



The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

Lausanne Occasional Paper 6 Christian Witness to the Chinese People

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Report of the Consultation on World Evangelization

Mini-Consultation on Reaching Chinese

held at Pattaya, Thailand from 16-27 June 1980

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Prefatory Note

This report, *Christian Witness to the Chinese People*, is one of the series of Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) emerging from the historic **Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE)** held at Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980. This report was drafted by members of the "Mini-consultation on Reaching Chinese" under the chairmanship of Thomas Wang, who also served as International Co-ordinator of the pre-COWE study groups on the Chinese people.

The major part of this report went through a draft and a revised draft, which involved all members of the mini-consultation. It was also submitted to a wider "sub-assembly" group for comment, but the responsibility for the final text rests with the mini-consultation and its chairman. The document is a highly valuable and informative report of this mini-consultation.

The report is released with the prayer and hope that it will stimulate the church and individual members in reaching this large segment of the population.

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Introduction

The Chinese constitute the largest single segment of the human race. Their unbroken history of more than five thousand years marks a culture that is durable and resilient. They have survived the ravages of countless internal struggles and foreign invasions and remain today a distinct people.

And yet, throughout their long history, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been almost a total stranger to them. True, there have been periods in which those who know the true and living God dwelled in their midst, but for a variety of tragic reasons, the great majority of Chinese learned little of Christ's Name and salvation. Jewish synagogues and Nestorian merchant communities were scattered throughout China during the Tang dynasty (7th to 9th centuries) when Chinese civilisation was more advanced than anything Europe had to offer. Franciscan missionaries struggled to survive on the fringes of that empire during the years of Mongol dominance (13th century), while creative Jesuits followed in the 16th and 17th centuries. Nevertheless these relatively brief periods of Roman Catholic missionary presence produced little lasting spiritual benefit for the common people.

It was only when Protestant and renewed Catholic missions came to China in force in the 19th and 20th centuries that it could be said that the Christian Church had at long last been planted among China's millions. Even then, this Church was more identified with Western cultural influence than with any spontaneous acceptance by the Chinese themselves. It was during those decades prior to the Japanese invasion of northeast China in 1937 that the Church began to loosen its Western moorings. This was largely due to the emergence of an able and vigorous Chinese leadership that began to take over responsibilities of the formerly

mission-oriented churches, as well as to produce a variety of independent Christian movements. Through their widespread influence, they prepared the whole Church to meet the forthcoming anguish which occurred after 1949.

Since then, during the past three decades, the people of mainland China have experienced a series of painful convulsions under revolutionary fervor. In the anguish of life under these protracted and trying circumstances, Chinese people have at long last become deeply disenchanting with revolutionary rhetoric and social manipulation, and the euphoria originally generated by the Maoist triumph has evaporated. Today, the official line has been reduced to "Four Modernizations" – the call to make economic growth and military security virtually the sole objectives of all collective activity.

Touching the Church in China, we must be particularly sensitive to the implications of God's evident control of recent history. It was in his providence that all Western missionaries were removed from China (largely completed by 1951). He allowed the Church there to be severely tested by man ever since the authorities determined to break its ties with the West and make it subservient to the State. Many suffered for their faith and some died in prison. During the period of the Cultural Revolution, some theologians overlooked the widescale oppression and tended to identify the emergence of a new political order with the coming of the Kingdom of God. Others, however, rejected it in its totality as incompatible with Christian faith.

As the years passed, Christians on the outside lost contact with the actual situation in China. Most could only pray and wait. Many asked whether all those years of sacrificial labor on the part of thousands of foreign missionaries and Chinese workers had been in vain. They waited over 30 years for an answer.

Today at this Pattaya Consultation, we rejoice that the silence has been broken. Government strictures against public worship have to some extent been relaxed. We now find nothing less than a living, growing Church, with thousands upon thousands of Christians courageously confessing that Jesus Christ alone is Lord!

Among the more than 40 million Chinese outside of the mainland, God has seen fit to work in different patterns. Over the years, he has pursued those Chinese in such ways that many feel they are being prepared for a significant role in his Kingdom in the days ahead. He has placed them in positions of leadership in various fields. Moreover, he has made them receptive to the Christian message, and churches made up of these people now exist in more than 80 countries of the world. Indeed we cannot but believe that what God has been doing in recent years in China to glorify his Name through a suffering Church and among other ethnic Chinese to bring about a growing Church will be seen to be intimately interrelated in the days ahead.

Having said this, we, at the same time, must not ignore the fact that the Chinese churches (both in the mainland and outside) are still occupied with issues and problems which must be objectively analyzed and studied. They must humbly seek the Lord's guidance into viable strategies and work very hard for their ultimate realization, with co-operation from churches of the West and of the Third World.

Our primary concern is with the evangelization of the Chinese people, both in the mainland and throughout the world. In our judgement, we believe we stand today on the threshold of the greatest ingathering into Christ of the Chinese people this world has ever known. But more, our larger concern is that in these last days, God will transform the Chinese Church into a missionary vehicle through which the Christian gospel will be brought to the forgotten and hidden peoples of this generation.

1. Factors in Chinese Resistance to the Gospel: Lessons from History

If China were to open her door to missionaries again, would the latter be able to begin their work anew without repeating the mistakes of the past or eliciting again such widespread negative response? To address this question, one needs to make a fresh examination of the history of Protestant missions in China within the larger context of Chinese culture and political history.

At this Consultation, it has not been possible to explore the total complexity of this question. We were only able to focus briefly on a few factors in Chinese resistance to the gospel as observed during the Protestant missionary era from 1807 to 1949. It is hoped that these will serve as guidelines for further study in this area and as necessary background in our concern for the evangelization of mainland China.

a. Chinese Historical Factors

(i) The religious situation of China into which the gospel came through Western missionaries in the 19th century was not conducive to its reception. Institutional religions (Buddhism and Taoism) in traditional China had been reduced in the Tang Dynasty (605-906) to a low position in society by the Confucian official literati through state control. Deprived of the opportunity to develop in the areas of education, civil service, and economic influence, and forbidden the right of free propagation and organisation, the influence of Buddhist and Taoist priests was reduced to only a marginal sphere in Chinese national and social life. Only the poor and the disillusioned in life entered the monastery, as a retreat to other worldly pursuits. It was out of this situation, therefore, that Chinese responded to the gospel. It was largely only marginal peoples who responded, while the mainstream of society kept itself at a distance from embracing Christianity as an institutional religion. Even today, religion in China is considered a matter of low priority in the eyes of the State, which still exercises its control over religious activities and growth.

(ii) The entrance of modern Christianity into China, riding on the waves of colonial expansion marked by "gunboat diplomacy," has been one of the main reasons for Chinese resistance to, if not outright rejection of, the gospel as embodied by Western missionaries. The juxtaposition of the two was further exacerbated by the fact that most missionaries uncritically enjoyed their rights of extraterritoriality taken from the Chinese State under duress. It was inevitable, therefore, that the Chinese people identified missionaries as a part of Western colonial expansion. Thus, in their rejection of blatant Western imperialism, they also rejected Christianity. Chinese who accepted the Christian faith were often considered as traitors, and hence had to suffer alienation from their own people and nation. To this day, the Communists still use this link between colonialism and the missionary enterprise as a tool and excuse to discredit the Christian message. The lesson to be learned from history is that the gospel cannot be imposed upon the Chinese people, but it can be introduced in the context of the contribution it can make toward national interest.

(iii) Historically, Chinese acceptance of, or resistance to, the gospel was largely determined by the State's attitude toward Christianity and particularly the countries from which missionaries came. The development of the Church in China shows that there is a close correlation between Chinese political events – both domestic and foreign – and the openness or resistance of the Chinese State and hence the people, to the gospel. This implies that the development of international relations and domestic politics greatly determine the extent of evangelistic work in China. It is necessary, therefore, to develop strategies for the cycle of "receptive times" and "resistant times" in our missiological approach. During the latter, we need to explore ways by which the Christian world can contribute to the development of Sino-foreign relations, thereby creating a climate more conducive to the gospel. On the other hand, Christians ought to use receptive times more fully for the task of evangelization.

b. Cultural Factors

(i) Many Western missionaries, in their zeal "to get on with the job" of evangelization, often failed to gain a deeper understanding of the various levels of the living dynamics of the gospel, and thus were insensitive to Chinese cultural and social barriers to the Christian message. Many, knowingly or unknowingly, bore a sense of European cultural superiority, characterized by a disdain for Chinese culture, which blinded them from seeing the Chinese people in the complexity of their cultural and social modes of existence. They made judgements on the Chinese people from the context of a Western cultural and social framework. This contributed enormously to tension between the guardians of Chinese culture and the Christian community. It also contributed indirectly to the death of intellectual leadership in the church. From this experience of history, we can learn that there is a great need for the bearers of the gospel (overseas Chinese and others included) to understand fully the cultural context of contemporary China and so contextualize our approaches in evangelism.

(ii) Many missionaries failed to understand the complexity of the Chinese family and community organization and the implications for evangelism and church growth. Colored by the Western concept of the individual and the family which they brought with them and isolated from the Chinese by their "compound" living, they persisted in their Western perspectives. Related to this is the central place of ancestral veneration and filial piety in the Chinese family. Many missionaries failed to understand the social dimensions of ancestor veneration in terms of family loyalty, paternal authority, and economic security, and often denounced it as demonic and idolatrous. Studies need to be made, therefore, on how the Chinese family structure can become a vehicle to evangelism.

c. Missiological Factors

(i) The Christian message taken to China was highly individualistic. While it is right to stress personal commitment to Christ, and while missions and churches did wonderful social relief work, the focus was mostly on the transformation of the individual. Chinese pastors and evangelists continued in this stream of thinking.

This meant that in spite of the massive missionary presence and the growth of the Church, Christianity contributed very little to the transformation of Chinese society and the nation as a whole. Many still regard Christianity as a "foreign religion." This points to the question of how the gospel should be understood and communicated to the needs of the Chinese people as a nation. Throughout the history of modern China, officials, even today, have asked what Christianity can contribute to China's social and economic reconstruction.

(ii) The fragmentary and denominational approach to the evangelization of the Chinese people in the past met with persistent resistance of the Chinese people both inside and outside the Church. Confusion in the Christian message, conflicting views on important national issues, and disunity among organizations derived from the fragmentary denominational approach seriously hindered the gospel. Whereas most Chinese Church leaders favored a united approach, both on the local and national level, most missions preferred a cooperative approach in which denominational identity remained intact. During the past thirty years, denominations have been destroyed in China by state control, but among the churches in diaspora the same problem persists. Can we learn anything from our recent past for a more effective evangelization of the Chinese people?

(iii) The introduction and persistence in the Western concept of the institutional church, which determined the concept of ministry and model of training, has made the Chinese Church rely on the professional clergy (evangelists, Bible-women and pastors) for evangelism and church growth. This has greatly hindered the development of the laity for evangelism. The development of the "employment system" for paid workers since the 1850's has retarded the development of independence and selfhood in the churches. In facing the one billion in China and in confronting the forty-five million in the diaspora, we feel the need to develop a more Biblical view of the ministry which will embrace the whole body of Christ for evangelism.

2. Reaching Chinese on the Mainland

Reaching the Chinese people on the mainland of China is, perhaps, one of the most difficult and challenging tasks in world evangelization. It is difficult because the one billion people in China live under a socialist system; and it is challenging because of the changing situation that is developing in China. In thinking and planning for the evangelization of China, we must, therefore, do so with these two realities held in proper tension.

In addition, it is absolutely mandatory that we do not think of the evangelization of China as something to be done primarily from the outside. We must keep in mind that these Christians in China, who have remained faithful to the Lord despite many trials of faith and much suffering, are already busily engaged in this task. Hence, the central challenge for Christians outside China is to learn how to work with them.

In seeking to find answers to this central question, we at COWE have reviewed Chinese attitudes toward religion, Chinese receptivity to the gospel and the current state of the Church. We have sought to identify the issues involved in the evangelistic task and also to work out realistic goals and strategies for its accomplishment.

a. Current Official Attitude toward Religion

(i) Recent official publications indicate that the Chinese Communists have not abandoned their Marxist interpretation of religion. In fact, they have recently restated their traditional position: religion is an erroneous worldview held by people not yet liberated by science and culture. They concede a distinction, however, between world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, and traditional Chinese superstitions such as geomancy, fortune telling, etc. The former are accorded legal status, while the latter are to be suppressed by science and education.

(ii) This current policy of toleration toward the world religions is being implemented as part of the Party's revived "united front" policy, in a reversal from that of the 1971-1976 days. This return to the pre-1966 religious policy is also a natural consequence of China's adoption of the "Four Modernizations" program.

(iii) The influence of the Marxist interpretation of religion, particularly of Christianity, nevertheless still is strong among the Chinese people. This is inevitable, following three decades of Marxist indoctrination. Today, instruction in atheism is being stepped up. Government religious officials continue to link the missionary movement in China with Western imperialism.

To be realistic about the future evangelistic task in China, therefore, we must understand the implications of this official attitude toward religion in general and toward Christianity in particular. We should expect the government to set limits upon Christian activities in China and upon evangelistic efforts from outside China.

b. Chinese Receptivity to the Gospel

However, as far as the rank and file of the people are concerned, they are still very interested in religious matters. They quite openly express this concern, particularly since the death of Mao Tse-tung when the country began to enjoy a measure of political relaxation. The resurgence of involvement in Chinese traditional religions, particularly in the villages, is a common phenomenon in China today. Among the young people, one discerns a growing interest in religious matters.

There are different levels of this interest and spiritual receptivity. Indeed, we may divide them into a variety of cultural subgroups:

(i) Farmers

With their families, they constitute some 800,000,000 of China's population, and they find life hard. Their standard of living remains practically the same as it was before 1949, except that all share in the work and all have been delivered from the fear of starvation. Social mobility is virtually non-existent due to the legal proscription against moving one's place of residence. Their lives are characterized by limited education, lack of access to independent news and information services, and ceaseless labor. It is difficult for outsiders to get into the rural villages, except by visiting relatives.

(ii) Urbanites

In sharp contrast, they have steady jobs, are better educated, have more contact with overseas Chinese, and have radios, newspapers, and books. Today they are prone to getting caught up in the consumer materialism of China's current "Four Modernizations" program for economic development. But their need for spiritual transformation through Christ is quite evident, and they are open to outside influence.

(iii) The Older Generation

One thinks particularly of those urban intellectuals over 50 who were trained in mission schools, still remember their missionary teachers, and have not forgotten the attractiveness of the Christian life-style. They are products of the China that existed before 1949. Since then, they have been considerably reshaped by the Communist worldview. Today, their education and practical skills are being sought by the Chinese government, regardless of their political views. This group is still receptive to the gospel, because many share the common heritage of Christian values.

(iv) Party Members, Cadres and Youth League Members

They currently run the country according to central directives. Because they are committed to Communist ideology and are under constant obligation to demonstrate loyalty to the Party they are the hardest group to reach. Some say they number about 50,000,000 people. Christians of distinction in the professions and sciences outside China are needed to contact these power holders to assure them that Christianity is not harmful to China, but can, in the long run, help in China's modernization program. The friendship approach is most appropriate for reaching them, both now and in the near future.

(v) Urban Youth

They are called "young intellectuals" and along with the old generation are the most receptive to the gospel. Millions have been "sent down to the countryside" to engage in manual labor. There they became embittered as they watched the prime of their lives being wasted. They are anxious to learn English, to enter university, and improve their lot. These young intellectuals, numbering somewhere between 50,000,000 and 100,000,000 possess great potential for either constructive and creative thought in China, or for unrest and dissent. Currently, they are a deeply disillusioned segment of society. Nonetheless, the Marxist ideas drilled into them since birth form an unconscious conceptual framework for their thought. Their understanding of even basic religious ideas is either poor or

non-existent. This makes gospel communication to them a formidable task, especially for outsiders.

Conclusion

This preliminary analysis suggests that further research and study are needed so as to understand fully the life situation and spiritual needs of the Chinese in these varied groupings. Different approaches need to be developed in relation to each separate group. We would state that the farmers are the most numerous, the youth are the most receptive, and the "power holders" are the most strategic. We will discuss later particular and relevant strategies that might be employed to reach them.

c. Situation of the Church in China

(i) The Development of Protestant Christianity in Mainland China, 1949-1979

When the Communists took over China in 1949, there were 110 Protestant mission groups at work there. The estimated baptized Christian community was 1.8 million, of which 834,000 were communicant members. Over 6,000 Protestant missionaries were at work, together with 13,000 Chinese Christian workers, ministering in some 19,500 churches and chapels. In addition, there were 270 Christian middle schools and 262 Christian hospitals. At that time, China was, perhaps, the largest Protestant mission field in the world. The Christianity that existed in China, apart from those independent forms developed by indigenous Chinese, was largely mission-planted and its institutional forms reflected both its strengths and weaknesses.

Organised Christian churches in China, both Protestant and Catholic, have undergone a painful process of deinstitutionalization and transformation during the last 30 years. It was a process to which the Church was subjected by the state against her will, but from which she emerged purified and triumphant.

During the initial period (1949-1958), all Protestant churches were unified and brought under the control of the State through the "Three-Self Patriotic Movement," a liberal pro-government Protestant agency. Under its leadership, all denominational structures and organisations were destroyed in the name of unity. Foreign missionaries were driven from the country, all foreign financial reliance was terminated, and professional clergymen and Bible-women were laicized. By 1958, city churches were so under "Three-Self" control that their numbers could be reduced drastically. In Shanghai, 200 churches were reduced to 15; and in Peking, 66 to 4. For all practical purposes, pastoral leadership over congregations was brought to an end. Through this state control, Protestant Christianity was deliberately deinstitutionalized and strange as it may seem, this was a mercy. Indeed, Chinese Christians experienced a kind of unwitting deliverance through suffering: they were freed from Western denominational forms, from financial dependency, from Western-style ecclesiastical control and ideological influence.

During the second period (1958-1962), the State, in conjunction with its experimentation in commune development, sought to control rural churches. It made concern for economic productivity such an all-absorbing activity that Christian community activities were disrupted, including regular Sunday services. The Atheistic Education Movement of 1963-1965 put much pressure on Christians by challenging the legitimacy of their religious profession. They were forced to meet privately for Christian worship and were able to partake in community life only at irregular intervals. Deprived of the institutional church and pastoral leadership, the laity suddenly found they were on their own. Through this, they discovered that the spiritual character of Christian community was capable of authentic existence without these external realities.

During the Cultural Revolution, the third period (1966-1969), Christians were attacked as part of the old culture and old ideology. Along with all other religious people, whether liberal intellectuals or pragmatic party members, all types of professing Christians were attacked and humiliated. The result was that Christian activities were driven further underground. Even the few state-controlled institutional churches were eliminated from the surface of Chinese society. It was the burial of the last vestiges of Western institutional religious forms.

During the fourth period, at the close of the Cultural Revolution (1970-1976), China became a "religionless society," as far as organised religion was concerned. But it was during this period that active local house churches emerged. As local communities of the people of God, Chinese Christians began to shine as trophies of God's grace. Diffused into such social structures as the family and local village community, Chinese Christians began to experience the power of the Spirit. They came to know love, peace, healing, and joy in the midst of a disillusioned generation. As a community of the redeemed, the Chinese church became a sign of hope to the despairing.

During recent years, Teng Hsiao-p'ing's pragmatism (1976 to present) has dominated the China scene. Informal Christian communities have been growing in strength, number and boldness in China, particularly in the coastal provinces. Current Chinese Communist religious policy, in congruence with the nation's "Four Modernizations" program and its liberalization policy, is reaffirming "freedom of religious beliefs" for religious people. The motive behind this is the desire of the State to recruit all of its citizens for the monumental task of socialist reconstruction through modernization. Under this new turn of events, Christian communities in China have become a vital force in providing spiritual hope to a nation troubled over its shifting ideology and struggling for survival in the modern world.

(ii) The Current Situation in Protestant Churches

The Protestant Church in China today must be understood in terms of "official churches" or "government recognised churches" and "house churches." The former are those which have been opened under the auspices of local committees of the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which is responsible to the Religious Affairs Bureau of the government. The latter represent spontaneous Christian fellowships meeting in private homes and other informal settings without official sanction, though increasingly open and often known to local officials.

(a) Government recognised churches

As of June 1980, at least 22 former Protestant church buildings had been opened for public worship in major cities throughout China, namely in Peking, Shanghai, Hangchow, Ningpo, Foochow, Amoy, Canton, Shenyang, Tientsin, Chengtu, and Chungking. These churches were opened mostly between September and December 1979. The church in Peking which had earlier been solely used by diplomatic personnel and other foreign nationals, was opened to Chinese worshippers in April 1979.

The opening of these churches is a direct consequence of the restoration of China's religious policy to its pre-1966 state of affairs. It forms part of China's overall shift from ideological struggle to economic reconstruction as symbolised by the "Four Modernizations" program. After reverting to this religious policy in March 1979, the Religious Affairs Bureau and various local committees of the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the Catholic Patriotic Association were restored in the months that followed. (The Religious Affairs Bureau is a government agency which implements the religious policy of the State and gives directions to the Three-Self Movement.) Government recognised churches, therefore, are usually opened as a co-operative effort of the local committee of the Three-Self Movement, the Religious Affairs Bureau of the state and the United Front Work Department. The rate of opening has been slow because of the difficulty of relocating work "units" that have been occupying former church buildings.

Most of these government recognised churches are staffed by four to five pastors who used to be pastors before the Cultural Revolution and some even before 1949. They usually serve in conjunction with a staff member of the Three-Self Movement, who is usually a former YMCA or YWCA secretary. The personal faith of these pastors represents a wide theological spectrum. It is unwise to label them according to current Western theological categories.

Attendance in these churches varies from city to city, and according to the size of the available church building. The Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai, for example, holds three services each Sunday with more than 2,000 worshippers attending each service. Other churches have congregations that range from 400 to 1,000 in attendance.

In most of these churches, the order of worship still follows the traditional style of Protestant churches: hymn singing, Scripture reading, preaching, announcements, and blessing. The Lord's Supper is administered in some churches on a monthly basis, and is only beginning to be introduced in others and then at irregular intervals. Baptism will shortly be administered in several churches. Mid-week fellowship and prayer meetings are being conducted in the Peking church.

More church buildings are being made ready for public worship in the provincial capitals. Early this year, the Executive Committee of the Three-Self Movement met in Shanghai (February 25 to March 1, 1980) and announced that a "Church Bureau" will shortly be formed to handle Protestant church affairs. In an open letter which also came out of that meeting, the National Committee promised to reprint the old "Union Version" (1919) of the Bible, publish books and journals,

begin ministerial training, and take steps to strengthen pastoral work. The Three-Self Movement sees its task as assisting the government in the implementation of its religious policy, helping Christians to become more patriotic and preventing outsiders from intruding into China's religious life.

(b) House churches

The development of house churches in China began concurrently with the process of reduction of institutional churches by way of unification in the 1950's and with the deinstitutionalization process completed during the 1960's.

Although it was at first thought that the phenomenon of house churches was limited to the coastal provinces where Protestant missionary activity had had a longer history and where the process of indigenisation had been most successful, it is now clear that house churches were far more widespread than we realised.

Today they are to be found in every province from north to south, as well as in the border areas and autonomous regions. In many provinces, house churches can be found in practically every major village. Wherever there used to be churches and evangelistic centres, or wherever Christians were sent into exile, these house churches, small and larger, have emerged. It is estimated that if there were 20,000 churches and evangelistic centres in 1949, in the light of the widespread phenomenon of house churches throughout the provinces there may be as many as 40,000 of them in China today. In one medium-sized city alone, 400 house churches are reported. The total Protestant population in 1949 being two million, the present estimate could be four to six million.

The types and sizes of house churches vary considerably. There are small city groups under one or two lay leaders that rotate from home to home. In addition, there are small group meetings in villages, open park fellowships in Shanghai and Hangchow, larger open house meetings under the leadership with attendance running as high as 2,000 people. The character of the house churches in China is a subject worthy of further study. Its model of existence and modes of evangelism could well become a model of evangelism in closed societies. The effectiveness of our participation in the evangelization of China will largely depend on our understanding of, and co-operation with, house churches.

Deprived of pastoral leadership since the mid-1950's, the house churches that emerged are largely a lay movement at the grass roots level, particularly in the villages. As a lay movement, house churches lay greater stress on Christian experience than theological formulation. When they come together, they share their experiences of God and of His Word in their lives. Prayer and fellowship, mutual encouragement, and costly discipleship mark their living in *koinonia*.

The house church is a diffused church, diffused into existing Chinese social structures and lines of relationship: the family (extended as well), the "work unit," neighbourhood block, and the commune structure (production battalion and brigades). Without institutional leadership or structures, the house churches have become relatively free from government administrative control. Furthermore, these social relationships and structures have become natural avenues for evangelism.

The house church represents the local living body of Christ which has become mature through suffering. There, Christians experience most vividly the love of God in times of depression, loneliness, and at times, unbearable suffering. They experience the reality and power of their faith, which pulls them through death-like experiences, and they draw genuine comfort from each other.

With such deepened experiences of God and of his power, the house churches are determined to witness for the living God through their transformed lives and through verbal communication of the gospel. Hence, they are evangelistic churches.

The needs of house churches, as expressed by them to outside visitors, are basically in five categories: (1) Prayer support; (2) Bibles, hymnals and devotional literature, such as *Streams In The Desert* and *Living Water*; (3) Bible study tools, such as concordances, commentaries, and other theological literature; (4) encouragement from outside through radio broadcasting, visits and letters; and (5) financial assistance for the elderly and for some Christian evangelists.

Methods of evangelism developed by house churches may be summarised as follows: (1) sharing their faith with their immediate family and extended family members and introducing the gospel to trusted friends; (2) incarnating the gospel in their lives and letting them speak for Christ; (3) using public occasions such as funerals, to witness for Christ; and (4) testifying to God's power through the exercise of the gifts of healing and exorcism.

d. Current Ministries from Outside

Current ministries being conducted from outside China reflect what Christians and organisations have been doing in response to China's evangelistic needs. Historically considered, the earliest is radio broadcasting, in existence from the closing days of pre-Communist China; followed by the rise of a worldwide China prayer movement during the early 1970's; and, more recently, by Bible and literature distribution; and finally, visits by overseas Chinese and foreign tourists.

(i) Radio Ministry

The Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) has been conducting radio broadcasting to China since the late '40s. More recently, Transworld Radio and four other program sponsors have joined this type of ministry. Indeed, when China was first closed, radio was the chief and most effective means of gospel communication to the people. Today, one out of eleven Chinese has a radio. Over the years, a variety of programs has been developed, ranging from pre-evangelism, to explicit evangelism, and on to Christian nurture and devotional programs.

Listeners, both believers and non-believers alike, greatly appreciate this ministry. Since 1978, audience response has increased significantly. According to FEBC's report for 1979, the monthly average jumped to 890 letters, whereas between 1968-1978, the yearly average was only 18. A recent study shows that 75% of the respondents are non-Christians, while 80% are young people under 30. This suggests that (1) youth form a significant responsive group in China today, and (2) radio is an effective means for confronting mainland Chinese with the Christian message. More research is needed to establish a better correlation between program content and audience receptivity.

(ii) Prayer

Prayer for China has been offered widely by churches throughout the world. This heartening phenomenon has been steadily enlarging in recent years. Inevitably, Chinese believers in China greatly appreciate this spiritual support. Through the growing volume of information being supplied by Christian research centres and its distribution to these churches, better communication is being developed between the needs of the people of God in China and overseas praying churches. Increasingly, many are recognizing the importance of focussing prayer on China's national transformation as well as on the needs of its churches. All told, the evangelization of China and the growth of its churches cannot be realised without the steady enlargement of this worldwide prayer movement.

(iii) Bible and Literature Distribution

Bible and literature distribution only became more possible and pervasive in 1977 when China began to open her doors to international travel and tourism. The need for Bibles and Christian literature is the result of the almost total destruction of Bibles which took place during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969). Until recently, believers could only secure their own Bible portions by copying them by hand. Today, many Bibles are being carried in by visitors or mailed in by Christians to their friends and relatives.

(iv) Visits by Christians from Outside China

Since 1977, these visits have greatly increased. They provide believers in China with encouragement, fellowship and the assurance that they are being remembered by the churches in the rest of the world. Indeed, these Christians are increasingly experiencing a sense of spiritual unity with the worldwide Christian community. And in turn, they are ministering to this larger community. Those outside visitors, upon returning home, are taking with them lessons learned from the Church in China. It is in this context of encounter in China that all participants are beginning to find their greatest opportunity for partnership in China's evangelization. But, we would add, this privileged partnership is not easy to realise. It requires the wisdom that comes from God, for the situations in which such joint efforts are possible, are very sensitive.

e. Issues in the Evangelization of China

(i) How should Christians and churches outside China relate to their counterparts within?

While all China ministries should be conducted in closest co-operation with believers in China and in response to their invitations, it does not seem prudent to develop formal organisational contacts with either the house churches or with the government recognised churches. Christian contacts should rather be conducted on a personal level between individual believers, thereby bringing to them a ministry of encouragement and love.

(ii) What should be the role of foreign churches in the evangelization of China?

Christians and churches in many lands are anxious to share in the evangelization of China. However, since most lack an accurate understanding of the general political and religious situation, and since the Chinese government has clearly stated that missionaries are not welcome, their role is best limited to the first and second goals of evangelism outlined on page 14. Recognition of the sovereignty of the State over its citizens and understanding of Christians' corresponding patriotism is particularly crucial.

(iii) Should any effort be made to re-establish former denominational programs?

Since most Christians in China today have discarded the former denominational structures and are now united on the local level, the reintroduction of denominations would only be divisive and a hindrance to evangelization. Nothing should be done to disturb the peace of our brethren.

(iv) What is the place of the Bible in evangelization? Should Christians continue to take them into China?

The Bible is central to the evangelization of China. As noted, it is also the item in greatest demand among Christians throughout China today.

Inasmuch as the government has not declared it to be illegal (it has in fact approved limited printing), even though some customs officials do prohibit its entry apart from personal use, taking Bibles into China should therefore be left to the discretion and conscience of the individual.

(v) How should the various Chinese and Non-Chinese China ministries be coordinated?

It is a matter of thanksgiving that interest in and concern for China's evangelization is so widespread. However, unless careful pains are taken to achieve closer co-ordination, great disservice will be rendered to the cause of Christ. Unnecessary duplication must be avoided and uncharitable competition resisted. Informal regional committees for co-operation should be set up to achieve the co-ordination needed. In time, it may be found helpful to form an international fellowship of those engaged in China ministries to promote better co-ordination and to stimulate innovative strategies for the evangelization of China.

f. Goals and Strategies

We believe that the overall goal for the evangelization of China is that the people of that great land might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. By "hearing," we mean correctly considering the claims of Jesus Christ in his own right across diverse barriers of historical, ideological and cultural biases of man. But more specifically, we suggest that the following sub-goals and strategies be considered as guidelines:

Goals		
1. To work towards a more relaxed religious atmosphere in China	2. To develop a worldwide mission consciousness for China	3. To work with Christians in China in fulfilling the Great Commission
Strategies		
a. To encourage and channel Christian resources towards China's development	a. To develop a worldwide prayerful concern for China	a. To encourage Christians in China in their evangelistic efforts
b. To encourage ideological exchange between Christian and Chinese leaders	b. To collect and channel accurate information on China and her churches to the worldwide churches	b. To assist church leaders in Bible study tools
c. To encourage Christians to travel and serve in China thereby developing a positive Christian image	c. To develop programs for educating worldwide churches about China	c. To assist various China ministries so that they can help the church in China

1. Goal No. 1: To Work Towards a Relaxed Religious Atmosphere in China

The purpose of the first goal is to help prepare China for a day of great harvesting. In China, as religion has always been functioning under the control of the State, we believe that it is most strategic to work towards a more relaxed religious atmosphere in China. We can develop a three-level approach to achieve this goal, in order to present a positive image of Christianity before Chinese rulers and people alike. For if this can be achieved, the gospel will have freer course in China, and the Church can have space to grow spontaneously. Strategically, this means:

a. Encourage Christian businessmen, scientists, engineers, technicians, doctors, and other experts to work in China in connection with their companies or as individuals. By using their expertise, they can contribute toward China's modernization program; and by their presence, they can show their Christian love and express their Christian faith.

b. Encourage ideological dialogue. To bring about a relaxed religious atmosphere in China, it is necessary to open the channels of communication between Chinese theoreticians of religion and Christian thinkers. If the former come to properly understand Christianity, they might effect change in policy.

c. Encourage Christians to travel or to serve in China so as to bring about a positive Christian image through people-to-people contact. China welcomes tourists and English teachers. These contacts on the grass roots level will enable Christians to gain personal contacts with the Chinese people. The aim here is to develop a more positive Christian image in Chinese minds.

2. Goal No. 2: To Develop a Worldwide Mission Consciousness for China

The purpose of the second goal is to inform, educate and sensitize the churches worldwide to develop a dynamic China mission consciousness. A concerted effort is necessary if they are to be prepared to participate increasingly and contextually in the evangelization of China as the Holy Spirit leads. The goal calls for the following strategies:

a. Develop a worldwide prayer concern for China. This implies the spreading of a worldwide prayer network for China ministries and all appropriate actions that might naturally follow, including financial giving, the training of personnel for future China ministries, etc.

b. Collect and channel accurate and comprehensive information on China and her churches for the churches worldwide. This implies assisting existing Christian China research centres and developing new ones, and disseminating reliable information so as to create a grass roots level China mission consciousness and to update the Christian Church on the current situation in China. The implementation of this will require the development of an international information gathering, storage and distribution system.

c. Develop programs for educating churches worldwide about China. This implies the organization of short-term training seminars for proper

orientation on the Church level concerning the evangelization of China and to train Christian scholars to lead these seminars. We encourage existing seminaries and Christian colleges to develop China studies programs.

3. Goal No. 3: To Work with Christians in China in Fulfilling the Great Commission

The purpose of the third goal is to provide encouragement to the churches in China in order that they might become more effective in their work of evangelism. The following strategies have been suggested:

- a. *Encourage Christians in China in their efforts of evangelism.* This includes (i) encouraging *person to person* evangelism along kinship and friendship lines; (ii) encouraging the *multiplication of house churches*; and (iii) encouraging the *Christianization of villages and communes*. If it could be proven to the authorities (as in a few cases has been done) that a Christian commune is more productive, more law-abiding, and more conducive to nation building, this could be one of the most promising avenues for China's evangelization.
- b. *Assist leaders in house churches and pastors in government recognised churches* by providing Bibles, hymnals, Bible study tools, etc., so that their ministry can be enriched. This can be done by Hong Kong and Macau Christians, overseas Chinese Christians, and the non-Chinese Christians on a personal basis.
- c. *Assist current China ministries in research, literature and tape production, lay evangelist training, radio ministry, and Bible distribution work* so that they might help the believers and churches in China.

Conclusion

Pursuant to this end, committees in different regions should be formed to propose programs of mutual co-operation between Chinese organisations as well as Western and Third World churches and missionary bodies, and to design such organisational framework as is necessary for the implementation of the same.

3. Reaching Chinese Outside of the Mainland

a. The Current Situation

Chinese outside of the mainland today are found in considerable numbers in over 80 different nations. A survey of these people shows that they are unevenly distributed in three types of regions. These three regions may be classified as follows:

- 1. *Chinese Districts*, where 95% or more are Chinese,
- 2. *Chinese Dominant Districts*, where 75% are Chinese, and
- 3. *Non-Chinese Dominant Districts*, with below 50% Chinese.

Figure 1 below shows the distribution of Chinese, Chinese Protestants and Chinese churches outside of the mainland. All figures of Chinese Population refer to ethnic Chinese, not necessarily Chinese-speaking.¹

Figure 1

Districts ²	Chinese Population (in millions)	Chinese Protestant Population (nos.)	(%)	CCCOWE Districts Represented
Chinese Districts	21.96	561,160	2.56	Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan
Chinese-Dominant Districts	1.76	74,000	4.21	Singapore
Non-Chinese Dominant Districts				
Moslem Districts	9.62	110,000	1.14	Brunei, Indonesia, Sabah, Sarawak, W. Malaysia
Buddhist & Hindu Districts	4.87	15,560	0.32	Burma, India, Japan, S. Korea, Thailand
First World Districts	1.01	46,300	4.60	Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, U.S.A.
Third World Roman Catholic Districts	0.86	18,230	2.12	Central & South America, Philippines
Others	0.07	2,500	3.48	Pacific Islands, South Africa
TOTAL	40.15 ³	827,750	2.06	

Notes:

- 1. Figures shown in the table are preliminary data only. Please do not quote.
- 2. "District" denotes CCCOWE District. The survey was conducted by the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelization (CCCOWE) with the collaboration of its world-wide network of 31 CCCOWE District Committees.
- 3. The total Chinese population in the CCCOWE districts is 40,149,500. The total Chinese population outside of the mainland is estimated to be about 45 million.

b. General Observations

There are several noticeable factors which affect the extent and impact of evangelism among Chinese people outside of the mainland.

(i) *Uncertain Future and Uneven Distribution of Christian Resources*

Chinese outside of the mainland are living under different political, racial, and economic situations. Those living in Chinese Districts constitute 54.7% of the total Chinese population outside of the mainland. (Please refer to Fig. 2). They enjoy religious freedom and material wealth. However, social and political stability remain an uncertainty, e.g., the larger part of Hong Kong is held under a lease due to expire in 1997. The future status of the British colony is difficult to predict. For those Chinese living in many Non-Chinese-Dominant Districts in S.E. Asia, the fear of a possible recurrence of a "boat people" experience is very real. Though many of the wealthy and educated have successfully migrated to First World countries, the total picture is one where the majority of the Chinese people still live in areas of doubtful long-term future.

Figure 2: Distribution of Chinese people and Chinese Protestants outside of the mainland

CCCOWE Districts	% of Total Chinese Population Outside of the Mainland	% of Total Chinese Protestants Outside of the Mainland

Chinese Districts	54.70	67.79
Chinese-Dominant Districts	4.38	8.94
Moslem Districts	23.96	13.29
Buddhist & Hindu Districts	12.13	1.87
First World Districts	2.50	5.59
Third World Roman Catholic Districts	2.14	2.20
Other Districts	0.18	0.31
TOTAL	99.99	99.99

There are over 4,500 Chinese churches outside of the mainland. Together, they encompass a total Chinese Protestant population of over 0.8 million, constituting over 2% of the population. The majority of the churches are established in Chinese Districts. When considered as a percentage of the total Chinese population of a given area, Chinese Protestant Christians are strongest in First World Districts (5.59%) and weakest in the Buddhist and Hindu Districts (1.87%). While some Chinese churches in S.E. Asia are wealthy in monetary terms, those in North America are teeming with intellectual leadership. The distribution of resources among the Chinese churches is quite uneven. It is believed that a lot of the resources (both finances and personnel) still remain untapped in many Districts.

(ii) Narrow Spectrum of Occupational Background Represented in Protestant Congregations

Most of the Chinese Protestant congregations consist of middle-class intellectuals, professionals and business people. Their social and economic status confines their witness to people of similar backgrounds. However, in a typical Chinese society, the more common professions of the majority of Chinese people are catering business, factory workers, small shopkeepers. In some other areas, farmers and fishermen are no less common. These Chinese seldom find their way into existing churches. Even if they do, it is difficult for them to fully integrate into the existing congregations.

(iii) Cultural Barriers

The traditional Chinese culture has been a major barrier against evangelization in Chinese society. The cult of ancestor worship, rooted in animism but clothed in ethical garb, has become the bulwark of the Chinese family and clan system. *Hsiao* (filial piety), including ancestor worship and signifying veneration of one's roots, has become the highest virtue in the Chinese value system. It is no surprise that Christianity, with its steadfast stand against any kind of idol worship, has been readily rejected by the Chinese society at large. The Chinese Christian is often charged with abandoning his roots, rebelling against the authorities and threatening social solidarity. It is unfortunate that the gospel has often been denounced, not on religious grounds, but on ethical grounds. This cultural barrier has successfully repelled the gospel even before it has had a chance to enter into a religious encounter with the Chinese people.

(iv) Shortage of Full-time Christian Personnel

One of the factors contributing to the slow development of the Chinese church is the shortage of full-time workers (particularly of pastors). This is especially true in the area of evangelization. Some pastors are paid inadequate salaries and have limited retirement security. Their inadequate professional image and heavy workload are the main causes for depression and discouragement. Young people, therefore, usually do not aspire to full-time ministry. In some cases, the pastor is dominated by a few wealthy or senior church members. Opportunities to exercise his leadership to the full, are limited. While over the past few years, both the quality and quantity of seminary graduates have steadily improved, there is nevertheless still a great shortage of church workers.

In many seminaries and Bible colleges in Southeast Asia, female graduates outnumber male. The ill-defined and ambivalent roles ascribed to female full-time workers in the local churches create a discontent among well-trained Christian women.

All these factors can explain why pastors and well-trained women workers leave their jobs in local churches, some for employment in parachurch organisations and some for secular jobs. Again, some leave Southeast Asia for North America where the professional image of a pastor is higher and where security is better. This leads to an uneven distribution of pastors among various Districts.

c. Goals

In spite of all the problems mentioned, the Chinese church still is stronger than at any time in her past development. She has more resources at her disposal than ever before for the evangelization of the Chinese people. The two-fold goal of the Chinese churches outside of the mainland should be both to evangelize the people in their areas and to keep before their members a prayerful concern for, and the possibility of involvement in, the evangelization of the mainland.

d. Strategies for Evangelization of Chinese Outside of the Mainland and Their Implementations

To achieve the stated goals, certain basic approaches are proposed as follows:

(i) Prayer Movement

The promotion of disciplined prayer life by local church pastors is the basic step. Pastors should start small studies on prayer life in their own churches and solicit commitment to such a development. When the congregation is revived, then the love to share Christ with others will come as a natural result. Not until the lessons on prayer life are taught and thoroughly learned will the church be ready for a mobilization for evangelism. Suitable prayer material should be circulated to all churches on a regular basis, giving them up-to-date information and prayer points.

(ii) Redistribution of Resources

Redistribution of financial, personnel and prayer resources is necessary to meet the most urgent and greatest needs. The Districts with the least certainty of long-term religious freedom or least political stability should be given first consideration in the distribution of manpower and finance. The Districts with the largest unreached population or the most responsive population should also have priority. To promote such strategic awareness, a central resource centre for the Chinese churches should be established to collect and store relevant information which will be disseminated from time to time. Direct contact between churches of various Districts, which would facilitate a sense of genuine concern, should be encouraged in every way.

(iii) Innovative Methods for Evangelism

More innovative methods to evangelize a wider spectrum of Chinese people should be attempted. Local churches and para-church organisations should be encouraged to start evangelistic work among segments of the society, as yet largely unreached by the existing churches. Application of the homogenous unit principle should be included in their planning. Different ways of adaptation of this model to specific situations will be necessary to maximize its effectiveness. Books regarding this concept should be written or translated. Research findings should be made more available. Refinement of concepts is indispensable. Other methods for evangelism should also be attempted.

(iv) Contextualization of the Christian Faith and Christian Life

Many have suggested that some Christian way of ancestral veneration, if successfully implemented, would not only take away much of the misunderstanding between the Church and the traditional Chinese, but would also open a way for evangelism. Young Chinese Christians in a non-Christian home represent a "bridge of God" for evangelization. However, they need help in order to win their parents to Christ. They need to learn, for the Lord's sake, how to excel in the typically Chinese virtue of *hsiao* (filial piety). The young Chinese Christian should love, serve, respect, and obey his parents better than non-Christian youths. The Christian may also remember his ancestors in a meaningful way without doing an act of worship. There is a great chance for the parents of such a Christian to be moved and to accept Christ willingly, thus producing an ideal Christian family. The significance of the Christian family can make it much easier for its members to maintain their Christian life and testimony. It can also bear a much greater witness to non-Christian families who are troubled by the generation gap, and can lead such families "elders and youths together" to become Christians.

If the local churches could (because of the Chinese emphasis on family life) introduce more family-integrated activities to their church programs, it would create a better contact point with non-Christian family members. This illustrates one aspect of the way in which continual research into areas relevant to the communication of Christianity in a Chinese milieu should be undertaken by seminaries and Christian research centres. A bibliography on the topic should be compiled and circulated.

(v) *Evangelization of Ethnic Chinese Overseas* Chinese immigrants used to be able to maintain a "little China" wherever they went. But during the last few decades, these "little Chinas" have begun to collapse. More and more young Chinese have become non-Chinese speaking, either through the limitations placed upon overseas Chinese schools by the local governments, or through the voluntary choice of the young Chinese themselves to adopt non-Chinese languages and cultures. But this has created two problems.

(a) There is an identity crisis on the part of such young Chinese who, though fairly well acculturized, are nevertheless, not fully accepted by the locals. We should therefore mount a campaign among local churches to ensure that there is no racial discrimination of this type.

(b) The communication gap within the family greatly heightens the generation gap, since the elders feel threatened.

These two problems in the overseas Chinese churches are almost as serious as in the local Chinese communities. The Chinese churches, largely dominated by Chinese-speaking elders, have little success in keeping their own second generation in the church. Nobody, however, can turn back this powerful tide. The number of non-Chinese-speaking Chinese (NCSC) is bound to increase greatly in the near future, and it is important that we realise that this is quite natural, although a painful process, since it creates a communication-gap between Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese-speaking segments of the church. Indeed, this is really another God-given opportunity. These NCSC young people, no longer closely bound by either the Chinese tradition or the local tradition, are free to choose their religion and are thus often very open to the gospel. The thriving churches among the NCSC youth, e.g., in Singapore and Indonesia, have certainly borne out this fact. These NCSC Christians represent an even greater bridge of God for evangelization.

In First World countries, the NCSC need special help.

(a) Some of them aim to establish a new self-identity through the rich meaning of the Christian life. They will then represent a powerful tool to evangelize their fellow-NCSC and develop a strong NCSC church.

(b) The NCSC Christians also need help to learn how to evangelize their Chinese-speaking elders. For Christ's sake, a NCSC Christian should excel in *hsiao*, especially by learning to speak Chinese in order to bridge the generation gap and lead his parents and elders to Christ. Harmonious, bilingual Christian families and churches can go a long way to win other Chinese families.

(c) The NCSC Christians, with further help, can readily embark upon the great task of evangelizing their non-Chinese fellow citizens. Well trained Christian workers from among the NCSC in a country have tremendous advantages in evangelizing the local non-Christian population, and planting new churches among them.

(vi) *Mobilization of Full-time Workers*

The most effective way to mobilize more workers to serve in a full-time capacity is for all churches and pastors to be aware of the high calling and God-given privilege of being in the ministry, and thus be motivated to pray that God will raise up more laborers. Churches should continually be on the watch for suitable young people to develop, and should provide opportunities for the expression of their spiritual gifts. Books and other literature on the full-time ministry should be produced. Those who offer themselves for full-time ministry should be followed through carefully, especially by the pastor. Before encouraging young people to go forward, the church should be ready to give necessary support "be it spiritual, financial, or emotional" during the period of preparation and the initial stages of ministry.

For Christians without adequate formal education, but who aspire to a full-time ministry, (the restaurant workers in the United Kingdom are notable examples) Bible colleges could design special programs at their level of academic competence to meet the specific needs of their future ministry.

Some pastors have expressed the need for more opportunities to equip themselves in their existing ministry. Extension courses and seminars should be made available to them in seminaries and Bible colleges. In view of the severe shortage of workers, it may be advisable to encourage more lay people to commit themselves to full-time ministries, even if only short-term. The possibilities of a "tent-making" ministry should be considered.

(vii) *Collective Long-term Planning for World Evangelization of the Chinese People*

Chinese churches are now dispersed in different geographical regions with different degrees of social pressure for assimilation and acculturation. It is imperative at this point to give one another support and encouragement. To bring about a more definitive direction of future developments of evangelization among Chinese, long-term plans for evangelization for Chinese churches in various Districts, on individual and collective levels, should be made. If worldwide and regional congresses for Chinese evangelization can be held at reasonable intervals, they could facilitate such co-operation. This would include collective strategizing, planning, progress evaluation and the sharing of innovative concepts, models, and working experiences.

e. Participation of Chinese Churches Outside of the Mainland in Mainland Evangelism

Many Chinese Christians are excited about opportunities to share the gospel in the mainland and would like to take part in this evangelistic activity. Some overseas Chinese Christian individuals who have visited the mainland have already attempted to further the work of the gospel and they have indeed been able to make some contribution. Yet these represent very limited efforts to approach such an immense task. More co-ordinated efforts among Christian groups are absolutely vital to take up this challenge in face of the fleeting and restricted opportunities.

Strategy and Implementation

(i) *Prayer*

While the possibility of direct assistance rendered to Christians in the mainland is limited, every Christian can be on his knees without going there in person, to pray for his fellow countrymen. Christians on the mainland, especially those who are laboring for the gospel, do urgently need prayer support from overseas. After all, it is the Holy Spirit that calls men to turn to Christ. Spiritual support in terms of prayer is just as important to Christians and Christian workers in the mainland as the supply of personnel and Chinese literature. Christians there who have committed themselves to evangelize would certainly be greatly encouraged, strengthened, and enlightened by knowing that the prayers of overseas Christians have gone before them in their work among non-Christians. The Apostle Paul used to remember the work of the church at Thessalonica. Likewise, we should do the same with God's people in the mainland today.

A prayer movement, initiated and mobilized by Chinese Christians outside of the mainland, would be a logical and workable strategy. Systematic planning and well co-ordinated efforts at all levels of the project are extremely important to start and sustain this movement. This should include the gathering of information and dissemination of the same through literature, mission conferences, etc. The issue of confidentiality will require careful handling of incoming information. Several such research centres already exist, engaging in this work. We therefore suggest that all churches use to the full the existing facilities.

(ii) *Contact with Mainland Students*

The mainland is now sending out every year on a regular basis large numbers of tertiary students for study in universities overseas, mainly in First World countries, usually in the scientific and technological areas. These represent a potential mission field for local Chinese Christians.

Three possible and proven levels of approach are suggested:

1. Contact through fellow students and classmates;
2. Contact through Chinese Christian professors and staff members;
3. Co-operation with Christian "host families."

It should be stressed that, whatever channel is used, Christian love and concern for the newcomer, expressed in practical help given, is the most powerful channel of evangelism. Several types of Chinese Christian fellowships have already engaged in this sort of work in First World countries, with some success; but the opportunities are vastly greater today.

Conclusion

The magnitude and urgency of the task, as well as the incredibly sensitive nature of its implementation, compel us to consider the development of new and enlarged patterns of interaction on behalf of the evangelization of the Chinese.

Our structures are varied and numerous, and we represent many widely scattered geographical areas. We cannot but believe, however, that ours is the responsibility to stimulate the development of a variety of levels of communication, association, interaction, and co-operation.

Appendix A

Comparison Between Past and Present Gospel Witness in China

Situation	Past	Present
Carriers of the gospel	Non-Chinese missionaries	Mostly by Chinese Christians
Condition of entry	Unfortunately coincided with gunboats and opium; Christianity being identified with oppression and humiliation	Must be done with wisdom and prudence
Culture	Resistant/ hostile	Open/resistant/ hostile
State of mind (and heart)	Traditional, closed, anti-foreign	Discontent, desire for better life; open to foreign people & things
Churches	Non-existent at first	Some government recognized churches, numerous house churches
Local workers	Non-existent at first	Both pastors and numerous "hidden" Christians as witnesses
Youth	In the background of the community	In the forefront of the community
Freedom of propagation	Restricted at first & later opened up	Restricted at present with hope of gradual relaxation
Other religions	Strong and co-exist	All suppressed, limited recovery lately
Ideology	Confucianism	Marxism
Transportation	Scanty & difficult	Varied but restricted
Language/dialects	Diverse	Unified
Role of Overseas Chinese Christians	None	With wisdom and prudence, help the house churches; pray for the official churches
Role of non-Chinese Christians	Introduced the gospel to China through direct ministries	With wisdom and prudence, help the Chinese church primarily <i>through</i> overseas Chinese Christians

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The China Quarterly, quarterly. US\$30. Contemporary China Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London WC 1 E 7HP, ENGLAND. A secular, scholarly journal on both ancient and modern China.

China Reconstructs, monthly. US\$7.80 to U.S.A., L3.90 to Europe. Guoji Shudian, P.O. Box 399, Beijing, People's Republic of China. A popular pictorial publication of the Chinese government.

China Study Project, 3 issues per year. L2 in England, L2.50 to Europe, L4 elsewhere by air. 6 Ashley Gardens, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8TY, ENGLAND. An ecumenical Protestant publication, with very good documentation.

Ching Feng, quarterly. US\$8.00, L4.00. The Ecumenical Centre, Tao Fong Shan, Shatin, N.T., HONG KONG. An ecumenical Protestant publication, with a strong interest in theological reflection.

Information Letter, quarterly. Free. Lutheran World Federation, Department of Studies, P.O. Box 66, Rte de Ferney 150, 1211 Geneva, SWITZERLAND. A mainline Lutheran publication, including both translated primary documents and serious Protestant reflection on China.

Modern China, quarterly. US\$16. Sage Publications, Inc., 275 S. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, U.S.A. A secular, scholarly publication covering various academic subjects on China.

Appendix C

In Attendance

"Reaching Chinese" Mini-consultation Participants

John Bechtel
Eugene R. Bertermann
G. Thompson Brown

Nang Fong Chan	
Tom Chang	Convener
Jonathan Chao	Convener
Samuel H. Chao	
Stephen L. Chen	Convener
Samuel Cheung	Convener
Luke H. S. Chhoa	
Derek S. C. Chung	
Alan Cole	
Edwin L. Frizen	
Arthur Glasser	Consultant
John Gration	Communications Advisor
Delmer R. Guynes	
Andrew K.H. Hsiao	
Theodore Hsueh	Convener
J. Elmer Kilbourne	
Godfrey Kwek	Convener
Gail Man-Wah Law	Convener
Kenneth Lo	Convener
Jack C. Rea	Convener
Barry L. Ross	
Frances Scherer	
James Scherer	
Arne Sovik	
James Taylor	Convener
Maggie Teo	
David Wang	Convener
Thomas Wang	International Coordinator
Samuel Wolgemuth	
Peter Wongso	Convener
Samuel S. C. Wu	
Mrs. Alfred Yeo	

Report Personnel

Chief Editor	Rev. Thomas Wang
Editor, China Mainland	Rev. Jonathan Chao
Editorial Members	Dr. Arthur Glasser Dr. James Taylor
Editor, Chinese outside of Mainland	Dr. Gail Law
Editorial Members	Dr. David Liao Dr. Alan Cole
Communication Advisor	Dr. John Gration