Peter Chang] to one in which there was grass-roots representation."²²

Following Chang's departure in 1971, Grace Church formed a church council, and Kenneth Seim became pastor, with Matthew Cheung assisting as vicar and Daniel Lee as interpreter. In July Howard Festerling, then principal of ILEMS, was elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the CELC, which was comprised of both expatriate missionaries and national church workers. Shortly thereafter ground was broken for the new CELC headquarters / Grace Church building / Bible institute and seminary / missionary apartments complex on Broadcast Drive. Grace adopted a constitution in June 1973, and work on the mission complex was underway. Seminary classes continued under Behn, Seim, and Festerling, and a Bible institute curriculum was developed by Gerald Lange (WLS 1969). Two more students graduated from the seminary, and, in July 1973, Timothy Lee was installed as associate pastor of Grace Church. Finally, on December 1, 1974, the new CELC mission complex on Broadcast Drive in Kowloon Tong was dedicated.²³ All of these events were significant steps toward the intended

²² Johne and Wendland, eds., 251.

²³ Schroeder, ed., "Hong Kong Focus."

goal of the missionaries to broaden leadership of the CELC beyond that of a single man, and to involve national workers and members more in the leadership and work of the church body.

Yet during these years, lingering tensions resulting especially from policies on the use of subsidy resurfaced between the national workers and the expatriate mission staff:

Some of the patterns for ministry that had somehow arisen in the minds of ministerial candidates were difficult to erase. Seminary graduates seemed to view the completion of a worker training program as an automatic guarantee of a salaried position for life, the salary assured by the “mother church” in America. One observer remarked, “They wanted a bigger slice of the good life than the WELS missionaries were willing to allow.” A record of the appeals of national workers to the Mission Council reflects dissatisfaction with salary subsidies and benefits. *Closely connected to this was an unwillingness on the part of nationals to teach stewardship in the congregations.*

This friction between national church and mission broke out into the open when Spirit of Love Primary School and Church, the oldest of the CELC congregations and schools, filed a formal protest in May 1972, indicating that the people had rejected the missionary sent to work with them. The CELC school supervisor also refused to register the schools’ board of managers with the government. Serious questions were raised at this time by the mission staff as to the viability of continuing to do effective mission work through the schools.²⁴ (my emphasis)

Despite the problems – and apparently without full resolution – the educational programs continued.

Then followed another transitional period of missionaries returning to the United States and new ones being called in their places: “Within five years of Chang’s departure [in 1971], all the WELS-trained staff involved in the transition years [around 1971] had left the Hong Kong scene.”²⁵ Lange accepted a call in 1974 to teach religion at Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee. ~~Behn retired in that same year (or 1975?).~~ Festerling returned to the US in 1975 to begin studies for the pastoral ministry. Seim accepted a call in 1976 to a congregation in Wisconsin. Then, in early 1974, John Chworowsky (WLS 1957) arrived in Hong Kong as

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 252-53.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

friendly counselor for all of Southeast Asia. Besides being the field superintendent for Hong Kong, he was also responsible for oversight of new missions opening in Indonesia, Taiwan, and India. Gary Schroeder (WLS 1966) arrived in 1975, and Gary Kirschke (WLS 1970) in 1976.

One missionary describes the CELC period, from 1965 to the mid-1970s, as follows:

A strong emphasis on education characterized the CELC period. Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School took up the lion's share of the WELS financial and manpower input. Between 1964-73 a Bible Institute was run periodically. Gerald Lange spent five years, 1970-74, learning Cantonese and setting up a Bible Institute curriculum. Between 1965-73, the seminary had 12 students, 9 graduated. The emphasis on Bible Institute and Seminary were well intended, but the workers were being trained mostly in English for congregations that did not exist.²⁶

The Transition from CELC to SALEM

The training of workers for congregations that did not exist, combined with the problem mentioned earlier of national workers relying heavily on WELS subsidy and being unwilling to teach biblical stewardship in their congregations, contributed to what the new missionaries on the field (Chworowsky, Schroeder, and Kirschke) perceived to be a very dysfunctional situation. These concerns came to the fore in discussions between the three missionaries in 1976. As Chworowsky reported in a letter to the Southeast Asia (SEA) Executive Committee, "Our Missionaries are unanimous in the conviction that the time has come to take the bold, firm and positive step necessary to make our church in Hong Kong a truly indigenous one. The step we believe can be taken now is to eliminate all subsidy to Hong Kong congregations and to the present Literature and Translation Committee."²⁷ Chworowsky indicates that while concerns about subsidy had been voiced among the missionaries for several years, more intensive discussion and decision to take action did not come until 1976:

²⁶ Schroeder, ed., "Hong Kong Focus."

²⁷ Chworowsky, letter to the WELS BWM.

Before I arrived back in Hong Kong from my furlough our two missionaries spent considerable time talking to Missionaries from other churches, attending classes at a World Mission Seminary [Fuller], reading books on World Missions and especially Chinese Missions, discussing among themselves the work here in Hong Kong, and in prayer. Since I arrived back here we have had nearly daily meetings at which this topic has been the major item of discussion. We have sought strength from the Lord through the Scriptures and in prayer. All this has resulted in the deeper and deeper conviction that we must act, and we must do it soon.²⁸

The missionaries were convinced that eliminating subsidy to the churches and national workers would be the best course of action for the church and its gospel ministry. Gary Kirschke also mentioned in an interview with this writer that the uncertain future of Hong Kong vis-à-vis 1997 was a significant factor in these deliberations. Given the uncertainty that existed in the mid-1970s – years before the PRC had made promises regarding the “One country, two systems” and “50 years, no change” policies toward Hong Kong – the missionaries had to assume the worst: that after 1997 none of them would be permitted to remain in the colony, and that the churches would either have to be totally independent of foreign influence and subsidy or they would have to go underground to avoid persecution and control from the communist government. Whatever the future held, the missionaries saw that it was their job – and would be their legacy – to prepare the Hong Kong church body in their care to stand on its own after 1997. In 1976 they saw subsidy as the major obstacle to that goal.²⁹

Kirschke indicates that when he arrived in Hong Kong in 1976, there were three congregations in the CELC, with six national church workers, and a total membership of only about 100.³⁰ Needless to say, the membership was not nearly large enough to support such an infrastructure. Although the missionaries offered to partner with and strongly encouraged the

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*; Kirschke, interview; Carol Schroeder, interview by the author, Jordan, Kowloon, Hong Kong, June 27, 2008; Schroeder, ed., “Hong Kong Focus”; John and Wendland, eds., 254. These source were also used for the paragraphs that follow.

³⁰ The three churches were Grace Church in Kowloon Tong, Immanuel Church in Kwun Tong, and ~~?? Church in Tsuen Wan.~~

national church workers to become more active in reaching out to their communities in evangelism, most of the national church workers were not terribly interested in accepting that assistance or in taking the initiative to do so on their own. Neither were they willing to teach biblical stewardship to their members, so as to encourage their members to take over more of the support for their facilities and workers. In one case, a church in Tsuen Wan had two national pastors for only fifteen members, almost all of whom were relatives of the two clergymen.

The plan the missionaries arrived upon as the result of their deliberations, which they then expressed to the mission board, was to discuss the matter of subsidy with the national workers of the CELC and inform them that subsidy from WELS would continue for a period of six months, but after that there would be no more subsidy for churches or workers – only for the school, ILEMS. They expressed a desire to see all aspects of the work continue, and if possible also a majority of the national workers remain. Chworowsky wrote to this effect:

The plan that we have for removing subsidy envisions maintaining the present level of effective ministry without interruption. The alterations in the present program will be minimal, continuing without interruption the present work at Immanuel School, Grace and Immanuel Congregations, and the work in Taiwan [exploratory mission work by Hong Kong seminary vicars]. The difference will be that only Immanuel School and Taiwan will continue to receive subsidy.³¹

The only “subsidy” that would remain to the churches would be the missionaries themselves – and this was the contingency plan for continuing the same level of ministry in the CELC, even if the staff of national workers was significantly altered as a result of the new subsidy policy.

The plan was proposed to the WELS BWM Southeast Asia Executive Committee in a letter from Friendly Counselor John Chworowsky on December 8, 1976. An initial step in that plan was conveyed to the national workers of the CELC through a December 12, 1976 letter to

³¹ Chworowsky, letter to the WELS BWM.

the Board of Directors of the CELC, on the subject of “gifts from sources outside the colony.”

Chworowsky writes:

Recently a number of questions have been raised by members of the CELC regarding gifts to the CELC from various sources outside the Colony. Concern has been expressed that certain areas of the CELC’s work, since its appeal may be more dramatic or its contacts outside the Colony more numerous, receive a large amount of extra-budgetary support, while other areas have few or none of these advantages and little or no extra-budgetary support. I have been urged, therefore to propose a policy which, as much as possible, will remove this inequity and source of irritation, and a policy which will reflect a fiscally sound approach to the receiving and distribution of gifts by the CELC.³²

The four-point policy then proposed in the letter stipulates 1) that all correspondence with and appeals for aid from sources outside the colony of Hong Kong (i.e. from individual stateside congregations and schools) must come through the office of the friendly counselor for approval; 2) that all such gifts would be placed in restricted funds for the area of CELC ministry to which they were given, to be used if unforeseen expenses in that area exceeded the budget for that area – and, if the funds were not able to be used in that way during the year in which they were received, they would be used to offset the regular WELS subsidy to that particular area of CELC ministry; 3) that, if the gift is designated by the donor for the purchase a specific item, the CELC Board of Directors would decide whether or not to make the purchase, and, if not, respectfully return the money to the donor; and 4) a reiteration that “in no case will any gift from a source outside the colony be placed directly into the treasury of any church, school or committee of the CELC, except with the express written consent of the committee of the Board of Directors [of the CELC].”³³

³² Chworowsky, letter to the Board of Directors of the CELC.

³³ *Ibid.*

Early in 1977,³⁴ the missionaries met with the national church workers to lay out the full plan of eliminating all WELS subsidy after a period of six months – a time period given to allow for the national churches to arrange for the support of their national pastors and the continuation of their ministry programs. The WELS World Missions centennial history gives this account:

After much consultation and prayerful consideration, it was decided to cut off all direct subsidy (except to Taiwan and to Hong Kong's Immanuel School) as of April 30, 1977. National evangelists were given six months of financial assistance, during which time they were encouraged "to develop a membership which will support your ministerial efforts or prepare yourself for some other type of employment."³⁵

The dispassionate reader might feel that six months is a rather short time to legitimately expect the national pastors to be able to develop such a membership and level of stewardship. This thought must have occurred also to the missionaries involved. But as their previous offers to assist the CELC churches and clergy in this regard had been rebuffed and no significant action had been taken by the national clergy and churches, they felt that this was the best and only recourse. The missionaries truly intended to continue assisting those who would have their help and support – though not necessarily financially – and hoped that those national workers with proven zeal and demonstrated gifts for ministry would remain in the CELC.

The national church workers, however, thought the new policy regarding subsidy was unfair: "Needless to say, this news was not greeted with enthusiasm by CELC and its national workers. Its Board of Directors responded with an appeal that was more in the form of an ultimatum – WELS missionaries must work at the invitation and under the direction of CELC or go home."³⁶ The frustration of the national evangelists toward this new subsidy policy is borne

³⁴ Unfortunately, after the December 12, 1976 letter from Pastor Chworowsky, there is a yearlong gap on this matter in the records of the WELS archive. Gary Kirschke, in his interview with the author, recounts some of the things that happened, but the dates and the progress of these events are difficult to piece together exactly.

³⁵ Johne and Wendland, eds., 254.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

out in a letter from the three national evangelists on the CELC Board of Directors to Kurt Koeplin, chairman of the WELS BWM SEA Executive Committee, dated December 22, 1977. They acknowledged a decline in the CELC's growth, but complained that the termination of subsidy was too abrupt, that it went against the WELS's mission policies and goals, and that it jeopardized the livelihood of the national workers and their families. They proposed that the WELS resume subsidy, but gradually decrease it (to nothing) over a period of ten years.

Beginning from next year (1978), if you are willing to continue subsidizing CELC, a proper and practical procedure of subsidy can be worked out by mutual agreement, whereby gradual decrease of subsidy over a period of 10 years may be effected. Many churches in Hong Kong (Lutheran churches included), still receive subsidy from their respective mission boards, some on 10-year term, others on a 15-year term. (The Campus Crusade for Christ is presently on a 15-year term.) The experience of these churches can serve as our reference.³⁷

But despite the opposition from the national workers, the WELS mission board agreed with the missionaries not to resume subsidy. Gary Kirschke says the following about how difficult the situation was after the cessation of subsidy:

That incident, when we announced the cutoff of subsidy, was traumatic. My life was threatened. I think Gary [Schroeder]'s probably was too. It made all the newspapers. They marshaled the other Lutheran churches, the [香港]信義會³⁸ and the 香港路德會³⁹ (that's Missouri Synod and the ELCA European Lutheran church). [...] I got terrible letters from people: "How could you be so cruel to do this?" And Gary and I and John [Chworowsky], we just had to meet and console each other and say, "We have to go through with this, no matter what." And we did.⁴⁰

As a result of the dispute over subsidy, Timothy Lee – pastor of Grace Church, and the one national pastor whom Kirschke says they had especially hoped would remain – resigned and went to the LCHKS. Evangelists Foun Jan, Matthew Cheung, and Robert Kam also left the

³⁷ Foun Jan, Matthew Cheung, and Joel Chung, letter to the chairman of the executive committee, SEA Missions, BWM, WELS, December 22, 1977.

³⁸ the now ELCA- and LWF-affiliated Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK)

³⁹ the LCMS-affiliated Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS)

⁴⁰ Kirschke, interview.

WELS's fellowship. Joel Cheung, who was pastor at Immanuel Church in Kwun Tong, which met in the facilities of ILEMS (and later moved to Sau Mau Ping, when the school closed), remained with WELS through the mid-1980s, and received some subsidy through the school as a teacher of Christian ethics. Daniel Lee also remained and served as pastor at Grace Church, but died of cancer shortly afterward, in 1978.

The property-holding agency CELC-WELS Ltd., that had been established in the aftermath of the Peter Chang affair to manage the Broadcast Drive complex, other apartments, and ILEMS, was also contested between the WELS and the CELC at that time. But Kirschke says:

In the process [of planning and implementing the new policy on termination of subsidy], CELC-WELS had ensured all the property was in CELC-WELS's name, that there were no loopholes. The board of directors [of CELC-WELS] always had a majority, at that time, of missionaries.⁴¹

This was significant in that, with a WELS majority on the CELC-WELS board, the WELS retained legal right to all the properties, which included the meeting places for two churches, seminary classrooms, central offices, the middle school facility, and several apartments.

Although a majority of the Hong Kong national church workers had left WELS fellowship and a large percentage of the membership had gone with them, the missionaries were determined to continue the work.⁴² In 1977, they drafted a constitution and reorganize the mission as a new entity, the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM). Thus, a major step was made toward preparing the Hong Kong mission for independence in 1997. The "Hong Kong Focus," contains reflections of the missionaries on the events of 1976-1978:

The termination of direct subsidy generally had a good effect on the development of a self-supporting church and congregations. (5 self-supporting congregations

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Kirschke estimates that about half the congregation, about 30 members, remained at Grace Church – a number which later dwindled to just seven.

are supporting the evangelists at 3 congregations as well as their own expenses.) But, on the other hand, we lost some older evangelists/pastors at that time who under better circumstances may have been able to provide some stability and maturity to a national church.⁴³

The SALEM Period – Before the Handover: 1977-1997

With Joel Chung the only remaining national pastor (after the death of Daniel Lee), the WELS missionaries assumed leadership of the churches and school. At this time, Schroeder and Kirschke were nearing the end of a program of two and a half years of intensive study of the Cantonese language (the dialect of the Chinese language family spoken in Hong Kong and China's Guangdong Province) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Although they had both made great strides in their language learning during those years, preaching in Chinese was still a difficult task. But there was no one else to do it. They prepared tirelessly, and, over the years as their language ability improved, the “big-nosed foreigners” preaching in Cantonese became a curiosity that attracted many young Chinese to come and hear the gospel for the first time.

Schroeder and Kirschke saw that since most of the national workers and membership had left, they practically had to start over, building the church from the ground up. So they focused on evangelism. They learned an evangelism presentation in Cantonese – a modified version of D. James Kennedy's *Evangelism Explosion* – and focused on reaching out to the young and middle-aged adults of Hong Kong. Schroeder became pastor of Grace Church in 1978, after the death of Daniel Lee, and trained two members in *Evangelism Explosion* (EE). Their Spirit-blessed concerted efforts in personal evangelism led to a vibrant fellowship group of people who had heard the gospel and come to faith in Jesus.

⁴³ Gary Schroeder, ed., “Hong Kong Focus,” WELS Board for World Missions, 1999 revision.

Carol Schroeder says of the fellowship group at Grace Church that, although there were a couple of older and middle-aged people, it was primarily a “big group of kids, from age 15 to 20 – about 20 to 30 of them.” From this initial group came most of the men who served as national evangelists and pastors of SALEM from the mid-1980s through today (some of whom also are no longer serving in SALEM today), including Titus Tse Tat Chiu, Daniel Yeung Wai Shing, Raymond Lai Kwong Man, Pip Chiu Lap Fu, and later also Samson Wong Yuk Choi and ~~Eric Wong Wai Ming (did he come out of Grace?)~~. Carol Schroeder recalls:

This is the thing that always impressed me, was that they always brought people from work or study groups, because in those days, because of the economics here, a lot of those people grew up in homes where they weren’t always necessarily able to finish Form 5 [about US grade 11]. And so they would leave school and go to work, and a lot of these people would study at night school, and a lot of them would bring people from night school and their friends from work. Tse Tat Chiu [Titus] brought a bunch of people. [...] That group was amazing. [...] They’d all come over to our house. [...] It was a big flat; and we had fellowships and *da bin louhs* [hotpot]. [...] They were really great. They did a lot of fun things together. [...] And those people stayed [with Grace Church]. [...] And they had Bible studies. Grace Church was the first church that started the evangelism – building a nucleus out of that.⁴⁴

At this time, while Gary Schroeder was working intensively on evangelism with Grace Church, Gary Kirschke took over as principal of Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School (ILEMS) in 1978, and sought to turn it into a viable institution. After inspecting the school and seeing what a miserable condition it was in, he proceeded by firing most of the teachers, who were unqualified (most had only high school diplomas) and most of whom were Buddhists. He retained Albert Szeto King Pui – a bright young teacher who had himself gone through ILEMS, heard the gospel and became a Christian there, and then went to Dr. Martin Luther College (DMLC), graduated with a degree in education, and returned to teach at ILEMS – and one other teacher.

⁴⁴ Carol Schroeder, interview.

Kirschke initially wanted to close the school, but the education department countered with a proposal to send students to the school – even though the school was failing – along with government funding for each student, and see if they could improve the students’ test scores. New teachers with better qualifications were hired to fill out the faculty which included some WELS missionary teachers and Albert Szeto. All the new teachers were also Christian, with the intent being that the school would not be just an educational institution, but a spiritual training ground, in which the WELS missionaries and mission teachers could evangelize and teach the students, without those efforts being counteracted by pagan teachers. Through the hard efforts of the teachers, the students’ scores improved, and the student population grew to a level that the facility then could no longer support.

Eventually, the government gave SALEM a brand new school facility built in Tai Po, a fishing village in the New Territories of Hong Kong, which the government was developing as a new settlement to relieve the crowding of the Kowloon area. The only stipulation was that SALEM had to come up with the money (about 2.2 million Hong Kong dollars) to furnish it. The missionaries managed to find a buyer for the ILEMS facility in Kwun Tong who would let them phase out the school there over a period of two years, while they also began classes at the new facility in Tai Po. This transition took place from 1982 to 1984, with classes beginning at the new Immanuel Lutheran College (ILC) in Tai Po in 1983, an official dedication in 1984, and the closing of Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School (ILEMS) in Kwun Tong in 1984. Kirschke’s efforts then were turned primarily to Bible institute work, which had already resumed under SALEM, and to the establishment of a seminary.

A brief “History of Our WELS Mission in Hong Kong,” written sometime between 1982 and 1984, says the following regarding the earliest years of SALEM:

Despite a shakey [sic] interim period, through the grace of God SALEM is making steady progress, and the Grace and Immanuel churches are gradually moving toward self-sufficiency. Pastor Kirschke reestablished a Bible Institute at the Broadcast Drive complex, which has also enjoyed an increase in the numbers and spiritual maturity of its students.⁴⁵

In 1979, after the tumult of the CELC to SALEM transition had subsided somewhat, the missionaries drafted a strategy statement for the WELS Hong Kong mission. This document, based on a model from Fuller Seminary, detailed a mission strategy that was clearly aimed at establishing within 20 years a church that would be able to stand on its own, without WELS subsidy, and even eventually without WELS missionary support. The document identifies the field – the target outreach group:

Although we have a mandate to witness to anyone and everyone, we shall specifically concentrate our efforts on the youth (aged 15 to 25) and couples (aged 25-40) of Chinese descent who speak Cantonese, Mandarin or English and who live in the urban centers of Kowloon and the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. In view of our limited language ability and relative youthfulness, in addition to the general receptiveness of the younger Chinese, we consider the afore-mentioned “target groups” presently to be the most “reachable.”⁴⁶

The objectives set forth in the strategy statement were 1) “We are so to present Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church”⁴⁷; 2) “We shall assist in the planting of and nurturing to maturity a Scripturally-confessional and contextualized church, actively engaged in on-going evangelistic outreach.”⁴⁸

The term “contextualized church” is clarified as a church that:

⁴⁵ “History of Our WELS Mission in Hong Kong,” undated – though from personal listed therein, written somewhere between 1982 and 1984.

⁴⁶ Gary Schroeder, et al., “Strategy Statement,” originally drafted in 1979; revised 1983, 1991, 1996, 1997, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2. This writer wonders why trust and reception are listed as separate things – perhaps portending the difficulty that SALEM would later have with the heavy influence of decision theology from the majority “Evangelical” Christianity in Hong Kong.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* The term “Scripturally-confessional” is explained in the document as follows: “By a Scripturally-confessional church, we mean a church whose doctrine and practice conform to the Bible, especially capable of rightly dividing Law and Gospel and rightly administering the Sacraments as means of Grace.” The reader may note

- 1) worships and serves the Lord according to Biblical principles and in a way that is relevant to the people who comprise the church;
- 2) is self-governing, i.e., has selected a Biblical pattern of church polity that is relevant to the people of the church and has demonstrated facility in using this pattern to administer all of its affairs, including discipline;
- 3) is self-propagating, i.e., has demonstrated a zeal for evangelism and is responsible for its own ministerial training and mission programs;
- 4) is self-supporting, i.e., is financially independent or is successfully pursuing its own plan for complete financial independence.

We believe that the church is contextualized when all aspects of its worship and service are administered by its members without on-going dependence on manpower or monetary support from foreign sources.⁴⁹

The evangelism strategy, and the goal of transferability of the method, was explained further in the “Hong Kong Focus,” revised in 1999:

Currently all 8 of our congregations have active evangelism programs. All the missionaries and all the evangelists are trained in the same method of personal evangelism. This enables us to transfer the concepts and ability to evangelize to evangelists who are able to transfer the same concepts and ability to other members who can in turn transfer the same concepts and ability to other members. If we all used a different form or method of doing personal evangelism, we believe that it would be very difficult to transfer evangelism skills to others.

We are convinced that each missionary should always be actively involved in evangelism as a means of earning credibility with Chinese members and earning the right to teach. We believe only if the missionary is a model as an evangelist will he be able to train evangelists who can do the work of evangelism. Evangelism emphasis helps us emphasize ministry over administration. Relationships are essential to effective evangelism and there is rarely, if ever, a shortcut.⁵⁰

the conspicuous absence of mention of the Lutheran confessions as correct expositions of Scripture, which is what would normally come to mind when the term “confessional” is used among Lutherans. Over the years, there was much discussion among the missionaries in Hong Kong, throughout the other SEA fields, and the mission board regarding whether the Hong Kong mission and its national workers were able to subscribe to the Lutheran confessions, since the only Chinese translation of them was felt to be very inadequate. For more on this discussion, see the papers in the bibliography below from the WELS BWM All-SEA Conference, Phuket, Thailand, September 2-7, 1996. It is probably safe to say that, at various points in the theological training of SALEM’s national workers, the main doctrines set forth in the Lutheran confessions were taught, but the identity as “confessional Lutherans” because of subscription to the Lutheran confessions was not one that was highly promoted.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Schroeder, ed., “Hong Kong Focus.”

Some activities involved in the strategy of evangelism and church planting are listed in the “Hong Kong Focus,” in the order of their occurrence in the development of SALEM:

- 1) Street evangelism – handing out tracts; 2) Publicity: i.e. posters, announcements; 3) Gospel presentations during evangelism contacts or with students during interviews (study center or tutorial ministries); 4) Gospel presentations during home visits; 5) Instruction classes for new believers and Adult Information class; 6) English classes for contact; 7) Event Evangelism, parties for students, picnics, retreats, special Christmas Evangelism services, community service presentations etc.; 8) Phone calls to visitors; 9) Sunday School classes; 10) Bible Classes; 11) Sunday Worship services.⁵¹

In the 1979 strategy statement then a four-phase plan is proposed, outlining the steps and procedures toward moving from basic evangelism and church planting to a fully independent indigenous church. Phase 1, “Development of existing fields and work,” was heavy on evangelism, basic education using existing materials, and development of congregational self-administration. Phase 2, “Expansion of existing fields and work,” consisted of continued evangelism efforts, evangelism conducted through existing schools, a Bible institute, production of evangelism and education materials, and training of national workers to assist in congregational ministry. Phase 3, “Opening of new fields and work,” consisted of determining potential new fields, acquiring sites for church planting (through study centers, etc.), opening a seminary, and continuing production of materials, and making full use of trained national workers to conduct ministry. Phase 4, “Formation of federation of national churches,” was the final phase, which aimed to solidify the independence and assure the continuance of the indigenous church. Evangelism and new church-planting were to continue; nationals were to teach in the Bible institute and seminary, which was also to have post-graduate courses available; nationals were to be involved in the production of materials for evangelism and education; and a

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

federation of the national churches was to be formed, with which the foreign missionaries would continue to assist as advisors.⁵²

This four-phase plan envisioned the evolution of the relationship between the mission (i.e., the WELS missionaries) and the national church along three stages, also expressed in the strategy statement:

- Stage 1 – Establishment (Guardian): The mission does the work of the church by planting the initial congregations
- Stage 2 – Cooperation (Partner): The mission works with the church in organizing and developing a federation of congregations
- Stage 3 – Assistance (Servant): The mission does work for the church by offering manpower assistance in areas determined by the church

It must be remembered that the national church is permanent and our mission is temporary.⁵³

It was under this strategy and vision, then, that WELS mission work in Hong Kong continued in and through SALEM in the 1980s and 1990s, all with a view toward the handover of 1997. From 1983 to 1996, seven new congregations were begun. The first was a church at the newly established Immanuel Lutheran College (ILC) in Tai Po, in the new territories. Roger Plath (WLS 1977), who arrived in Hong Kong in 1982 after John Chworowsky returned to the US in 1981, started the church at Tai Po while going to language school. DMLC graduate Mark Sprengeler was called in 1984 also to work in developing the outreach potential of the school. James Krause (WLS 1981) was also called in 1984, and served as a mission developer. During this time Titus Tse, Daniel Yeung, Raymond Lai, and Pip (Chiu Lap Fu), were all being trained in the Bible institute and seminary, as at the same time they began active ministry in SALEM. Another evangelist, Charles Lee, began serving at Grace Church in the mid 1980s, but he later went to another church body.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4-7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13.

When ILEMS in Kwun Tong closed in 1984, after ILC was established in Tai Po, there was a core group of about 25 members at Immanuel church there. They didn't want to split up, so the missionaries assisted them in finding a study center in Sau Mau Ping. The study center program, arranged by the Hong Kong government, provided a facility in a housing estate (apartment complex) at low monthly rent to the church, on the condition that the church manage it during the week as a quiet area for middle and high school students from the housing estate to come study after school, as most apartments were very small and shared by several family members. The church would staff the study center with a supervisor to manage it, and also keep an evangelist on staff to do counseling and outreach among the local students who came there to study. The aspiring young evangelist Titus Tse was approached by the missionaries to begin doing evangelism work among the study center students at Sau Mau Ping, with Gary Kirschke as a mentor.

The study center model was then used in SALEM for the next five of its church plants. These endeavors generally consisted of one of the missionaries mentoring/partnering with a national evangelist to do evangelism at the study center and work toward establishing a church. In 1986 Mark Sprengeler and Titus Tse, now trained as an evangelist in SALEM, began work at a study center in Lai King Estate, and were blessed with rapid growth. After about five months, there were 20 to 30 people in the fellowship groups, and worship services were begun in November 1987. About two years later the church had a membership of over 50, and no longer needed support from SALEM to continue its ministry.

In 1987? Jim Krause and Daniel Yeung started a church at a study center in Sam Shing Estate, in the developing town of Tuen Mun, in the western New Territories. In the late 1980s, the study center in Sau Mau Ping was closed because the building it was located in was to be

torn down. Immanuel Church closed with it, its members joining other churches. Roger Plath then moved to Shatin, a city in the New Territories, and opened a tutorial center in rented storefront space. This was a variation on the study center theme: instead of being subsidized by the government, it was operated as a tuition-based after-school tutorial program – which then also provided a meeting place for a new congregation. Samuel Pun Kwong Mo assisted Plath in ministry as he also began Bible Institute and seminary training. The church there began in 1989.

In 1989 a study center was opened in Long Ping Estate, in Yuen Long, a town in the northwestern New Territories. Worship services began there in 1990, with Chiu Lap Fu (Pip) serving as evangelist. In 1990, Samuel Pun and Mark Sprengeler began working in a study center in Yau Oi Estate, also in Tuen Mun. The congregation there began worship services in 1991.

With the development of these new congregations in study centers, the goal was always to bring them to a point of independence, so they would be able to carry on their ministry independently after 1997. The WELS mission centennial history, written in 1992, says this of the study center program in SALEM:

These have not only proved to be effective vehicles for witnessing for Christ but also offer places for the development of Christian congregations. They show promise of being a bright spot in the few years that remain before 1997, when China resumes sovereignty of Hong Kong, and possibly beyond. In the meantime SALEM is training as many Chinese people as possible to become effective witnesses for Christ.⁵⁴

The idea of preparing SALEM members to continue ministry among themselves and to reach out to all of China is also expressed in the 1988 revision of the “Hong Kong Focus”:

Despite the agreement worked out by the governments of Great Britain and the People’s Republic of China, the future role of the church and its missionaries remains unclear. Thus questions such as “Will missionaries be allowed to work in Hong Kong after 1997?” or “If missionaries are allowed to work in Hong Kong

⁵⁴ Johne and Wendland, eds., 257.

after 1997, what restrictions will the government impose on religious activity?” arise because of the lack of clarity in the agreement itself and the Chinese government’s present policy toward the free exercise of religion.

No matter what form of Government exists in Hong Kong after 1997 and no matter what restrictions there might be or what the role of the church might be after China takes over, the greatest need of the 5.5 million people in Hong Kong and, indeed, the 1 billion people in China, is still the saving Gospel message of Jesus Christ. The 1997 issue will not change this fact. [...]

Hong Kong Christians are and will be a bridge to Mainland China. This fact alone demonstrates the necessity of the continuation and further development of the Gospel outreach here in Hong Kong and into China. [...]

What we do here in Hong Kong before 1997 may have a significant effect on the welfare of countless souls and the development of Christianity after 1997.

Should we continue and expand our mission effort in Hong Kong, the gateway to China? The answer must be a resounding “Yes.”⁵⁵ (emphasis original)

Operating under this uncertainty about the future, in light of 1997, but with the certainty of the divine imperative of its mission, the work of growing and strengthening the many newly established churches continued throughout the 1990s, with national workers increasingly taking over more of the ministerial duties, and WELS missionaries reverting to roles as advisors and continuing theological educators. Another aim of the missionaries was to increase lay leadership – besides the national evangelists – in the work of the congregations. This is born out in the 1999 revision of the “Hong Kong Focus”:

Basic Policies/Practices: 3. Lay Leadership

We stress lay leadership in our mission as much as possible. We want to give our members as much opportunity as possible to use their spiritual gifts and implement the universal priesthood of all believers. This takes 2 forms:

- a. One form is our full-time Chinese workers. Besides being pastors or evangelists, these men, if necessary, could be teachers, office workers, and artisans and are trained “with ministry” rather than “for ministry.”
- b. We are also training our congregation members to be leaders. Currently many congregation members preach, train lay evangelists, counsel, lead the worship, and teach membership Bible classes. The Bible Institute program has been

⁵⁵ “Hong Kong Focus,” August 1988 revision, 29.

useful in reaching this goal. Our “federation” of congregations has lay leaders representing each congregation. In this way we attempt to emphasize the universal priesthood of all believers.⁵⁶

In 1989 the SEA executive committee decided to redeploy funding for one full time position from Hong Kong to Taiwan, and so Jim Krause was suddenly recalled to the United States. Although Krause had had disagreements with SEA executive committee chairman Korky Koeplin regarding some practices in SALEM congregations that he felt were unscriptural,⁵⁷ the SEA executive committee maintained that there were no other factors involved in the decision, besides the consideration of finances and manpower needs between the Hong Kong and Taiwan fields of the SEA.⁵⁸

In the late 1980s or early 1990s, the missionaries brought in Jacob Tse Nga Kok (a graduate of Bethel Bible Seminary) by colloquy, to serve as evangelist of Tai Po Church, at ILC, under the mentoring of Gary Schroeder. In the early 1990s, Titus Tse, Jacob Tse, and Daniel Yeung were all ordained into the pastoral ministry (Raymond Lai would be ordained later). In 1991, Gary Kirschke, who was serving at that time as seminary president, its main professor, and Bible institute instructor, resigned from ministry in SALEM and left the WELS for personal reasons. Roger Plath took his place as president of the seminary. Thomas Frei, who had served in the Evangelical Free Church in Hong Kong, and then came into the WELS by colloquy, after studying for a year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, was called to serve SALEM in 1992.

Kirschke recalls coming back to speak at SALEM’s 15th anniversary service in 1992 – a time when SALEM had approximately 1,000 members – and challenging them to a goal of 2,000

⁵⁶ “Hong Kong Focus,” 1999 revision. Note that, while the emphasis on developing lay leadership was present from the beginning, some of the specific developments mentioned here did not occur until the late 1990s.

⁵⁷ according to Mark Sprengeler, interview – such as women leading songs and reading the Scripture lessons in the worship services, and serving on the board of deacons of the congregations, which have a similar function to the board of elders and church council in most WELS congregations.

⁵⁸ Kurt Koeplin, Daniel Koelpin, and James Haag, letter to James Krause, June 23, 1989.

members by the year 2000.⁵⁹ Unfortunately though, this was during the period in Hong Kong in which many thousands of citizens were moving overseas, and SALEM was not unaffected. Of all its churches, though, it was Grace Church that lost the most members at that time. Most members of the other churches were young, and did not have enough money to leave Hong Kong. So, although there was uncertainty and some fear about what the future would hold after the handover in 1997, there was not panic, because the majority of the citizens of Hong Kong realized that there was nothing they could do about the situation.

In SALEM, it seems that there may not have been any specific strategy or plan laid out regarding the exact procedure of the church after the handover in 1997 – and this was simply because everything was so uncertain. Gary Schroeder was also extremely reluctant to put any plans down on paper, for fear that such records might be intercepted by PRC officials, and the security of WELS mission work and SALEM members might be compromised. Naturally, this was cause for some frustration. In 1996 letter from SEA Chairman Dan Koelpin to the SEA states:

The SEA EC [Executive Committee] wonders whether a strategy based on optional plans (as in A, B, and C) for after '97 can't be on paper. If you can't get SALEM to do this, at least lay out the expat teams' best shots for some walks into the future. It is important to us to know that you have some credible direction for the possibilities after '97.⁶⁰

Mark Sprengeler recounts that there were workshops and seminars in Hong Kong during the mid-1990s that he and Gary Schroeder would attend, about how to prepare cell groups in the churches, so that they could go underground if the PRC decided to repress or persecute Christians, as it had done in the past. But the overarching plan of the WELS mission team to prepare SALEM for 1997 had really been in place for 20 year... and large steps had been made

⁵⁹ Kirschke, interview.

⁶⁰ Daniel Koelpin, letter to the WELS missionaries in Southeast Asia, February 8, 1996, 7.

in the decade preceding 1997. As Titus Tse says, the handover of SALEM in 1997 was not a sudden decision. It had been in preparation since 1986, when he and the other evangelists of that generation completed their Bible institute training and first started going out and establishing new churches. In 1992, Schroeder brought Titus Tse onto the board of directors of SALEM, and more and more Chinese directors were appointed to the board, until at a joint SALEM service in the spring of 1997, all the old directors resigned, and new directors were installed – over 90 percent Chinese. Tse himself was appointed vice-chairman of SALEM by Schroeder in 1995, and then became chairman in 1997. Also, in 1996, at the dedication of the kindergarten in Shaukeiwan, SEA Committee Chairman Daniel Koelpin announced that the Broadcast Drive complex (Grace Church’s worship facility, SALEM’s offices and Bible institute classrooms, and missionary apartments) would be given over to SALEM, as soon as they could demonstrate that they had sufficient financial means to maintain the building.⁶¹ Also, because of concerns that the PRC might not permit religious groups to continue operating study centers, the members of Lai King church had plans to purchase a new facility of their own.

When the SEA Executive Committee made a field visit to Hong Kong in August 1996, they heard reports from the national church leaders on SALEM’s progress towards “localization.” Among the recommendations and requests they made was the hope of the continuance of the seminary program, with support from WELS missionaries and short-term visiting professors from the WELS. Although the WELS missionaries had later claimed that all four phases of the 1979 strategy statement had been achieved, it was clear that the fourth stage, which called for national workers teaching in the seminary, had not yet been reached. Some of the national workers had been involved in teaching seminary and Bible institute classes, but this

⁶¹ This has been a cause of some difficulty over the past decade, since technically, legally, the property is still in under WELS ownership – although SALEM has managed it under de facto ownership.

involvement was not extensive. The leadership of the seminary and most of the teaching remained under the direction of Roger Plath, until he left shortly before the handover in 1997.⁶² Thomas Frei, who had come onto the field in 1992, also left in 1996, for personal and doctrinal reasons. So as the handover came in 1997, the mission was left with just two workers: Gary Schroder and Mark Sprengeler. And shortly after 1997, Gary Schroeder's health began rapidly declining, due to a massive stroke and later brain cancer.

The date of June 30 came and saw the changing of the flags at midnight, and despite the uncertainty and apprehension, July 1 and the months and years that followed came with no effect on the churches of Hong Kong. The mission was now officially independent, with the Titus Tse as president and the two remaining missionaries, Schroeder and Sprengeler, as advisors and assistants in ministry.

⁶² Plath said that some personal factors and frustrations with what he felt was a dysfunctional administrative structure set up by the SEA committee on the field in Hong Kong led to his decision to return in 1997.

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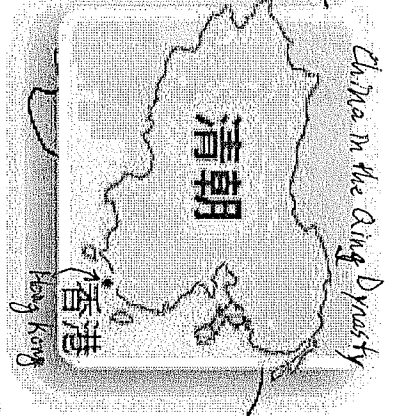
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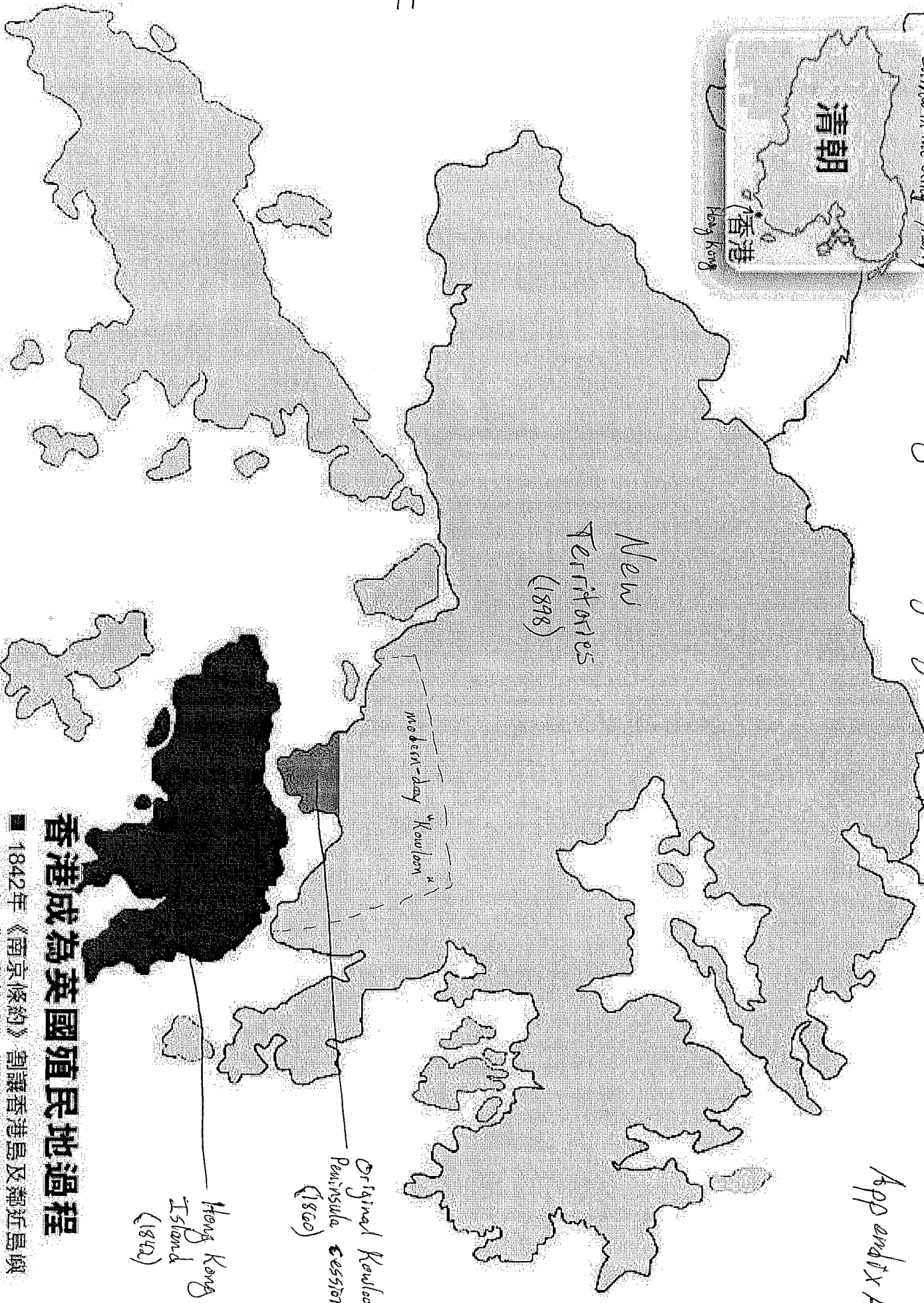
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Appendix A

China in the Qing Dynasty



THE STAGES OF HONG KONG LAND EXPANSION UNDER BRITISH COLONIAL RULE



Appendix A

香港成為英國殖民地過程

- 1842年《南京條約》割讓香港島及鄰近島嶼
- 1860年《北京條約》割讓九龍半島
- 1898年《展拓香港界址專條》租借新界

Original Kowloon Peninsula (1842)

Hong Kong Island (1842)

modern-day "Kowloon"

New Territories (1898)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Hkcolonyprocess.jpg>



STRATEGY STATEMENT

Hong Kong
Southeast Asia Missions
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

(to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised annually)

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December 1979
Revised December 1991
Revised June 1996
Revised July 1997

THE FIELD

Although we have a mandate to witness to anyone and everyone, we shall specifically concentrate our efforts on the youth (aged 15 to 25) and couples (aged 25-40) of Chinese descent who speak Cantonese, Mandarin or English and who live in the urban centers of Kowloon and the New Territories and Hong Kong Island. In view of our limited language ability and relative youthfulness, in addition to the general receptiveness of the younger Chinese, we consider the afore-mentioned "target groups" presently to be the most "reachable".

OBJECTIVES

We are so to present Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.

As we strive to fulfill this commission, we shall assist in the planting of and nurturing to maturity a Scripturally-confessional and contextualized church, actively engaged in on-going evangelistic outreach.

By a Scripturally-confessional church, we mean a church whose doctrine and practice conform to the Bible, especially capable of rightly dividing Law and Gospel and rightly administering the Sacraments as means of Grace.

By a contextualized church, we mean a church that

- 1) worships and serves the Lord according to Biblical principles and in a way that is relevant to the people who comprise the church;
- 2) is self-governing, i.e., has selected a Biblical pattern of church polity that is relevant to the people of the church and has demonstrated facility in using this pattern to administer all of its affairs, including discipline;
- 3) is self-propagating, i.e., has demonstrated a zeal for evangelism and is responsible for its own ministerial training and mission programs;
- 4) is self-supporting, i.e., is financially independent or is successfully pursuing its own plan for complete financial independence.

We believe that the church is contextualized when all aspects of its worship and service are administered by its members for its members without on-going dependence on manpower or monetary support from foreign sources.

ACTIVITIES

To achieve our objectives, we shall engage in the activities listed below. These activities, in our estimation, presently afford the optimum potential for attaining our objectives.

In the area of evangelism, we shall witness through

- contacts made in the network of our established relationships;
- classes in homes and institutions (e.g., churches, schools, activity centers, etc.);
- special evangelism campaigns;
- the mass media.
- activities for different age groups

In the area of Christian education, we shall provide ongoing Biblical instruction and training for ministry through

- small classes and organized groups in institutions (e.g., churches, schools, activity centers, etc.);
- a Bible institute
- a theological seminary

To facilitate our evangelism and education activities, we shall produce (either through translation or by original composition) and/or purchase all necessary materials.

To establish a contextualized national church, we shall

- engage in the planting of local churches;
- foster, with the help of nationals, the development of these local churches;
- cooperate in the organization and development of a federation of local churches;
- assist the national church in fulfilling its mission.

As a general principle, we shall not formally organize humanitarian relief efforts. However, this general principle does not preclude the occasional participation in a cause which directly meets human needs.

Also, as a general principle, we prefer Chinese churches and ministries to be self-supporting. Limited subsidy, however, may be given if there is a definite plan for the reduction and the eventual cessation of this subsidy.

PLANNING

PHASE I - DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING FIELDS AND WORK*

| EVANGELISM | EDUCATION |
|---|---|
| ✓ cultivate personal relationships for witnessing | ✓ train members to witness |
| ✓ arrange and/or seize opportunities to witness to individuals | ✓ train members to reach Sunday school and Bible classes |
| ✓ organize small classes for witnessing | |
| ✓ utilize organizational meetings and worship services for witnessing | SUPPORT MINISTRIES |
| ✓ conduct special services periodically for witnessing | ✓ purchase and use existing materials in evangelism and education |
| ✓ conduct annual evangelism campaigns | ✓ (Hire translator) |
| ✓ advertise in mass media and through letter/tract distribution | |
| ✓ (Call 'director of outreach through education') | NATIONAL CHURCH |
| | ✓ assist congregations individually administer own affairs |

✓ *ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED*

* presently includes Churches:
 Grace Lutheran Church, Lai King Lutheran Church, Sam Shing Lutheran Church, Tai Po Lutheran Church, Shatin Lutheran Church, Shaukeiwan Lutheran Church, Yau Oi Lutheran Church and Yuen Long Lutheran Church

Schools & Study Centers/Tutorial Center:

- Immanuel Lutheran College, SALEM Kindergarten-Shaukeiwan,
- Lai King Lutheran Study Center, Sam Shing Lutheran Study Center, Yau Oi Lutheran Study Center, Long Ping Study Center
- Jat Min Tutorial Center

PLANNING

PHASE 2 - EXPANSION OF EXISTING FIELDS AND WORK
 continue Phase 1 activities (except hiring of additional personnel) plus

| EVANGELISM | EDUCATION |
|--|---|
| ✓ increase number of potential prospects in target group by ... | ✓ Open Bible institute |
| ✓ 1) opening kindergarten and/or activity center at Grace | ✓ offer TEE courses in existing institutions |
| ✓ 2) re-establishing ILEMS in a larger, more suitable facility | |
| ✓ 3) emphasize family evangelisation | |
| SUPPORT MINISTRIES | NATIONAL CHURCH |
| ✓ produce own materials for evangelism and education as needs arise and as resources available | ✓ use qualified nationals to assist in ministry |

✓ *ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED*

PLANNING

PHASE 3 - OPENING OF NEW FIELDS AND WORK

continue Phase 1 and 2 activities (except hiring of additional personnel) plus ...

| EVANGELISM | EDUCATION |
|--|---|
| ✓ determine potential of possible fields | ✓ open seminary |
| ✓ acquire necessary sites and/or facilities | |
| ✓ open new fields (i.e., plant churches in order of apparent priority; note: these churches may be associated with an institution) | |
| ✓ in new fields, follow phase 1 evangelism activities | |
| SUPPORT MINISTRIES | NATIONAL CHURCH |
| ✓ produce needed materials | ✓ use qualified and trained nationals in ministry |
| ✓ (Hire business manager) | |

✓ *ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED*

PLANNING

PHASE 4 - FORMATION OF FEDERATION OF NATIONAL CHURCHES

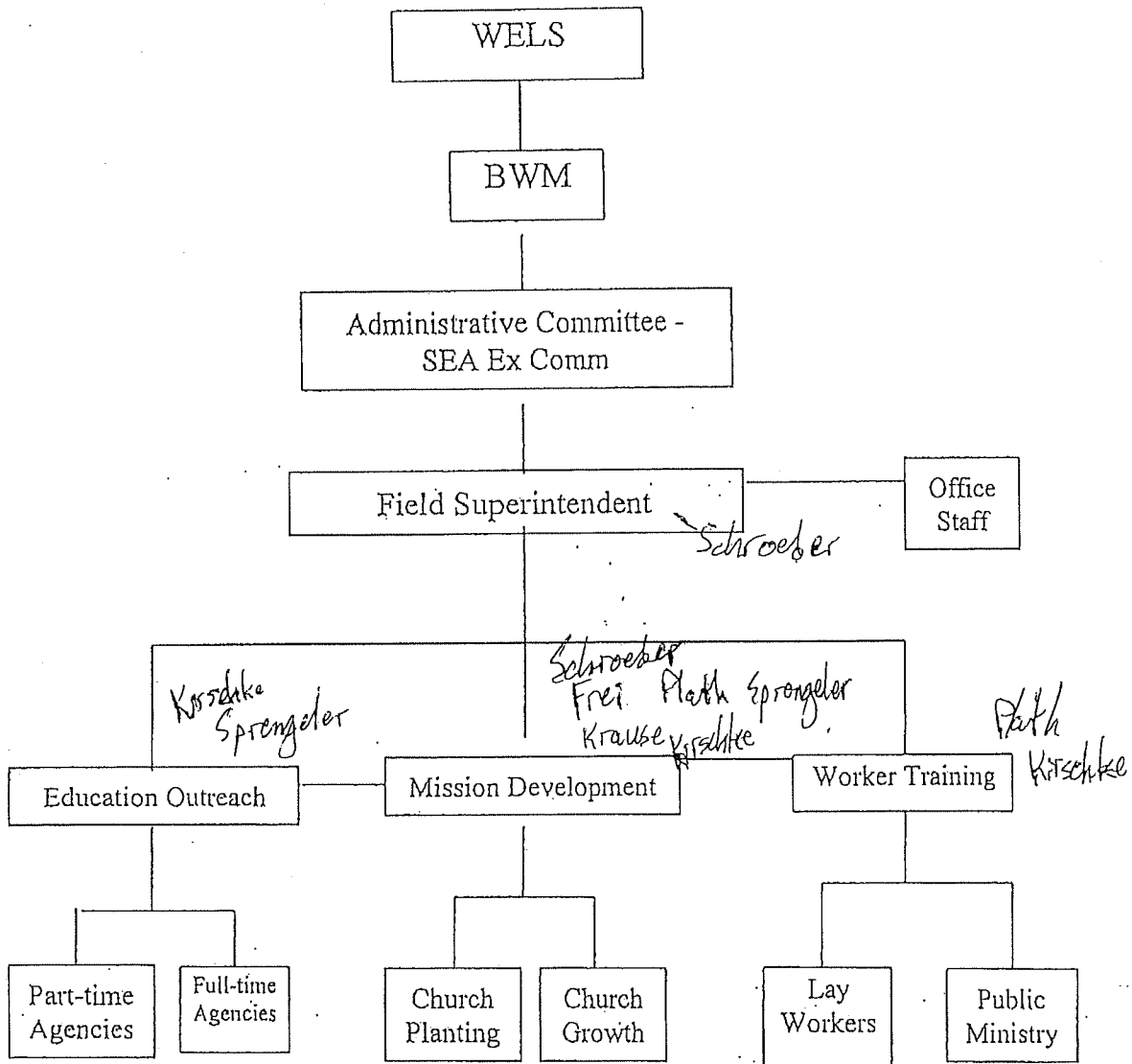
continue Phase 1, 2, and 3 activities (except hiring of additional personnel) plus ...

| | |
|--|--|
| EVANGELISM | EDUCATION |
| ✓ use proven methods to assist national church body in planting churches | ✓ use nationals in Bible institute |
| | ✓ use nationals in seminary |
| | ✓ provide post-graduate courses for seminary graduates |
| SUPPORT MINISTRIES | NATIONAL CHURCH |
| ✓ use nationals in production of materials for evangelism and education | ✓ form federation of national churches |
| | ✓ Assist federation of national ministry* |

✓ *ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED*

* *ONGOING*

AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY CHART



Note: All missionary staff are required to submit a report to the superintendent by 15 January of every year; this report is to include an evaluation of the past year(s) and plans for the future in the missionary's specific area of responsibility.

JOB DESCRIPTION

MISSIONARY-FIELD-MISSION COORDINATOR (team leader)

Qualifications:

- graduate of theological seminary
- minimum of 5 years' pastoral experience
- proven ability in personal evangelism
- proven ability in administration
- interest in counseling
- socially adept

Accountability:

- is appointed by and serves at the discretion of the Administrative Committee (AC)
- is directly responsible to the AC Liaison

Basic objective:

- to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church

General responsibility:

- to attain the above objective by supervising all mission activities and personnel
- is considered first among equals, to encourage other staff, facilitate meetings and projects and has the responsibility and authority for overall administration of the field
- is responsible for implementing AC directives and ensuring team accomplishment of strategy and objectives.
- is the channel through which missionaries and the national church report to the AC
- is responsible for supervising all missionary personnel
 - a) assignment of duties/workload
 - b) all aspects relating to day to day operation of the field
 - c) facilitates staff effectiveness, assists in their orientation, maintenance and repatriation
 - d) coordinates, plans, implements and oversees all mission development and staff
 - e) oversees, coordinates and approves all budgets, requisitions, furloughs, furlough costs, vacations or necessary absences from the field.
- the mission coordinator is the official representative of the field and serves as the liaison between WELS, Mission Liaison, AC, the missionaries and the national church.

Specific duties:

- to become fluent in Chinese (Cantonese dialect)
- to facilitate staff effectiveness by assisting in their selection, orientation, maintenance, and repatriation
- to administer, i.e., coordinate, the planning, implementation, and development of all mission activity and staff
- to serve as the liaison between the executive committee and the field
- to be the official representative of the field
- to participate in local ministries of the missionary team
- to train local staff to assume his responsibilities

JOB DESCRIPTION

MISSIONARY - MISSION DEVELOPMENT

Qualifications:

- graduate of theological seminary
- minimum of 3 years' pastoral experience
- proven ability in personal evangelism
- familiarity with missiological principles
- innovative

Accountability:

- is directly responsible to the field mission coordinator and is to work in consultation with him and the other missionaries in the field

Basic objective:

- so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church

General responsibility:

- to attain the above objective by planning, implementing, and coordinating the development of activities leading to the establishment and growth of local congregations

Specific duties:

- to become fluent in Chinese (Cantonese dialect)
- to plan, implement, and coordinate basic evangelistic outreach
- to plant local congregations
- to coordinate the development of these congregations into a church body
- to work with developing and developed congregations as supervisor, then associate, and finally assistant
- to participate in local ministries of the missionary team
- to train local staff to assume his responsibilities

JOB DESCRIPTION

MISSIONARY - WORKER TRAINING

Qualifications:

- graduate of theological seminary
- minimum of 3 years' pastoral experience
- proven ability in personal evangelism
- proven ability in teaching
- familiarity with educational administration

Accountability:

- is directly responsible to the field mission coordinator and is to work in consultation with him and the other missionaries in the field

Basic objective:

- so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church

General responsibility:

- to attain the above objective by planning, implementing, and coordinating the development of all training programs for ministry (lay and pastoral)

Specific duties:

- to become fluent in Chinese (Cantonese dialect)
- to plan suitable programs and schools for training the laity and a national clergy
- to implement planned programs by providing suitable facilities, staff, and materials
- to coordinate development of worker training programs and schools
- to participate in local ministries of the missionary team
- to train local staff to assume his responsibilities

JOB DESCRIPTION

MISSIONARY-DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH THROUGH EDUCATION

Qualifications:

- possess a graduate degree in education from an accredited institution
- minimum of 3 years' teaching experience
- proven ability in personal evangelism
- proven ability in education administration
- interest in evangelistic outreach through educational agencies

Accountability:

- is directly responsible to the field mission coordinator and is to work in consultation with him and the other missionaries in the field

Basic objective:

- so to present Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church

General responsibility:

- to attain the above objective by planning, implementing, and coordinating development of all outreach activity in the field of education

Specific duties:

- to become fluent in Chinese (Cantonese dialect)
- to plan programs for evangelistic outreach in the field of education (Bible Institute & Seminary excepted)
- to implement the planned programs by providing suitable facilities, staff and materials
- to coordinate the development of all outreach activities in the field of education
- to serve as supervisor of S.A.L.E.M. schools
- to participate in local ministries of the missionary team
- to train local staff to assume his responsibilities

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MISSION AND NATIONAL CHURCH

Our HK mission's basic objective in regard to national churches is to plant and nurture to maturity a Scripturally-confessional and contextualized church.

We envision three general stages in the process of planting and nurturing to maturity a national church.

STAGE 1 - ESTABLISHMENT (Guardian)

The mission does the work of the church by planting the initial congregations

STAGE 2 - COOPERATION (Partner)

The mission works with the church in organizing and developing a federation of congregations

STAGE 3 - ASSISTANCE (Servant)

The mission does work for the church by offering manpower assistance in areas determined by the church

It must be remembered that the national church is permanent and our mission is temporary.

Other aspects of the relationship between the mission, its workers, and the national church are defined elsewhere in this statement under "Objectives", "Activities", and "Planning".