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**Essay #4**

**Lutheranism in East Asia**

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China**

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**Introduction**

One challenge in producing a survey of the Lutheran church history of East Asia is the variety. Different wars and movements can generate other impacts, shaping Lutheranism differently. Various Lutheran missionary societies sent missionaries to various countries at various times. Each church body may have some writings illustrating its pieces of the Lutheran church history in East Asia, but we rarely see a summary gathering them together. The main scope of this essay is to sketch a picture of the development of Lutheranism in East Asia, which involves the Lutheran ministries from the mid-nineteenth century till now. Some critical global events or movements in this period are taken into consideration in this sketch, which the five summary charts in the appendix have shown. The history of Lutheran ministries in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea is presented based on this time frame. One commonness among the Lutheran churches is the adoption of the term Lutheran. However, it does not necessarily mean the united belief of Lutheran confessions and doctrines when we use the same word for self-identification. Therefore, discussing the root of Lutheranism is a good starting point for sketching this picture.

**The Root: Luther, Lutheran, and Lutheranism**

The term “Lutheranism” nowadays generally refers to the theological tradition tracing its origin to the Wittenberg reformation movement, as the name indicates, with Martin Luther as the central figure of the reformers in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In those days, terms like “Lutheran,” “Lutheranism,” and “Lutheran Church” were initially used, not by protestants or reformers, but by the Catholic parties to deprive their opponent’s honors as a heresy. John Eck of Ingolstadt probably coined the term “Lutheran” in the Leipzig Disputation in 1519. Luther consistently deprecated his name’s use in connection with evangelical principles.<sup>2</sup> In “A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and

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<sup>1</sup> David S. Yeago, “Lutheranism,” in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2000): 342.

<sup>2</sup> W.H.T. Dau, “Luther’s relation to Lutheranism and the American Lutheran Church,” *The American Journal of Theology*, 21, No. 4 (1917): 512–3.

Rebellion,” the article Luther published when he was exiled at the Wartburg in 1522, he said:

In the first place, I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine [John 7:16]. Neither was I crucified for anyone [1 Cor. 1:13]. St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3, would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I—poor stinking maggot-fodder that I am—come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of defining the term “Lutheran,” Luther emphasized the meaning of being Christian with a focus on God’s approach through the Word, especially for Luther’s understanding of God’s atoning work in the death and resurrection of Christ—for the destruction and burial of the sinner and the resurrection of the believer restored to righteousness (Rom 4:25, 6:3–11). This approach brought a significant change in the Wittenberg theological education program by focusing on the direct reading of the Scripture as the core subject.<sup>4</sup> It resulted in the emphasis on the preacher of the Word with the Lutheran understanding of the doctrines, for instance, Law and Gospel, Means of Grace, and Justification through faith, which later developed into essential parts of Lutheranism. The rising of the Reformation led to their opponents’ attacks on the Lutherans and forced them to forge their theology into writing. At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, the followers of Luther were accused of spreading false doctrines. The Lutheran princes presented and submitted the *Augsburg Confession* to Charles V, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, to respond to his request that the Evangelical parties justify changes they had made in their territories. Philip Melanchthon is the one who wrote the confession, but undoubtedly with significant contributions from Luther’s *Torgau Articles* and his consent. The *Augsburg Confession* became the historical *Magna Charta*, the founding document of Lutheran confession, which can be considered as the act, the teaching, and the document of confessing.<sup>5</sup> Agreeing with the *Augsburg Confession* as the historical *Magna Charta*, some scholars highlighted Luther’s *Smalcald Articles*, published in 1538, as the theological *Magna Charta* of confessional Lutheranism because it represents

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 45: The Christian in Society II, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, 45 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999): 70–71.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Kolb, “The Lutheran Church in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Five Centuries of Lutheranism*, ed. Aaron Moldenhauer, (Luther Academy, 2020): 4.

<sup>5</sup> Kolb summarized three different definitions of confession according to the Augsburg Confession. The verbal witness by the Evangelical princes before the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V, is the act of confessing. The content of the confession was treated as the teaching of the Lutheran theologians and pastors. The confession was treated as the confessional document the Evangelical leaders read to the diet and preserved as the churches’ teaching. See Robert Kolb, *Confessing The Faith: Reformers Define The Church, 1530-1580* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 46.

Lutheranism's most important confessional priorities.<sup>6</sup> After Luther died in 1546, there was a leadership vacuum among Lutherans. Controversies about original sin, conversion, justification, sanctification, and the Lord's Supper led to their divisions over several doctrinal issues. The controversies of the time were settled in a joint writing by Jakob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz, Nikolaus Selnecker, David Chytraeus, Andreas Musculus, and Christoph Körner known as the *Formula of Concord* in 1577.<sup>7</sup> In its epitome, the authors confessed:

We pledge ourselves also to the Small and Large Catechisms of Dr. Luther, as both catechisms are found in Luther's printed works, as a Bible of the Laity, in which everything is summarized that is treated in detail in Holy Scripture and that is necessary for a Christian to know for salvation.<sup>8</sup>

With Luther, Lutheranism declines a view of saving grace and the gospel that does not concord with the Scriptures.<sup>9</sup> In 1580, the fiftieth anniversary of the presentation of the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Book of Concord* was published. It includes the three Ecumenical Creeds, the *Small Catechism* (1529), the *Large Catechism* (1529), the *Augsburg Confession* (1530), the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531), the *Smalcald Articles* (1537), the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (1537) and the *Formula of Concord* (1577). About two-thirds of German Evangelical clergy subscribed to the Book by 1580;<sup>10</sup> however, not all Lutheran churches in Europe accepted the entire Book.<sup>11</sup> The different European historical and cultural contexts of their origin and theological shape may be their explanations while these groups also adopted the name Lutheran.<sup>12</sup> To correctly identify the Lutheran groups who unconditionally subscribe to the Lutheran confessional writings in the *Book of Concord* because (*quia*) it agrees with the Word of God but not partially or "in so far as" (*quatenus*) subscription, they are named confessional Lutheran in this essay. With this identification, we can now sketch the picture of Lutheranism in East Asia, starting from a critical pioneer, Karl Gützlaff.

### **Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff: The First Lutheran Missionary in East Asia**

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<sup>6</sup> William R. Russel, "The Theological "Magna Charta" of Confessional Lutheranism," *Church History* 64, no.3 (September 1995), 389, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3168946>.

<sup>7</sup> Schmelting R. Gaylin, "Two Thousand Years of Grace" *2000 Synod Report* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2000), 61.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 487.

<sup>9</sup> Dau, Luther's relation to Lutheranism and the American Lutheran Church, 518.

<sup>10</sup> Kolb, *The Lutheran Church in the Sixteenth Century*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Some Lutheran Churches affirm the three Ecumenical Creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, and the *Small Catechism* as the representative creeds of Christendom but not the entire *Book of Concord*.

<sup>12</sup> Günther Gassmann, Mark W. Oldenburg, *Historical Dictionary of Lutheranism*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press, 2011), 15.

Karl Gützlaff (郭士立), a German Lutheran pioneer missionary to China in the nineteenth century, dedicated himself to evangelism to East Asia, especially for China, even though few ministers are more controversial than he.<sup>13</sup> Undeniably, his contributions to awakening Western Christian congregations for popularizing China missions are conspicuous. It is unrealistic if we suppose that Gützlaff initiated Lutheranism in East Asia. However, he is still worth noticing as the first Lutheran missionary who stood on the soil of many countries in East Asia, for instance, China, Korea, and Japan, and distributed Christian literature and the Bible to the local people.

Under the influence of pietism and rationalism, Gützlaff was ambitious and adventurous to become an overseas missionary. He graduated from the seminary of the Netherlands Missionary Society. In 1826, the Society sent him to Sumatra, an island in Indonesia. He later worked with Walter Medhurst, a London Missionary Society missionary on another island called Java. In 1828, he went to Singapore and Thailand to reach out to the Chinese communities and the traders from Fujian (福建) and Guangdong (廣東). Finally, he left the Netherlands Missionary Society because it did not support him in evangelizing China, which was beyond its scope of focusing on the Dutch colonies.<sup>14</sup> Gützlaff stayed in Thailand and began a Thai translation of the New Testament with Jacob Tomlin of the London Missionary Society, but only the Gospel of John was finally published. In 1831, Gützlaff became an independent missionary and came to Tianjin (天津) in China. He spoke fluent Fujianese and wore Chinese dress, and the local people in North China once misrecognized him as Chinese.<sup>15</sup> He then came to Macau for the end of his first voyage along the coast of China and met Robert Morrison (馬禮遜). In 1832, he took his second voyage as a translator and physician from the East India Company on the ship *Lord Amherst* (安默士號). In addition to the coast of China, he visited Korea and Japan on this journey. Gützlaff stayed in Korea for about forty days and distributed the Chinese Bible and evangelical booklets to the Koreans.<sup>16</sup> With assistance from the Japanese sailors, Gützlaff published his Japanese translation of the Gospel and Epistles of John in 1837.<sup>17</sup> He translated the *Small Catechism* into Chinese in 1843, twelve years after landing in China, yet he did not intend to promote Lutheran teaching

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<sup>13</sup> Karl Gützlaff stayed in China during the times of the Opium War. Regarding his close relationship with opium traders and the British government, some scholars regarded him as a collaborator of opium traders behind his role as a missionary. On the contrary, based on the concerns for that conflicted and complex circumstance, some other scholars defended him, never forgetting his identity as a missionary but using multiple strategies in his missionary work.

<sup>14</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "The Legacy of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff," *International bulletin of Missionary Research*, 24, No. 3 (July 2000), 123.

<sup>15</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, *The Legacy of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff*, 124.

<sup>16</sup> Yong Ji Won, "Karl Gützlaff: the first Lutheran missionary in Korea," *Concordia Journal* 11, no. 6 (Nov 1985): 201.

<sup>17</sup> Umarani, "The Oldest Japanese Bible," National University of Singapore Libraries, October 23, 2014, <https://blog.nus.edu.sg/linus/2014/10/23/the-oldest-japanese-bible/>.

in China.<sup>18</sup> After the First Opium War, he became Chinese secretary to the government of the new colony, Hong Kong. In 1844, he began organizing a group of Chinese evangelists to preach the good news of salvation throughout China. He founded a Society called the Chinese Union (福漢會), which expanded to a hundred preachers working in twelve of the eighteen provinces in China. In 1851, Gützlaff suffered from rheumatic fever and other illnesses from Europe. As a sick man, he returned to Hong Kong and passed away in the same year.

### **Lutheranism in Hong Kong (currently called HKSAR) before 1948**

Following the expansion of the Chinese Union, which Gützlaff founded in 1844, he realized the necessity of more outside support in his ministry. He sent letters to the German missionary societies<sup>19</sup> and persuaded them to send more missionaries to Hong Kong and China. In response, the Basel Missionary Society and the Rhenish Missionary Society at Barmen each sent two missionaries to Hong Kong in 1847,<sup>20</sup> six years after China ceded Hong Kong Island to the British. The missionaries of the Berlin Ladies Mission responded to Gützlaff's request in 1851 to start a children's home at Morrison Hill in Wan Chai, Hong Kong. In 1896, the Hildesheim mission began establishing schools and homes for blind Chinese girls in Hong Kong and Kowloon.<sup>21</sup> These were the four Lutheran German missions in Hong Kong before 1948.

#### ***Basel Mission (Tsong Tsin Mission)***

The Basel Mission Society's headquarters was in the Swiss city of Basel. In 1847, the first Basel missionaries, Rev. Theodore Hamberg (韓山明) and Rev. Rudolf Lechler (黎立基) arrived in Hong Kong to work with Gützlaff. They found that the Hakka (客家) appeared more receptive to the Christian message than most other Han Chinese. Hamberg and Lechler, therefore, made the Hakka and Teochew (潮汕) the focus of their work in the eastern region of Guangdong province, including Hong Kong. Lechler was to minister to the Teochew people in the Chaozhou (潮州) and Shantou (汕頭) areas, while Hamberg was to minister to the Hakka population. They set about learning the Chinese language and began to preach with the aid of interpreters. Their outreach, with the assistance of many former Chinese Union members, resulted in the growth of the Basel group, and they held their first worship at Sheung Wan (上環) in 1851. Hamberg planned to establish their first congregation in Sai

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<sup>18</sup> Pilgrim W.K. Lo, "Luther and Asia," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb et al., Oxford Handbooks (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 611.

<sup>19</sup> Basel Mission, Rhenish Mission at Barmen and Berlin Mission received Gützlaff's letter

<sup>20</sup> Carl T. Smith, "The German Speaking Community in Hong Kong 1846–1918," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 34, (1994): 7.

<sup>21</sup> Pui Yee Pong, "German Mission History in Hong Kong," in *The First World War as a Turning Point: The impact of years 1914–1918 on Church and Mission (with special focus on the Hermannsburg Mission)*, ed. Frieder Ludwig (Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2020), 190–1.

Ying Pun (西營盤) on Hong Kong Island in the next year and requested the Hong Kong government to provide the land. The plan was suspended with Hemberg's death in 1854, but Lechler did not give it up. He finally established the first Basel congregation at Sai Ying Pun in 1861.<sup>22</sup> Based on their cultural background, the Basel missionaries not only preached in the Hakka dialect, but they also produced the Hakka translations of the Bible and other religious works. Lechler made the first translation of the Gospel of Matthew into Hakka in 1860, which is treated as one of the earliest translations of a portion of the Bible into vernacular Chinese. Hakka translation of the Gospel of Luke was finished five years later. In 1883, the first New Testament in the Hakka dialect was published.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the first Chinese pastor of a Basel church was ordained to raise local leaders in 1878.

Before the First World War (1914-1918), the Basel Mission developed more than 150 churches and gathering spots throughout the Hakka regions of Hong Kong and Guangdong province. Hong Kong was one of the 25 parishes with seven churches holding Hakka worship.<sup>24</sup> After the declaration of the war, the colonial government rolled out a series of laws to deport the enemy subjects and wind up their properties. In the very beginning, the German missionaries were allowed to stay under police surveillance, but they were still expelled a few years later. In the 1920s, the colonial government prohibited the Chinese church congregations of the Basel Mission from contacting the German missionaries and forced them to adopt the Anglican church practices. However, they refused by insisting on their Hakka church identity and practice, which the government finally recognized.<sup>25</sup> In 1923, the Basel Mission Hong Kong was organized as the headquarters of the Chinese Basel congregations in Hong Kong. The following year, the Basel Mission in China changed its name to Tsung Tsin Mission (TTM, 崇真會). In 1929, the Tsung Tsin Mission in Hong Kong district became self-supported and self-managed, but still under the tree of the TTM in China.

### ***Barmen Mission (The Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod)***

The cradleland of the Barmen Mission was Wuppertal-Barmen, an area west of the River Rhine in Germany. Therefore, people named the mission Rhenish Missionary Society with the term Barmen Mission. Responding to Gützlaff's request, the Rhenish Missionary Society sent Rev. Ferdinand Genähr (葉納清) and Rev. Heinrich Köster (柯士德) to Hong Kong, who

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<sup>22</sup> "The brief history of congregation," Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Kau Yan Church, last modified December 8, 2022, <https://www.kyc.org.hk/history.php>

<sup>23</sup> Christine Lamarre, "Early Hakka corpora held by the Basel Mission library: an introduction," *Cahiers de Linguistique – Asie Orientale* 31, no. 1 (2002): 73–4.

<sup>24</sup> Lihua Chen, "The Mechanism of the Hakka Imagination in Hong Kong: the Role played by the Basel Mission in the 1850s-1950s," *Global Hakka Studies*, no.3 (2014): 140.

<sup>25</sup> Iris C.W. Leung, "Aggressive Nationalism vs Global Mission: German Missionary Societies in Hong Kong during the First World War," in *The First World War as a Turning Point: The impact of years 1914–1918 on Church and Mission (with special focus on the Hermannsburg Mission)*, ed. Frieder Ludwig (Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2020), 165–6.

began their study of Chinese in 1847. Initially, they worked with the Chinese Union (漢福會) and were responsible for the southeastern and western parts of the Guangdong provinces, where the Cantonese-speaking Chinese dominated. In 1848, Köster fell sick during his evangelical trip to China and passed away. In the same year, Genähr left the Chinese Union (漢福會), which mainly aimed at training sufficient local preachers, but not in line with the evangelical approach of the Barmen Mission. He began to offer theological classes in Taiping (太平), where he could teach Chinese evangelists systematically. The Barmen Missionaries developed their evangelical works in southern China and raised local church leaders. In Hong Kong, they purchased a building on Bonham Road (般咸道) in the Central and Western district and founded the Rhenish Church Hong Kong in 1899.<sup>26</sup> Genähr founded the first school of Barmen Mission in 1910, because many children in Hong Kong had no opportunity for education. A year later, the Barmen Mission in Hong Kong suggested being self-managed and planned to construct its church building. The church construction was started in 1913. During the First World War (1914-1918), the German missionaries had to leave Hong Kong; therefore, the local Chinese administered the Barmen Mission. In 1914, with the completion of the church construction, they changed their name to the Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod (CRCHK). The school founded by Genähr was registered as an official primary school in 1919 and named Hong Kong Rhenish Church Girl School. In 1923, the CRCHK became self-managed and founded another congregation in Kowloon six years later. To fulfill the social needs concerning education, the CRCHK started their work on a kindergarten and nursery in 1936.<sup>27</sup> During the Second World War (1941-1946), Japan, a German ally, occupied Hong Kong. The CRCHK was allowed to continue its worship services due to its German background, and as a cooperative society it could provide food and daily necessities to the church members.

The CRCHK established its tradition by providing whole-person education in the Christian learning environment. One point should be noticed concerning the church tradition and its theological stand. Rhineland congregations inherited a mixed tradition from Lutheran and Reformed churches because of their historical and geographical frontier between Germany and the neighboring countries. Therefore, the Rhenish Missionary Society adopted a relatively flexible approach toward indigenizing their theological concepts in the Chinese context under the influence of Calvinistic Reformed theology.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “Brief history of the congregation,” Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong, last modified January 11, 2023, <http://www.rhenish-hk.org.hk/fushi/jiaohuishi1ve.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Pui Yee Pong, German Mission History in Hong Kong, 193–4.

<sup>28</sup> Kin Pan Wu, “The Early Accommodation of German Sacramental Theology in China: A Case Study of the Confession, Translation, and Commentary of the Rhenish Missionaries,” *Ching Feng* 19, no.1–2 (2020): 72–3.



### ***Berlin Mission***

To support Gützlaff's ministry works in Hong Kong, the Berlin Ladies Mission sent missionaries to Hong Kong and founded an orphanage called 'children's home' in 1851. They began their ministries at Morrison Hill in Wan Chai. Ten years later, this Berlin founding house moved to a larger building at No.1 High Street in the western district and was re-titled Bethesda.<sup>29</sup> The Bethesda founding house sheltered female babies and girls that their poverty-stricken parents abandoned in southern China. Disabilities of all kinds were another reason to leave a female child behind. The Bethesda founding house was closed as enemy property during the First World War. The colonial government vacated the site of the Bethesda founding house and appointed the Church Missionary Society to take care of the 106 foundlings.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Hildesheim Mission***

A German missionary, Luise Cooper, established the Hildesheim mission in 1890 and sent Martha Postler (布絲樂) to Hong Kong in 1897. Postler sheltered four abandoned blind girls in an old broken house in the western district, which initiated the Hildesheim ministries for blind females in Hong Kong. Following Postler's work, a Hildesheim missionary, Ebenezer, developed the Ebenezer Home. In 1901, the colonial government granted her a piece of land in To Kwa Wan (土瓜灣) at Kowloon to open a new campus with a capacity of fifty blind students. In 1913, Ebenezer Home constructed a permanent campus on Pokfulam (薄扶林).<sup>31</sup> The Ebenezer Home was under the supervision of the Church Missionary Society during the First World War. The girls in Ebenezer were moved to Ming Sam School for the Blind in Guangzhou, but they returned to the Pokulam Campus in 1928. The colonial government reclaimed the land in To Kwa Wan (土瓜灣) in 1930, and the Pokulam campus became the only site for Ebenezer Home. During the Second World War, the government terminated the Pokulam site, and the blind students were moved to Sheung Shui (上水) in 1941. With assistance from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the students returned to the Pokulam campus in 1948.

## **Lutheranism in China up to the 1950s**

### ***Lutheran Church of China (LCC)***

With the background of the ministries by Gützlaff and other German and Swiss Missionary Societies in Hong Kong and southern China, we can move to the discussion of Lutheranism in China. The Scandinavian and American mission groups came to China in the final decade of the nineteenth century. In 1877, thirteen years before the Scandinavian and American

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<sup>29</sup> Pui Yee Pong, *German Mission History in Hong Kong*, 190.

<sup>30</sup> Iris C.W. Leung, *Aggressive Nationalism vs Global Mission*, 171.

<sup>31</sup> "Ebenezer History," Ebenezer School & Home for the Visually Impaired, last modified January 10, 2023, <https://www.ebenezer.org.hk/History1910-en>.



mission groups came to China, the first General Missionary Conference was held in Shanghai (上海). The issue concerning the training of the native workers became a critical discussion. The second General Missionary Conference was held in the same city in 1890, a few months before the arrival of the Scandinavian and American mission groups. They recommended that the new mission groups move into some areas that no other mission organizations occupied. Therefore, the pioneer Lutherans in China were advised to locate their ministry works to the north. Under such circumstances, the pioneer Lutheran missionaries urged close cooperation to give people an impression of one mission and even one Lutheran church among the Chinese.<sup>32</sup> The representatives of American, Norwegian, Finnish, and German Lutheran missionary societies in China signed a circular letter in 1906 to confirm their cooperative relationships. A regular conference was suggested to discuss the union issues, and the first regular Pan-Lutheran<sup>33</sup> meeting was held in Kikungshan (雞公山) at Henan (河南) in 1908. Their discussions covered the plans for book publication, hymnal translation and production, worship liturgies operation, and last but not least, the establishment of a national Lutheran Church. A committee was organized by Ingvald Daehlin of the American Lutheran Mission, A.W. Edwins of the Augustana Synod Mission, Christian Stokstad of the Hauge Synod Mission, all of whom were from the Scandinavian-American societies, and Andreas Fleischer of the Norwegian Missionary Society, to decide a site for the new union seminary.<sup>34</sup> A location in Shekow (灑口), north of Hankow (漢口), was chosen, and the construction of the Central China Union Lutheran Theological Seminary (CCULTS, 華中聯合信義神學院) was completed in 1913.<sup>35</sup> Graduation from a high school, an academy, or an evangelist school was required as the entrance qualification. Twenty students were present for the opening ceremonies, while six more were to arrive during the semester. The first seminary graduation was held in 1916, and the name of the seminary was re-titled to Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS, 信義神學院) in 1923.<sup>36</sup>

Concerning the formation of a national Lutheran Church in China, the representatives from different Lutheran mission groups gathered at the CCULTS in 1915 for the election of the temporary council of the Lutheran Church of China (LCC, 中華信義會). The Chinese translation of the term ‘Lutheran’ was not from its transliteration but choosing the characters ‘faith’ (信) and ‘righteousness’ (義) based on Lutheran doctrinal teachings rather than an expression associated with Luther himself. The first General Conference of the LCC was called in 1920. Five mission bodies took part in the founding of the LCC, which became the

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<sup>32</sup> John G. LeMond, “A History of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong: 1913–1993, from isolation to ecumenicity” (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, 1996), 20–1, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<sup>33</sup> Pan-Lutheran means a Lutheran group consists of individuals from different Lutheran denominations.

<sup>34</sup> John G. LeMond, A History of Lutheran Theological Seminary, 25.

<sup>35</sup> Pilgrim W.K. Lo, Luther and Asia, 612.

<sup>36</sup> “History,” Lutheran Theological Seminary, last modified February 2, 2023, [https://www.lts.edu/eng/lts\\_history](https://www.lts.edu/eng/lts_history).

first five synods, including a) Xiangbei Synod (湘北區會) in northern Hunan (Church of Sweden Mission), b) Xiangxi Synod (湘西區會) in western Hunan (Finnish Missionary Society), c) Xiangzhong Synod (湘中區會) in Central Hunan (Norwegian Missionary Society), d) Yu'e Synod (豫鄂區會) in Henan and Hubei (United Lutheran Mission) and e) Yuzhong Synod (豫中區會) in Central Henan (Augustana Synod Mission). Facing the challenges and difficulties caused by the breaking out of large-scale opposition to Christianity, the Anti-Christian movement from 1922 to 1927, the LTS in China kept its role in providing theological education. In 1924, during the Second General Conference, two more synods joined the LCC: a) Yudong Synod (豫東區會) in Eastern Henan (Lutheran Free Church Mission) and b) Yue nan Synod (粵南區會) in southern Guangdong (Schleswig-Holstein Evangelical Lutheran Mission). In 1927, the National Revolutionary Army (NRA, 國民革命軍) invaded Nanjing (南京). In the Nanking (Nanjing) Incident,<sup>37</sup> the foreigners were the targets of the NRA, causing immense trepidation in the missionary community throughout China. Due to the growing danger to missionaries and those associated with them, the LTS in China was temporarily closed. However, the Lutheran mission groups' union with the LCC was not suspended. In 1928, the number of synods of the LCC increased to ten after three more synods joined the LCC in the Third General Conference: a) Yuegan Synod (粵贛區會) in Guangdong and Jiangxi (Berlin Missionary Society), b) Ludong Synod (魯東區會) in Shandong (United Lutheran Church of America) and Dongbei Synod (東北區會) in Manchuria and the Northeast (Danish Mission Society). The Second Sino-Japanese War broke out from 1937 to 1945. The Japanese troops temporarily occupied the LTS campus in Shekow (灑口) in 1938, so the LTS classroom was moved to Xuchang (許昌) in Henan (河南). In 1942, the LTS faculties and students came back to the seminary campus in Shekow (灑口) and began theological teaching there again. In 1946, two more synods joined the LCC when they had the seventh General Conference of the LCC: a) Yu'eshaan Synod (豫鄂陝區會) in Hubei, Henan, and Shaanxi (Norwegian Lutheran China Mission Association) and b) Shaannan Synod (陝南區會) in southern Shaanxi (Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Mission). The breaking out of the Chinese Civil War led to this General Conference as the last assembly held by the LCC. The Civil War ended in 1949, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was begun. Under this situation, the scheduled eighth General Conference in Guangzhou (廣州) was canceled. The National President of the LCC, Rev. Peng Fu (彭福), stayed in Hong Kong at that particular time and called a National Council meeting in Tao Fong Shan (道風山) in Shatin (沙田) in Hong Kong. The total number of synods of the LCC increased to sixteen by approving the applications from four more

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<sup>37</sup> Nanking Incident refers to the events that occurred in March 1927 during the capture of Nanking by the National Revolutionary Army (NRA). At first, the NRA was not met with much resistance from other Chinese forces within Nanking. By March 24th, the NRA began to clash with foreign forces from Britain, America, and Japan. This conflict led to the NRA and other Chinese citizens pillaging the homes and businesses of foreign residents.

Lutheran mission groups in Hong Kong at the National Council meeting. The mission societies included: a) Yuxi Synod (豫西區會) in Eastern Henan (American Lutheran Brethren Mission), b) Yuedong Synod (粵東區會) in eastern Guangdong (Rhenish Missionary Society), c) Yuexi Synod (粵西區會) in western Guangdong (Basel Mission), d) Hong Kong Synod (香港區會) in Hong Kong (Christian Mission to Buddhists).

In the meantime, some of the leaders of the LCC in China called an extraordinary meeting of the Church Council in 1951 in Hankou (漢口). The National Vice-President of the LCC, Yu Jun replaced Peng Fu (彭福), who stayed in Hong Kong, to be the new National President of the LCC. He changed the name of the LCC from the Lutheran Church of China to The Lutheran Church in China (TLCC) and abolished the sixteen synods. He reorganized the TLCC into five geographical zones. The TLCC joined the National Council of Churches in China to become a “three-self” church, as the Communist government then interpreted that term. In 1958, the TLCC was abolished with the introduction of union worship and post-denominationalism imposition by the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

### ***Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC)***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC, 福音道路德會) was a confessional Lutheran group that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) missionaries founded in the 1920s in China. The first LCMS missionary, Rev. Edward Arndt (雅人德), who organized the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society for China in 1912, arrived in Hankow (漢口) in 1913. He became fully immersed in learning Mandarin after his arrival and preached his first Chinese sermon at Shekow (灑口) in the first year he came to China. The Bible Rev. Arndt used was the Union Wenli translation (文理和合譯本). As education was an essential part of the Missouri Synod tradition, Arndt started a primary school in 1914 to teach the children of the laboring class with the curriculum including reading, arithmetic, good behavior, geography, singing, English, catechism, Bible study, and hymns.<sup>38</sup> The second missionary, Erhardt Riedel (李天德), accepted the call to serve Chinese and arrived in Hankow (漢口) in 1916 to start his language training. In this very beginning period, all the financial support to the missionaries was from Arndt’s mission society, but not from the LCMS. In 1917, the LCMS decided to provide financial and workforce support to the mission works in China. Twenty-two divine calls were issued for the following ten years, from 1918 to 1928. The third missionary, Lawrence Meyer, came to Beijing (北京) to learn the Beijing dialect of Mandarin in 1918. After his language training, he joined the missionary group in Hankow (漢口) and opened another primary school for the local children. Their parents were willing to pay the

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<sup>38</sup> David G. Kohl, *Lutherans on the Yangtze: A Centenary Account of the Missouri Synod in China, Volume 1, 1912–1952* (Oregon: One Spirit Press, 2013), 29–31.

tuition fee so their children could become well-educated. In 1921, this school became an evangelist's school. The upgrade of the evangelist's school to the seminary level in 1922 aimed at the theological training of doctrinally sound workers. In 1926, the first class of students graduated.

The first China General Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in China was held in Kuling (牯嶺) in the LuShan (廬山) mountains in the year of 1921. In this meeting, the LCMS policy on separation was clearly affirmed, which means cooperation and fellowship with any church body not in complete accord with synodical teachings must be avoided. This policy kept the ELC separate from the unionism of the LCC. At the beginning of the mission works, Arndt followed the Chinese translation of Lutheran (信義會) using the Chinese characters of faith and righteousness. To distinguish its doctrinal purity and stress its evangelical nature, the LCMS missionaries re-titled it as Evangelical Lutheran Church (福音道路德會) in 1923.<sup>39</sup> During the Civil War in China, the Wuhan (武漢) government insisted on the registration of all schools, and no school was allowed to teach or promote religion in any form. Some missionaries retreated to Shanghai (上海), and some returned to their homeland. The ELC opened six primary schools in Hankow (漢口) in 1928, but it was still questionable for them concerning the official registration under government regulation on religious matters. The missionaries only hoped that the local government would not strictly follow the rules. In 1929, the ELC published its first complete LCMS edition of Luther's *Small Catechism* at the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luther's *Catechisms*.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, from 1937 to 1945, the LCMS missionaries in China were disseminated into four groups: a) to remain at their posts in areas beyond Japanese control, b) to keep going in occupied China until repatriated, c) to move to the British colony Hong Kong and d) to return permanently to their homeland. When the Japanese occupied the Lower Yangtze cities in 1937, some LCMS missionaries decided to transfer their families to Hong Kong. The LCC similarly relocated their American school for missionary children from Kikungshan (雞公山) in Mainland to Cheung Chau (長洲) in Hong Kong on the campus of Tiger Balm Hospital (虎豹醫院/長洲醫院) in 1938.<sup>40</sup> The families of the LCMS missionaries who lived on the same Island sent their children to this school but restricted them from joining the daily chapel services. Before the Japanese invasion upset four-fifths of the LCMS mission work, Chinese membership of the ELC had grown to two thousand, but the number dropped to four hundred and sixty after the second Sino-Japanese War. The Chinese Civil War between the Nationalist and Communist parties was continuous until 1949. When the communist armies declared the People's Republic in Tien An Mien Square (天安門

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<sup>39</sup> David G. Kohl, *Lutherans on the Yangtze*, 55.

<sup>40</sup> David G. Kohl, *Lutherans on the Yangtze*, 139.

廣場), the LCMS missionaries Rev. Wilbert Holt (何傳捷牧師), Gertrude A. Simon (西門英才), Martha Boss (包美達), and Lorraine Behling (白樂雲) escaped to Hong Kong.

### **Lutheranism back to Hong Kong (currently called HKSAR) from the 1950s**

#### ***Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (TTMHK)***

The Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (TTMHK, 基督教香港崇真會), which was initiated from the Basel Mission in 1847, continued its church ministries in Hong Kong. In 1946 and 1950, the Tsung Tsin Mission in Hong Kong district founded its first primary and secondary schools to provide a Christian education environment to the local children as its outreach strategy.<sup>41</sup> The Tsung Tsin Mission in the Hong Kong district became independent in 1952 through its legal registration. It was re-titled as the Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (TTMHK) in 1956. The TTMHK initially concentrated on evangelism for the Hakka people. Facing the wave of refugees from China coming to Hong Kong in the 1950s, TTMHK decided to preach sermons in the Hakka dialect with Cantonese translation. In 1954, TTMHK joined the Lutheran Church of China - Hong Kong Association (中華信義宗香港協會) as a federation of most Lutheran groups in Hong Kong. It also became a founding member of the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC, 香港基督教協進會). In 1974, the TTMHK joined the LWF. In 1996, the TTMHK became a founding member of the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation (香港信義宗聯會), which was from the root of the Lutheran Church of China - Hong Kong Association (中華信義宗香港協會). Although the TTMHK considered itself a part of the Lutheran groups, it inherited the Reformed traditions, especially in the liturgies of worship service. This idea can be affirmed by its declaration of the faith statement, which was drafted according to the Ecumenical Creeds, Augsburg Confession, and Heidelberg Catechism. According to the statistics from the LWF,<sup>42</sup> the TTMHK has more than 12,000 active members in Hong Kong.

#### ***The Chinese Rhenish Church of Hong Kong Synod (CRCHKS)***

The Chinese Rhenish Church of Hong Kong Synod (CRCHKS, 中華基督教禮賢會香港區會) with the background of the Barmen Mission became self-managed in 1923. With its official registration in 1951, it became a legal entity under Hong Kong law and separated from the Rhenish churches in China, which came under the Three-Self Church in 1954. The CRCHKS joined the LWF in 1974 and became a founding member of the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation (香港信義宗聯會) in 1996. With the traditions from both Lutheran and Reformed, the CRCHKS stated their belief according to Scripture and the Apostles' Creed.<sup>43</sup> Referring

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<sup>41</sup> "The brief history of congregation," Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Kau Yan Church, last modified December 8, 2022, <https://www.kyc.org.hk/history.php>

<sup>42</sup> "Hong Kong," the Lutheran World Federation, last modified January 30, 2023, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/hong-kong>.

<sup>43</sup> "Beliefs," The Chinese Rhenish Church of Hong Kong Synod, last modified January 30, 2023, [https://www.rhenish.org/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=24&Pid=2&Version=0&Charset=big5\\_h](https://www.rhenish.org/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=24&Pid=2&Version=0&Charset=big5_h)

to the record from the CRCHKS, there are 18 churches and a Gospel Center, two secondary schools and one primary school, and ten kindergartens in Hong Kong. The number of active members of the CRCHKS is about 14,000, according to the information of LWF.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Hong Kong & Macau Lutheran Church (HKMLC)***

The root of the Hong Kong & Macau Lutheran Church (HKMLC, 港澳信義會) is a free and independent mission organization in Norway; the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM), which was founded in 1891 under the name The Norwegian Lutheran Federation for Mission in China.<sup>45</sup> The NLM missionaries arrived in China in 1894 and launched the Yu'eshaan Lutheran Church (豫鄂陝信義會) in Hubei (湖北). In the following fifty years, the Yu'eshaan Lutheran Church developed its ministries for church planting, Christian education, and providing different charity services. It joined the LCC in 1946 and became its Yu'eshaan Synod (豫鄂陝區會). Regarding the political uncertainty in China after 1949, the NLM missionaries fled to Hong Kong and restarted the ministries in Tiu Keng Leng (調景嶺). They opened a secondary school in 1950, starting with twenty-three students. After thirty years, the missionaries founded the HKMLC as a self-managed church body with the local leaders in 1978. The local leaders took over the HKMLC in 1986 and became independent. In the 1990s, the HKMLC opened three primary schools and two kindergartens. In 1992, the HKMLC joined the LWF and became the founding member of the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation in 1996. The HKMLC currently has ten congregations and around 2,300 active members.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK)***

The forming of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK, 基督教香港信義會) was strongly correlated to the history of the LCC (中華信義會). In 1948, the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS, 信義神學院) in Shekow (灑口) was relocated to Tao Fung Shan (道風山) in Shatin (沙田). A National Council Meeting of the LCC was held in the same place in 1949 by the National President Peng Fu (彭福), but he was dismissed when the LCC joined the National Council of Churches in China in 1951. In February, the Chinese government announced a new border control policy, which shelved their plan of returning to Shekow. Peng Fu stayed in Hong Kong and gathered representatives from all Lutheran congregations in Hong Kong at Tao Fung Shan in 1954. The meeting resulted in the birth of the ELCHK, composed of the LCC's fifteen congregations in Hong Kong. The following year,

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<sup>44</sup> "Hong Kong," the Lutheran World Federation, last modified January 30, 2023, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/hong-kong>.

<sup>45</sup> "About us," Norwegian Lutheran Mission, last modified February 3, 2023, <https://www.nlm.no/en/about-us/>.

<sup>46</sup> "Hong Kong," the Lutheran World Federation, last modified January 30, 2023, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/hong-kong>.

the ELCHK purchased a new campus for the LTS in Pak Tin (白田) in Shatin.<sup>47</sup> In 1956, a discussion was held by thirty Chinese Lutheran pastors, evangelists, and church workers at Diamond Hill Lutheran Church, planning the shift of responsibilities to the local leaders, which was a clear move toward independence from the missionaries.<sup>48</sup> The cooperation of ELCHK with CRCHKS (中華基督教禮賢會香港區會), TTMHK (基督教香港崇真會) and the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS, 香港路德會) advocated for organizing the Lutheran Church of China – Hong Kong Association (中華信義宗香港協會) in the same year. The ELCHK became a member of the LWF in 1957 and took over the management of the LTS (信義神學院) from the Mission Societies in 1963. Dr. Hsiao Ken-hsieh (蕭克諧) was appointed in 1971 as the first Chinese President of the seminary. In 1977, the LTS was legally registered by the ELCHK, the CRCHKS, the TTMHK, and the Taiwan Lutheran Church (台灣信義會). The Chinese name of the seminary was amended from the LTS (信義神學院) to the LTS (信義宗神學院), with one more Chinese character in between. This amendment indicated that different Lutheran church bodies jointly supported the institution. In 1993, the LTS (信義宗神學院) was moved to its new campus, which is located at Tao Fung Shan. The LTS provided advanced degree program training to students from different Lutheran church bodies. Still, its teaching is more on liberal theology than the confessional Lutheran teachings. One of the examples is that the ELCHK has offered to ordain women since 1989. With the original members of the Lutheran Church of China - Hong Kong Association (中華信義宗香港協會), [i.e., the ELCHK, the TTMHK, the CRCHKS and the LCHKS, and two other Lutheran church bodies, the HKMLC (港澳信義會) and South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM, 南亞路德會)], the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation (香港信義宗聯會) was legally registered in 1996. Based on the information of the LWF, the current number of active members of the ELCHK is about 20,000.<sup>49</sup>

### ***The Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS)***

When the mainland China government changed its sovereignty overnight in 1949, the LCMS missionaries Rev. Wilbert Holt (何傳捷牧師), Gertrude A. Simon (西門英才), Martha Boss (包美達), and Lorraine Behling (白樂雲) fled from China to Hong Kong. The LCMS missionaries originally planned to return to the United States via Hong Kong. However, during their stays with the refugees who spoke the Chinese dialects they understood, the LCMS missionaries realized that Hong Kong could be a mission field. They asked for permission from the missionary board of America to stay and continue their ministries to the Chinese in Hong Kong. They founded the Hong Kong Evangelical Lutheran Church (HKELC, 香港福音道路德會). In 1950, the LCMS missionaries built a gospel station in a

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<sup>47</sup>“History,” Lutheran Theological Seminary, last modified January 30, 2023, [https://lts.edu/eng/lts\\_history](https://lts.edu/eng/lts_history).

<sup>48</sup> John G. LeMond, *A History of Lutheran Theological Seminary*, 152–3.

<sup>49</sup> “Hong Kong,” the Lutheran World Federation, last modified January 30, 2023, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/hong-kong>.



temporary shack in Tiu Keng Leng (調景嶺), the Refugee settlement area. The station became a regular location for the outreach works of the LCMS missionaries at that difficult time. They were also able to reprint the Chinese edition of Luther's *Small Catechism* with Explanation, which was based on the first complete LCMS Chinese edition of 1929.<sup>50</sup> In 1953, the first synodical school was founded. The LCHKS (香港路德會) started many secondary schools, primary schools, and kindergartens from the 1960s onwards. The schools also became bases of evangelical activities, and many churches and mission stations held their meetings in schools. From 1950 to 1954, the LCMS missionaries founded the Concordia Bible Institute to provide theological training to the local people. In 1956, the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS, 路德會協同神學院) was established, and Rev. Wilbert Holt was appointed to be the first seminary president. The seminary received recognition from the LCMS in 1959, and a new campus was built in Kowloon in 1963. The Literature Department of the LCHKS was established in 1962 by the LCMS missionary Victor Hafner from Taiwan, who moved to Hong Kong to teach in the CTS. In 1977, the Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service (HKLSS, 香港路德會社會服務處) was formally registered as a charity organization.<sup>51</sup> The church gradually changed from a mission station to an independent local church and registered legally as the Lutheran Church–Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS, 香港路德會). At the same time, it became the sister church of the LCMS. As a member of the Lutheran Church of China - Hong Kong Association (中華信義宗香港協會), the LCHKS became the founding member of the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation (香港信義宗聯會) in 1996. The LCHKS operates schools at kindergarten, primary, and secondary levels, serving nearly 20,000 students throughout Hong Kong, and has thirty-four congregations with over 9,000 baptized members.

### ***South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM)***

South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM) was founded by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) missionaries with the local leaders in 1977. Still, it was a different point in its history. In 1956, a student at the LCMS-affiliated Concordia Bible School (later became the CTS), Peter Chang, organized the Christian Chinese Lutheran Mission (CCLM, 遠東中華路德會) in Hong Kong. Chang withdrew from the LCMS for personal reasons and enrolled at Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Minnesota of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), a sister synod of the WELS. He got his bachelor's degree in Divinity in 1962 and returned to Hong Kong. In 1963, he began a middle school called Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School and invited the ELS graduates to come to Hong Kong as

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<sup>50</sup> Sam L.S. Yeung, "The Written Word Enriching Minds and Souls: a Case Study of the Function of the Religious Literature provided by the Lutheran Church- Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS)," *Missio Apostolica* 23, no. 2 (November 2015): 247.

<sup>51</sup> Annissa Lui, "The Wholistic Missionary Works of the Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, Luther Church – Hong Kong Synod," *Lutheran Mission Matters* 29, no. 1 (May 2021): 49.

teachers. The first congregation was founded on the same site called Immanuel Church. Realizing their deficiency in instruction capability and financial support, Chang appealed to the WELS for assistance. The WELS provided provisional support and called Richard Seeger, a WELS missionary in Japan, to Hong Kong. In 1965, the CCLM was reorganized as the Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC). In 1971, the CELC purchased land in Kowloon Tong (九龍塘) for another congregation's administrative headquarters, seminary, and church facility. The construction was completed in 1974, and the church was named Grace Church.<sup>52</sup> Because of some financial controversies, Chang resigned from all his positions in the CELC in 1971. Most other local leaders left the CELC in the following few years. The WELS sent its missionaries, Gary Schroeder (施維德) and Gary Kirschke (祁斯基), to Hong Kong, and they arrived in 1975 and 1976, respectively. In 1977, the WELS missionaries drafted a constitution and reorganized the mission as a new entity, the South Asia Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM). Schroeder and Kirschke started their language training in Cantonese at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Their Cantonese preaching became a curiosity that attracted many young Chinese to come and hear the gospel for the first time. In 1978, Schroeder became the pastor of Grace Church, and Kirschke took over as the principal of Immanuel Lutheran English Middle School in Kwun Tong (觀塘) in Kowloon. From this initial group came most of the men who served as national evangelists and pastors of SALEM, including Rev. Titus Tse Tat Chiu (謝達超) and Rev. Daniel Yeung Wai Shing (楊偉成), from the mid-1980s.

In 1984, the middle school moved to Tai Po (大埔) in Kowloon and was officially dedicated as the new Immanuel Lutheran College (沐恩中學). From 1984 to 2016, SALEM expanded its ministries and planted nine more congregations in Hong Kong. By joining the study center program arranged by the Hong Kong government, SALEM could provide charity services so that students who live in small apartments with several family members could have a quiet area for their study. In 1997, the year that Hong Kong was handed over to China, SALEM became self-managed and independent, connected to the WELS as its sister church. In 2005, WELS started the Asia Lutheran Seminary (ALS, 亞洲路德宗神學院) in Hong Kong to equip church workers with confessional Lutheran teachings to reach out, train leaders, and multiply groups in God's kingdom. Dr. John C. Lawrenz (羅永志) was called to be the founding seminary president of the ALS. Rev. Robert Siirila (施禮樂), a WELS missionary in Taiwan, took a call to Hong Kong, where he ministered with SALEM and helped start the ALS. When the Hong Kong Lutheran Federation (香港信義宗聯會) was founded in 1996, SALEM joined as a member. Still, to preserve the confessional Lutheran teachings, it left the federation and joined the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) in 2017.

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<sup>52</sup> Adam S. Gawel, "Mission Strategy in a Time of Uncertainty: The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Work in Hong Kong in view of the Handover of 1997," (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 2008): 16–8.

### ***Lutheranism in Taiwan***

Similar to the case of the LTS (香港信義宗神學院) in Hong Kong, six Lutheran synods in Taiwan jointly support a Lutheran seminary named the China Lutheran Seminary (CLS, 中華信義神學院). Four Lutheran missions initially founded the seminary in 1966.<sup>53</sup> The CLS moved to the new campus in Hsinchu (新竹) in 1969. The four national synods founded by the mentioned mission groups [a) the China Lutheran Gospel Church (CLGC, 中華福音信義會), b) the Lutheran Church of Taiwan (LCT, 中華民國台灣信義會), c) the Chinese Lutheran Brethren Church (CLBC, 中華基督教信義會), and d) the Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (LCROC, 中國信義會)] joined the board of Directors of the CLS. Another two Lutheran synods, the Taiwan Lutheran Church (TLC, 台灣信義會) and the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC, 中華福音道路德會), officially joined the cooperation in theological education in 1989 and 1992 respectively. Except for the CELC, the other five synods had their history of union and division.

In 1949, due to the change in the political situation in China, many missionaries and Chinese workers fled to Hong Kong, but some came to Taiwan. In 1951, the TLC (台灣信義會) was founded and opened the first Taiwan Lutheran congregation in Kaohsiung (高雄). In 1954, the church union under the TLC from twelve congregations founded by the seven former LCC synods<sup>54</sup> established a headquarters in Taipei (台北). In 1956, five congregations from Yuxi Synod (豫西區會) and Yu'eshaan Syond (豫鄂陝區會) withdrew from the TLC and founded the Chinese Lutheran Brethren Church (CLBC, 中華基督教信義會) in 1958 and the Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (LCROC, 中國信義會) in 1960. Other congregations withdrew from the TLC in 1961 and joined the Shaanan Synod (陝南區會) to found the China Lutheran Gospel Church (CLGC, 中華福音信義會) in 1973. The Lutheran Church of Taiwan (LCT, 中華民國台灣信義會) was founded in 1977 by the congregations that withdrew from the TLC but associated with the Xiangxi Synod (湘西區會). Among these five Lutheran churches, three joined the LWF.

### ***Taiwan Lutheran Church (TLC)***

The TLC became a member of the LWF in 1960. To provide charity services in Taiwan, it built two hospitals, one in Chiayi (嘉義) in 1962 and another in Kaohsiung (高雄) in 1967. The TLC has its Literature Department for book publications and kept the operation of the Dao Sheng publishing house (道聲出版社) in Taiwan. The faith statement of the TLC shows its agreement with the Ecumenical Creeds, *Augsburg Confession*, and Luther's *Small*

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<sup>53</sup> The four Lutheran missions were a) the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway, b) the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, c) the Lutheran Brethren China Mission, and d) the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

<sup>54</sup> The seven synods were: a) Yuzhong Synod (豫中區會), b) Yu'e Synod (豫鄂區會), c) Yudong Synod (豫東區會), d) Yuxi Synod (豫西區會), e) Yu'eshaan Syond (豫鄂陝區會), f) Xiangzhong Synod (湘中區會), and g) Dongbei Synod (東北區會).

*Catechism*, but not the entire *Book of Concord*. In 1999, the TLC had the first woman ordination, which the confessional Lutherans rejected. In Taiwan, the TLC has over 50 congregations and 53 ordained pastors. The number of active members is around 20,000.<sup>55</sup>

### ***Other four Lutheran churches***

The LCT (中華民國台灣信義會) and the LCROC (中國信義會) are another two Lutheran churches with membership in the LWF. The LCT became an LWF member in 1984 with currently about 1,700 members. The LCROC joined the LWF in 2015 with currently about 5,000 members.<sup>56</sup> The CLBC (中華基督教信義會) has 19 congregations in Taiwan. Its faith declaration shows the agreement with the Ecumenical Creeds, *Augsburg Confession*, and Luther's *Small Catechism*.<sup>57</sup> For the CLGC (中華福音信義會), the only information the author has is its location in Taichung (台中).

### ***China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC)***

In 1951, the LCMS sent the first missionary to Taiwan and founded the CELC (中華福音道路德會). The CELC became an independent church and connected with the LCMS as its sister church in 1966. Concordia Middle School was founded in 1967, and more than 2,300 students attended. The operation of the Christian school became a vital evangelistic tool for the outreach of the CELC in Taiwan. In 1969, the Chinese version of the *Book of Concord* was completed by Erhardt Riedel (李天德) in Taiwan, who was the second LCMS missionary to China. This Chinese version of the *Book of Concord* has been the most popular Lutheran confession used by many Chinese Lutheran churches. In 1975, the church had its official registration with the name China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC, 中華福音道路德會). In 1992, the CELC joined the support of the China Lutheran Seminary (CLS, 中華信義神學院). In 1997, several CELC congregations in southern Taiwan formed the "Southern Taiwan Mission Alliance" for leadership training and church planting. The CELC accepted the entire *Book of Concord* as its faith declaration, and there are currently twelve congregations in Taiwan.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Christ Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC)***

The Christ Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC, 基督教路德福音會) is a confessional Lutheran church body in Taiwan founded by the WELS missionaries in 1979. The WELS sent three missionaries, Doug Found, Marcus Manthey, and Rob Meister, to Taiwan in 1978. Their

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<sup>55</sup> "The Mission of Taiwan Lutheran Church," Taiwan Lutheran Church, last modified February 10, 2023, <https://www.twlutheran.org.tw/the-mission-of-taiwan-lutheran-church>.

<sup>56</sup> "Taiwan," the Lutheran World Federation, last modified February 10, 2023, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/taiwan>.

<sup>57</sup> "Church," Chinese Lutheran Brethren Church, last modified February 10, 2023, <http://www.clbc.org.tw/page/church/index.aspx>.

<sup>58</sup> "Lutheran Church," China Evangelical Lutheran Church, last modified February 10, 2023, <http://www.clbc.org.tw/page/church/index.aspx>.

primary purpose for the Taiwan ministries was leadership training for the local workers. In 1980, another two missionaries, Ralph Jones and Robert Sirilla, were called for replacement because two WELS missionaries in Taiwan had difficulties with the language and cultural differences. WELS missionaries assisted the local workers in building up four congregations in Taiwan. In 2013, the CLEC became independent and self-managed.<sup>59</sup> The CLEC became a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) in 2021, which deepened its ties with sister churches worldwide and declared official fellowship with the WELS. The CLEC currently has four congregations serving over 130 baptized members in Taiwan.

## **Lutheranism in Japan**

### ***Early Seeds of Christianity***

More than 300 years before the early Protestant missionaries arrived in Japan, Spanish Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, landed at Kagoshima (鹿兒島) with two companions in 1549 and started the Catholic ministries in Japan. From 1549 to 1639, known as the “Christian Century” in Japan, the number of Christians reached 300,000.<sup>60</sup> The promising beginning of the Catholic Church was wiped out through a series of persecutions, especially during the Tokugawa shogunate (江戸幕府) (1603-1868). Christianity was prohibited over the next two centuries. Though the shogunate was overthrown in 1868, the new imperial government renewed the old edicts against Christianity. Five years later, the edicts were removed, and the early Protestant missionaries entered Japan a year before. They established the first Japanese Protestant church in Yokohama (横濱) and started their Japanese translation of the Bible. They spent eight years (1880) publishing the first Japanese New Testament, and the whole Japanese Bible was published in 1888. The ceasing of the passport requirement in 1889 made it possible for the first time that missionaries could go into all parts of the country for evangelism without restrictions.<sup>61</sup> This policy became the golden opportunity for the Lutheran missionary pioneers, James A.B. Scherer and Rufus B. Perry, to arrive in Tokyo (東京) and start their language study in 1892.

### ***Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)***

Scherer and Perry are the missionaries sent by the United Synod of the South in America. Their initial ministry strategy was teaching English in Saga (佐賀).<sup>62</sup> They held their first

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<sup>59</sup> Dong Lange, “The History of the WELS Mission Work on the Island of Taiwan,” (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 2007): 2–3.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph J. Spae, “The Catholic Church in Japan,” *Contemporary Religions in Japan* 4, no. 1 (March 1963): 4.

<sup>61</sup> Benjamin Paul Huddle, *History of the Lutheran Church in Japan* (New York, N.Y.: Board of Foreign Missions ULCA, 1958), 49.

<sup>62</sup> Scherer learned that a friend of an earlier unsuccessful mission candidate, Dr. Bradbury, was an English teacher in Saga Middle School. He inherited his post after Bradbury suddenly returned to the States in 1893. Perry asked his language teacher Yamnouchi to open an English night school and ‘employed’ him as a teacher. See Benjamin, *History of the Lutheran Church in Japan*, 73–4.

public service on Easter Day (April 2) in 1893, which became the foundation date of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC). Despite opposition and persecution in Saga due to nationalism in the early Meiji period (明治時代), the mission front gradually widened as preaching places were opened in neighboring areas. They translated and published the first Japanese *Small Catechism* in 1895 to instruct their helpers and converts for baptismal preparation, and the first Japanese *Augsburg Confession* was published five years later. Fundamental courses in theological education were offered in 1896, and they officially changed the name of the Saga church to JELC in 1898.<sup>63</sup> Rev. J.M.T. Winther, a Danish missionary sent out from Germany, the Rev. A.R. Wellroos' family, and Esteri Kurvinen of the Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF) arrived in Japan in the next two years and started their evangelical ministries. This second wave of missionaries and the ordination of local pastors enhanced the growth of the Lutheran church in Japan. In 1900, the church council was established, which allowed the first Lutheran newspaper (*Ruteru Kyoho*, 路帖教報)<sup>64</sup> to come into being. Charles Lafayette Brown from the United Synod of the South became the first president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS). He raised funding in America to establish a seminary in Japan but faced the problem of inflation after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The LTS was eventually founded in 1909 without a secure permanent location until it became the theological department of Kyushu Gakuin (九州学院) in 1911. After finishing two years of preparatory courses and three years of theological studies for ministerial preparation, the first seminary class graduated in 1915. The LTS was transferred to Tokyo in 1925 and re-titled the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary (JLTS). In 1930, at the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Augsburg Confession*, the Literature Committee of JELC published new translations by Asaji Noboru of Luther's *Small Catechism* and the *Augsburg Confession*.<sup>65</sup> At that time, the JELC had 27 congregations with 3,362 members.<sup>66</sup> Noboru's translations of *Large Catechism* and *Smalcald Articles* were published in 1933 and 1934, respectively.

In 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) broke out. The war made up the Chinese theater of the wider Pacific Theater of the Second World War (1939-1945). The enactment of the "Law for the Control of Religious organizations" in 1939 reflected the rising Japanese imperialism. The Japanese government only recognized one Catholic organization and one Protestant organization. In 1941, the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) was organized to keep all Protestant churches united, and the JELC disappeared for a time from history.

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<sup>63</sup> Timothy S. McKenzie, "Early Lutheran Missionaries and Theological Education in Japan: The lives and work of Brown, Nielsen, Horn and Stirewalt," *Japan Lutheran College and Theological Seminary Institutional Repository*, no.43 (2009): 21.

<sup>64</sup> The *Ruteru-Kyoho* became the *Ruteru-Shinpo* in 1902 and developed into the *Ruteru* in 1911.

<sup>65</sup> McKenzie, *Early Lutheran Missionaries and Theological Education in Japan*, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Yoshikazu Tokuzen, *Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mission from 1893 to 1993*, trans., Ronald Hays (Tokyo: Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1993): 17.

After the war, in 1946, the JELC was organized again by taking the opinion that “Confession was necessary because the church had not been faithful in taking a stand” regarding the union issue.<sup>67</sup> Referencing the current website of the JELC, the confession they referred to should be Scripture, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, and the *Small Catechism*.<sup>68</sup> In 1952, JELC joined the LWF for communion with other LWF church members worldwide.<sup>69</sup> The merging of the Tokai Evangelical Lutheran Church<sup>70</sup> into the JELC in 1963 assisted in developing evangelical ministries and nurturing theological education. In the 1970s and 80s, the JELC published the JELC hymnal (1976), a Japanese version of the *Book of Concord* (1982), and the liturgy’s revision (1983). In 1993, JELC joined the Mission Centennial Assembly in Kumamoto (熊本) and sent missionaries to serve Japanese immigrants in Brazil and the United States with expatriate Japanese. Up to 2018, the JELC has around 120 congregations and over 20,000 members.<sup>71</sup>

### ***Japan Lutheran Church (JLC)/Nihon Ruteru Kyodan (NRK)***

Concerning the missionary works of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Japan, the story was started by a student of Japanese ancestry, George Shibata, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He enrolled at Concordia Seminary in 1941. During his stay at the seminary, Shibata was eager to promote his desire for evangelism to the people in Japan. He graduated in 1945, but the Board of Foreign Missions of the LCMS had not called him as a missionary to Japan because of the Second World War (1939-1945). Though he was not the one who was called, the president of Concordia Seminary and leaders in the Board of Foreign mission recognized his thoughts.<sup>72</sup> In 1948, the LCMS called Rev. William J. Danker as the first LCMS missionary to Japan. He conducted Bible classes in the first week after he arrived in Tokyo, either in English or through an interpreter. Meanwhile, this was the time when the Nationalist Government in China began to crumble before the Communist armies. The American Consul advised all American citizens in Central China to leave. To help two LCMS missionary families move from Shanghai to Japan,<sup>73</sup> Danker assisted them in applying for

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<sup>67</sup> Yoshikazu, Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mission, 24.

<sup>68</sup> “Lutheran Church Faith,” Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, last modified December 8, 2022, [https://jelc.or.jp/about/lutheran\\_church\\_faith/#私たちルーテル教会の信仰](https://jelc.or.jp/about/lutheran_church_faith/#私たちルーテル教会の信仰).

<sup>69</sup> The Lutheran World Federation’s (LWF) first Assembly took place in Lund, Sweden, in 1947, under the theme: “The Lutheran Church in the World Today.” It developed from the Lutheran World Convention, which held conventions in 1923, 1929, and 1935.

<sup>70</sup> The Tokai Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded by missionaries from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELC) in Tokyo and southward to the Tokai region in 1960. It was the center of the Japan Mission of the ELC. ELC was founded as the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA) in 1917 and changed its name to ELC in 1946. In 1960, ELC was merged with the American Lutheran Church (ALC), which later formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988.

<sup>71</sup> “Who We Are,” Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, last modified December 8, 2022, <https://jelc.or.jp/welcome-to-the-jelc/who-we-are-2/>.

<sup>72</sup> Arthur H. Strege, “A History of Missouri Synod Work in Japan” (master’s thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), 6.

<sup>73</sup> Missionaries LeRoy Hass and Ralph Egolf and their families left Shanghai and arrived in Yokohama on December 18, 1948. Two other nurses, Miss Norma Lenschow and Miss Adelheld Mueller, who had been



military permits and provided them the physical support they needed. The LCMS missionary team in Japan thus expanded based on this political situation in China.<sup>74</sup> As a result, the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC), sometimes called Nihon Ruteru Kyodan (NRK) in Japanese, was founded in 1948. The missionaries organized a Sunday school in 1949, which received over 150 students within a month. Another LCMS missionary from Shanghai, Ralph Egolf, secured a position as a social sciences teacher in the American high school in Yokohama (横濱). On Easter in 1949, he preached to 200 people. With the enactment of the Broadcast Law legalizing commercial and private broadcasting in 1950, the Lutheran Hour radio program was initially broadcast in 1951, making it the first program on commercial radio. More than 500,000 listeners enrolled in the correspondence course they offered, and many persons of all denominations who became Christian during the 50s trace their introduction to Christ to The Lutheran Hour.<sup>75</sup> In 1953, the JLC was recognized as an official religious body in Japan.

However, the JLC cooperated from the beginning within the framework of evangelism of the JELC in their outreach program. Through the working relationship with the JELC, the JLC trained its pastors with the cooperation of the JELC, sending their students to each other's congregations for field work and vicarage. The confessional fellowship with the LCMS was further weakened when the JLC and the JELC declared pulpit and altar fellowship in 1966, three years before the LCMS came into church fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (ALC, 1969-1981). Many JLC pastors have been educated at the feet of the JELC faculty who graduated from the institutions (e.g., the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul) which currently belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). They learned higher critical methods for exegesis and liturgy following the modern liturgical movement, meanwhile withdrawing from the courses on the Lutheran Confessions, except for one on the *Augsburg Confession*, which was taught in the history department.<sup>76</sup> The JLC became self-governing in 1968 and declared to be a sister church of the LCMS in 1971. The JELC has become a member of the LWF since 1952, and JLC sent a delegation to the LWF's Assembly in Hong Kong 45 years later. In 1999, the JLC became an associate member of the LWF.

The ALC introduced the ordination of women in 1970, which the LCMS repeatedly opposed as doctrinally contrary to the Scriptures.<sup>77</sup> The JLC favored this practice but has not urged it to change because they had no female seminary students. Since 2002, the JLC has submitted

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working with Missouri Synod's mission in China, were evacuated to Japan in 1949.

<sup>74</sup> Arthur, A History of Missouri Synod Work in Japan, 18.

<sup>75</sup> "Lutheran Mission in Japan," Okinawa Lutheran Church, last modified November 11, 2022, <https://www.church.ne.jp/okiluth/english/history.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Naomichi Masaki, "Cultural Differences and Church Fellowship: The Japan Lutheran Church as Case Study," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 78, no. 3-4 (July/October 2014): 103.

<sup>77</sup> Naomichi, Cultural Differences and Church Fellowship, 106-7.

the proposal on the ordination of women, and the LCMS convened theological discussions with them to uphold the clear teaching of the infallible Word of God that only men should be ordained. The conversations were finally in vain when the JLC codified the ordination of women to the pastoral office as its official doctrine and practice in 2021.<sup>78</sup> Based on the statistics of the LWF, the members of the JLC are now over 700,<sup>79</sup> and it has about thirty congregations in Japan.

### ***Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC)***

The history of the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC) had usually referred to its beginning in 1957 when the WELS sent the missionary Richard Seeger to Japan. Seeger was the first missionary of the second WELS mission in Japan. The first mission had been lost during the Intersynodical Controversy<sup>80</sup> between the WELS and the LCMS.<sup>81</sup> Seeger started his ministry in Japan through English language Bible classes. In the following year, the second missionary, Rev. Richard Poetter, was called. Poetter had already been an experienced missionary in Japan when he accepted the call. He previously was the LCMS missionary in Japan since 1950, but he resigned from his call and returned to the WELS where he had grown up because of the doctrinal controversy in the LCMS.<sup>82</sup> Poetter began his new ministry in Ibaraki Prefecture (茨城県), where the LCMS had an insufficient workforce. With the assistance of a radio ministry conducted by the LCMS, the Lutheran Hour, Poetter started outreach with the list of contacts in Ibaraki (茨城). In 1959, the missionaries reported to the WELS Japan Board to stop practicing fellowship with the LCMS missionaries in Japan; however, they continued to receive lists of prospects from the Lutheran Hour.<sup>83</sup> The following year, WELS sent the third missionary, Luther Weindorf, forming the foundation of the WELS Japan missions.

The expansion of the WELS missions in Japan was noticeable in the first half of the 1960s. In 1961, the WELS missionaries and the Japanese church leaders formed the Mission Council

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<sup>78</sup> “Japan Lutheran Church (JLC),” the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://www.lcms.org/partner-church-bodies/japan-lutheran-church>.

<sup>79</sup> “Japan,” the Lutheran World Federation, last modified December 20, 2022, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/member-churches/asia/japan>.

<sup>80</sup> The term “Intersynodical Controversy” refers to the series of events and doctrinal disputes leading to a break in fellowship among the members of the Synodical Conference. The controversy, which had gone through various stages since the 1930s, led to the Wisconsin Synod breaking its fellowship with the LCMS in 1961.

<sup>81</sup> Rev. Fred Tiefel accepted the call as the first missionary to Japan, and he arrived in Japan in 1952. He commented that the LCMS missionaries in Japan were straying far from their synod’s past teaching and practice, which strengthened his conviction that the time had come for the WELS to break fellowship with LCMS. Tiefel resigned from WELS in 1957 because of this Intersynodical Controversy and decided not to return the property in Japan to WELS. See Darren Green, “God’s Grace in Action in Mito,” (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 1994): 2–3.

<sup>82</sup> Jacob Limpert, “Enduring by His Grace: An update history of the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church in Japan from 1957 through 2019,” (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 2020): 5.

<sup>83</sup> Limpert, *Enduring by His Grace*, 7.

officially. They published the Japanese church periodical “Church News.”<sup>84</sup> A chapel in Utsunomiya (宇都宮市) was dedicated in the same year. The first Delegate Church Council of the LECC was held in 1962, and Poetter was elected Chairman. The Mission Council recognized the necessity of a Japanese seminary to train the local pastors. They started some fundamental courses in 1964, and the LECC Board directors finalized the seminary’s curriculum in 1967.<sup>85</sup> Two years later, the seminary produced its first graduate. In the same year, Harold Johnne accepted the call as the head of the new seminary, which was established in Tsuchiura (土浦). The new seminary facilities were dedicated in 1971 with three new buildings, including a chapel and the LECC print shop. In 1973, the LECC began adopting a Sunday radio broadcast as an evangelical outreach tool. Translation projects of some of the WELS doctrinal writings caused their need for more help, leading to more WELS missionaries coming to Japan. With its print shop, the LECC Literature Committee published the *Small Catechism* and “Basic Doctrines of the Bible” in Japanese in 1976. To transform from a daughter church to a sister synod with the WELS, the LECC started the work of formal declaration of fellowship with WELS when it had a constitution. The number of workers sent by the WELS continued to grow. In 1981, the LECC pastors and congregational representatives signed “A Declaration of Church Fellowship with the WELS by the LECC” and sent it to the WELS convention.<sup>86</sup> This action symbolized a significant step in the growth of the LECC, becoming a mature and independent church body.

Entering the latter half of the 80s, a high turnover of missionaries happened, and the LECC continued to grow in its ability to stand on its own. In 1993, the first meeting of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)<sup>87</sup> was held in Oberwesel, Germany. The LECC sent three delegates and served as a founding member of the CELC. According to the information from the CELC website,<sup>88</sup> the LECC currently has six congregations and over 350 baptized members.

## **Lutheranism in Korea**

### ***Early Seeds of Christianity***

The birth of the Korean Catholic Church was marked in 1784 when a well-educated Korean, Lee Seung-Hoon, was baptized by the Jesuit priest in China and became the first official

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<sup>84</sup> William F. Bernhardt, “The History of Our WELS Mission in Japan with Historical and Cultural Background,” (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 1986): 10–1.

<sup>85</sup> Clark et al., “Praising His Grace II,” (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 1985): 21.

<sup>86</sup> Limpert, *Enduring by His Grace*, 19.

<sup>87</sup> The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) is a worldwide fellowship of Lutheran church bodies, committed to the teachings of the Lutheran Church found in the Book of Concord of 1580. The CELC was formed to be the spiritual successor to the Synodical Conference, an international organization for the edification of confessional Lutheran church bodies worldwide.

<sup>88</sup> “Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church - Japan,” the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://celc.info/membership/member-churches/lutheran-evangelical-christian-church-japan/>.

Korean Catholic. By 1785, he baptized more than a thousand people in Korea.<sup>89</sup> About fifty years later, Karl Gützlaff visited Korea and became the first Lutheran and Protestant missionary on Korea's soil. He translated the Lord's Prayer into Korean and distributed Chinese Christian literature, including the Chinese Bible, evangelical booklets, and medicine, when he stayed in Korea for about forty days in 1832. The next wave of the protestant missionary coming to Korea was about another fifty years later when Korea opened its doors to the outside world in the 1870s and 1880s. Before that, the early history of the Korean Catholic Church was a story of persecution and martyrdom. In 1884, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in the United States appointed Rev. John W. Heron and Horace N. Allen<sup>90</sup> as medical missionaries to Korea.<sup>91</sup> A Presbyterian missionary, Horace G. Underwood, and a Methodist missionary, Henry G. Appenzeller, arrived in Korea in 1885. They started their ministry by founding schools and received official permission to conduct Christian worship in 1887. By 1900, John Ross, a Scotch Presbyterian missionary, translated the New Testament into Korean and the Old Testament ten years later. From 1910 to 1945, Korea was occupied by the Japanese until Japan was defeated in the Second World War (1939-1945). During the Japanese occupation, Korean Christians suffered from religious persecution for their rejection of the Japanese abolishment of the Korean language, history, and culture. After the war, Korea was occupied by Western powers. The United States and Russia divided Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into two zones. The Korean War, a fight between North Korea and South Korea, broke out from 1950 to 1953. There were seventy Lutheran chaplains served in Korea, and thirty-four were from the LCMS during the Korean War. These chaplains urged the Lutheran Christians in the United States to begin missionary work in Korea.<sup>92</sup> In 1958, the LCMS sent three American missionaries and one Korean missionary to restart the Lutheran ministries in Korea after 126 years when Gützlaff had visited there.

### ***Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK)***

The LCMS missionaries, Kurt E. Voss, a veteran missionary in China, L. Paul Bartling, and Maynard W. Dorow, arrived in Korea in 1958. Voss had ended his missionary work in China in 1949 when the communist party took over. About ten years later, the LCMS mission board called him to serve in Korea. In the same year, another Korean missionary Won-Yong Ji<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Korean Catholicism cascaded from martyrs' faiths," The Arlington Catholic Herald, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://www.catholicherald.com/article/columns/korean-catholicism-cascaded-from-martyrs-faiths/>.

<sup>90</sup> Horace Allen healed a critically wounded Prince Min Yong-Ik when a coup happened, and he was appointed physician of the royal court. He was allowed to open a government-sponsored hospital, the first official approval of Protestant missionary work in Korea. The resident clergy missionaries Horace G. Underwood, a Presbyterian, and Henry G. Appenzeller, a Methodist, taught physics and chemistry at the hospital.

<sup>91</sup> Hans Schwarz, "The Lutheran Church and Lutheran Theology in Korea," *Dialog* 50, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 289–90.

<sup>92</sup> Schwarz, *The Lutheran Church and Lutheran Theology in Korea*, 292.

<sup>93</sup> Won Yong Ji was a refugee from the Communist-occupied North to the South. He attended a Christian school and worked part-time at the U.S. military base in Kim Po. He received a scholarship from a United State Air Force Unit to study in the U.S. Though initially supported by a military chaplain of the Church of Christ,

joined their team and founded the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK). They held their first worship service in a conference room of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) building in Seoul in 1959. They emphasized the mass-media mission in their early development, and in the same year, they founded the Korean Lutheran Hour and Concordia Sa publishing house. The Korean Lutheran Hour covered the whole of South Korea and was beamed into North Korea and even northern China. It also pioneered employing television to proclaim the Gospel in Korea. In the 1960s, the radio and television ministries of the LCK drew many radio listeners and television viewers when there were still few existing educational programs. The radio program invited listeners to request the Christian Correspondence Course, which the LCK began to offer in 1960, to study the fundamental truths concerning the Christian faith. From 1961 to 1979, the LCK produced the printed monthly magazine *New Life* with some biblical studies and short stories of Christian witnesses for Christians and non-Christians.<sup>94</sup> For their church-planting scheme, the LCK founded their first church — Immanuel Lutheran Church— in 1959, followed in 1963 by St. John's. Concerning theological education, Won Yong Ji was appointed as the director of the Lutheran Theological Academy, which started its training programs in 1965. Their program was undertaken in cooperation with the Theological College of Yonsei University in Seoul and its United Graduate School of Theology. This cooperation lasted until 1980 when the Korean government standardized all theological schools and seminaries. The Lutheran Theological Academy was classified as an unrecognized institution but received permission to establish a theological seminary under the government's policy. With the fundraising driven by the LCMS, the LCK in 1984 built a seminary in the south of Seoul and provided a four-year theological program for both men and women who wanted to pursue pastoral ministry or become evangelists or parish workers.<sup>95</sup> In 1996, a Lutheran Study Institute was added as an adjunct seminary institution. Two years later, the Korean government recognized the Lutheran Seminary as a university in Korea and has named it Luther University and Seminary since 1998. The Lutheran Study Institute established the Korea Luther Study Society ten years later to extend their ecumenical enterprise by translating more of Luther's works into Korean and arranging study tours to Luther sites.<sup>96</sup>

Although the LCMS missionaries initiated the LCK, the attitudes toward the Lutheran Confessions differed. The LCMS missionaries founded the LCK in 1958, It spent thirteen years to become independent and has been the sister church of the LCMS since 1971. In the

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through a Missouri Synod family he drew closer to the Lutheran church. After obtaining a college degree in California, he was accepted at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to receive his S.T.M. and Th.D. degrees. For more details, see Park, Dam, "Two Worlds, One Mission, One Future: The Work and Life of Missionaries Maynard Dorow and Wong Yong Ji," (Milwaukee: WLS Essay File, 2005): 5–10.

<sup>94</sup> Jin-seop Eom, "History of Lutheranism in Korea," *Missio apostolica* 20, no. 2 (Nov 2012): 241–2.

<sup>95</sup> Schwarz, *The Lutheran Church and Lutheran Theology in Korea*, 293–5.

<sup>96</sup> Eom, *History of Lutheranism in Korea*, 246.

following year, the LCK joined the LWF. To reveal the Korean Lutherans' perspective of Lutheranism, Eom highlighted the LCK's subscription to the ecumenical creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, and Luther's *Small Catechism* as "representative creeds of Christendom and true interpretation of the Scriptures." However, the LCK treated other confessional writings in the *Book of Concord* as a "faithful exposition of the evangelical theology of the Lutheran Reformation."<sup>97</sup> He described the Korean Lutheran in the LCK with the attitude of hypothetical confessional Lutheranism, which is in the sense of accepting the Lutheran confessions only "in so far as" (quatenus) they are relevant to their modern interpretation of the Scripture.<sup>98</sup> Even though the LCK published the first Korean *Book of Concord* in 1988, *Luther's Works* – Korean Edition in twelve volumes from 1981-1989, and became a member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) in 1993, we do not call them confessional Lutherans based on their perspective of Lutheranism. In 2010, the LCK dedicated the Luther Tower in central Seoul. Based on the information on ILC's website, the LCK has 37 congregations and over 5,800 baptized members.<sup>99</sup>

### ***Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC)***

According to the Korean Educational Development Institute, in 2006, 29,511 children from elementary through high school left South Korea, almost seven times the numbers recorded in 2000.<sup>100</sup> The main reason such Korean students come to America is to learn English. From the Korean parents' perspective, good English skills can lead their children to enter universities in Korea and achieve better future career paths. This belief brought the Korean Student Movement to America. The founder of the Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC), Rev. Young Ha Kim,<sup>101</sup> convinced the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) to send him to Seoul to begin the ministry by recruiting high school-aged Koreans in 2005. In the same year, he founded a congregation with its original name East Seoul Canaan Church (ESCC), which gathered over 130 members<sup>102</sup> for Sunday worship. Rev. Kim offered adult instruction classes using confessional Lutheran teaching materials, Luther's *Small Catechism*, *Go and Teach* and *Communicating Christ* (from the WELS), and *We Believe, Teach and Confess* (from the ELS) in the Korean translations. In addition, the ESCC has its mission to bring the gospel to China

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<sup>97</sup> Jin-seop Eom, "The Korean Lutherans' Perspective of Lutheranism and Lutheran Identity," *Missio apostolica* 22, no. 2 (Nov 2014): 287.

<sup>98</sup> Jin-seop Eom, "The Lutheran confessions in Korea," *Dialog* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 139.

<sup>99</sup> "Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK)," the International Lutheran Council, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://ilc-online.org/members/asia/korea/>.

<sup>100</sup> Norimitsu Onishi, "For English Studies, Koreans say Goodbye to Dad," *New York Times*, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/08/world/asia/08geese.html?pagewanted=all/>.

<sup>101</sup> Kim studied theology when he was in Chicago in 1985. He later asked a local WELS church to lend him the building in the afternoons and started a Korean church called Jerusalem in Morton Grove. He decided to further his theological study at Bethany Seminary in 1997 and graduated in 1999.

<sup>102</sup> Craig A. Ferkenstad, eds., 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Annual Report 2007 (Mankato, MN: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2007), [https://els.org/wp-content/download/document\\_archive/synod\\_reports/report2007.pdf](https://els.org/wp-content/download/document_archive/synod_reports/report2007.pdf).



and North Korea by helping some refugees from North Korea. In 2006, the ELS sent two elementary school teachers, Dennis and Dolores Morrison, to Seoul to teach Korean children English and founded Canaan Language Institute (CLI) to support Kim's ministry. The CLI offered training in the English language to the native Koreans while providing the opportunity for outreach through the classes. In addition to offering English classes, Morrison assisted Korean students with enrollment in WELS/ELS high schools.<sup>103</sup> Rev. Kim collaborated with the CLI to offer daily teaching of the religious courses and confirm the students before sending them across the Pacific.<sup>104</sup> In 2008, the ESCC was admitted as an associate member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) and has had a worldwide fellowship of Lutheran church bodies committed to the teachings of the Lutheran Church found in the Book of Concord of 1580. The CLI was renamed the Canaan Lutheran Academy in 2014 and Rev. Kim's wife, Margaret, served as the director. The Academy held a program to teach a seven-month doctrine class to the students who were preparing for their study at ELS/WELS high schools and confirmed them if necessary. Following their outreach strategy, the parents were highly recommended to take Lutheran doctrine classes. In 2015, the ESCC changed its name to Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC) and arranged some pastoral study classes, later forming the Seoul Theological Institute. The following year, Dr. Samuel Choi was ordained as an associate Pastor of the SLC and served as the director of the Seoul Theological Institute. He and Rev. Kim offered classes to the congregation members who desired a deeper understanding of the Scripture and confessional Lutheran doctrines. In 2021, the SLC ordained David Choi, who walked through the pipeline from the Seoul Lutheran Theological Institute to the Master of Divinity training at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary of the ELS, beginning the outreach to Koreans in Seoul.<sup>105</sup> According to the WELS website about church bodies worldwide, the SLC has more than 350 members as a confessional Lutheran group in Seoul.<sup>106</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the history of Lutheranism in East Asia, taking the LTS (香港信義宗神學院) in Hong Kong, the LCC (中華信義會) in China, the CLS (中華信義神學院) in Taiwan, and the close cooperation between the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) and the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) as examples, the unionism of Lutheran mission groups can gather abundant workforces and resources, which probably gives people a more profound impression of a giant Lutheran group. The outreach capacity can be effectively enhanced by

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<sup>103</sup> Craig A. Ferkenstad, eds., 91st Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Annual Report 2008 (Mankato, MN: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2008), [https://cls.org/wp-content/download/document\\_archive/synod\\_reports/report2008.pdf](https://cls.org/wp-content/download/document_archive/synod_reports/report2008.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Jason D. Free, "The Korean Problem: Improving the spiritual care of Korean International students," (Master's thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wisconsin, 2016), 13.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Heyn, "Ordination in Korea," Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, January 26, 2022, <https://celc.info/2022/01/26/ordination-in-korea/>.

<sup>106</sup> "Who We Are," the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, last modified December 08, 2022, <https://wels.net/about-wels/who-we-are/commission-inter-church-relations/#toggle-id-49>.



employing up-to-date technology like the LCMS broadcasting from the 1950s to 1970s. The translation and publication of the Lutheran confessional writings prepare essential materials for Lutheran theological education and training. However, all these are good only if the purity of the confessional Lutheran heart is preserved. Therefore, collaboration is essential, but cooperation in the united faith of confessional Lutherans who unconditionally subscribe to the Lutheran confessional writings in the *Book of Concord* because (quia) it agrees with the Word of God but not partially or “in so far as” (*quatenus*) subscription, is more critical for the sustainable development of Lutheranism, which we can find in the fellowship of Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Convention (CELC).

## **List of Abbreviations**

### **Lutheran Church/synod in America**

Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS)  
Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA)  
American Lutheran Church (ALC)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in Europe**

Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF)  
Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in Hong Kong**

Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (TTMHK, 基督教香港崇真會)  
Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod (CRCHK, 中華基督教禮賢會香港區會)  
Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS, 信義宗神學院)  
Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC, 香港基督教協進會)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK, 基督教香港信義會)  
Hong Kong Evangelical Lutheran Church (HKELC, 香港福音道路德會)  
Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS, 路德會協同神學院)  
Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service (HKLSS, 香港路德會社會服務處)  
Lutheran Church–Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS, 香港路德會)  
South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM, 南亞路德會)  
Chinese Lutheran Mission (CCLM, 遠東中華路德會)  
Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in China**

Tsung Tsin Mission (TTM, 崇真會)  
Central China Union Lutheran Theological Seminary (CCULTS, 華中聯合信義神學院)  
Lutheran Church of China (LCC, 中華信義會)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC, 福音道路德會)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in Taiwan**

China Lutheran Seminary (CLS, 中華信義神學院)  
Taiwan Lutheran Church (TLC, 台灣信義會)

China Lutheran Gospel Church (CLGC, 中華福音信義會)  
Lutheran Church of Taiwan (LCT, 中華民國台灣信義會)  
Chinese Lutheran Brethren Church (CLBC, 中華基督教信義會)  
Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (LCROC, 中國信義會)  
China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC, 中華福音道路德會)  
Christ Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC, 基督教路德福音會)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in Japan**

Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS)  
United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ)  
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)  
Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary (JLTS)  
Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC)

### **Lutheran Church/synod in Korea**

Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK)  
Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC)  
East Seoul Canaan Church (ESCC)

### **Others**

Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)  
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)  
International Lutheran Council (ILC)  
National Revolutionary Army (NRA)  
People's Republic of China (PRC)

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## Appendix

### Key events for Lutheranism in Hong Kong before 1948

#### Basel Mission

- 1847 Early Lutheran missionaries to HK [TTMHK]
- 1851 First worship of Basel group
- 1860 First Hakka translation of Matthew
- 1861 First congregation on HK Island
- 1865 First Hakka translation of Luke
- 1878 First Chinese pastor
- 1883 First Hakka NT
- 1906 Revised Hakka NT
- 1923 Renamed Basel Mission Hong Kong
- 1924 Basel Mission in China renamed Tsung Tsin Mission [TTM]
- 1929 TTM in HK district became self-managed

#### Barmen Mission

- 1847 Early Lutheran missionaries to HK [CRCHK]
- 1899 The Rhenish Church Hong Kong [RCHK] was founded
- 1910 The RCHK founded the first school
- 1914 The RCHK renamed the Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod [CRCHK]
- 1923 CRCHK became self-managed

#### Berlin Mission

- 1851 Berlin Ladies Mission to HK
- 1861 Berlin Foundlings House was founded

#### Hildesheim Mission

- 1841 China ceded the Island to the British
- 1840-1842 The First Opium War
- 1856-1860 The Second Opium War
- 1860 China ceded the Kowloon to the British
- 1878 British leased the New Territories
- 1894-1895 First Sino-Japanese War
- 1897 Ebenezer Home for the Blind was founded
- 1901 Ebenezer Home moved to To Kwa Wan
- 1913 Ebenezer Home built campus in Pokfulam
- 1914-1918 First World War
- 1927-37, 1946-49 Chinese Civil War
- 1937-1945 Second Sino-Japanese War
- 1939-1945 Second World War

## Key events for Lutheranism in China up to 1950s

### LCC

1890  
The second General Conference

1890  
Pioneer Lutheran Missionaries arrived at Hankow in China

- 1908 First Union Lutheran Conference
- 1906 Cooperation letter was signed by representatives of Lutheran missionary societies in China
- 1913 The Central China Union Lutheran Theological Seminary [LTS] was founded
- 1915 Temporary Council of Lutheran Church of China [LCC] was elected
- 1920 LCC was founded
- 1920 Second General Conference of LCC
- 1920 First General Conference of LCC
- 1922 Conference of the World's Student Christian Federation in Beijing
- 1924 Third General Conference of LCC
- 1927 LTS was temporary closed
- 1928 Third General Conference of LCC
- 1938 LTS seminary campus in Shekow was occupied by the Japanese troops
- 1942 LTS seminary campus in Shekow restarted
- 1949 National Council Meeting of the LCC in Tao Fong Shan

### ELC

- 1894-1895 First Sino-Japanese War
- 1898 British leased the New Territories
- 1913 First missionary to China
- 1914 First primary school and chapel in China
- 1916 Second missionary to China
- 1918 Third missionary to China
- 1921 First China General Conference Of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission
- 1922 First seminary in China [Concordia Theological Seminary]
- 1923 Adopt the name Evangelical Lutheran Church [ELC]
- 1926 First seminary graduation
- 1922-1927 Anti-Christian Movement
- 1927-37, 1946-49 Chinese Civil War
- 1929 LCMS translation of the *Small Catechism* (SC)
- 1937 Some missionary families escaped to HK
- 1937-1945 Second Sino-Japanese War
- 1939-1945 Second World War
- 1949 Some missionaries escaped to HK

## Key events for Lutheranism back to Hong Kong from 1950s

### ELCHK

- 1948 LTS was relocated to Tao Fung Shan
- 1954 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong was founded
- 1955 A new campus of LTS in Shatin
- 1956 The Lutheran Church of China - Hong Kong Association was organized
- 1957 ELCHK joined LWF
- 1963 ELCHK took over the LTS
- 1971 First Chinese LTS President
- 1977 LTS is registered by ELCHK, CRCHKS, TTMHK and Taiwan Lutheran Church
- 1989 ELCHK started ordination of women
- 1993 LTS moved to To Fung Shan
- 1996 The Hong Kong Lutheran Federation [HKLF] was founded
- 2006 Revised Hakka NT

### LCHKS

- 1949 The LCMS missionaries from China
- 1950 First gospel station in Tiu Keng Leng
- 1953 First synodical school
- 1956 Concordia Theological Seminary [CTS]
- 1962 The Literature Department of the LCHKS was established
- 1963 CTS new campus in Kowloon
- 1959 LCMS recognized CTS
- 1977 Lutheran Social Service was set up
- 1977 LCHKS became a sister church with LCMS
- 1996 LCHKS joined HKLF

### SALEM

- 1977 SALEM was founded
- 1984 First SALEM college was dedicated
- 1996 SALEM joined HKLF
- 2005 Asia Lutheran Seminary [ALS] was founded
- 2017 SALEM left HKLF and joined CELC

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region [HKSAR] 1997 until now

\* TTMHK, CRCHKS, and HKMLC are not included in the Chart but are mentioned in the text.

1948-1997  
Hong Kong [British colony]

1997 Handover of HK



## Key events for Lutheranism in Japan

# JELC

- 1880 First JP NT
- 1888 First JP Bible
- 1892 Early Lutheran missionaries to JP [JELC]
- 1895 JP translation of the *Small Catechism (SC)*
- 1900 First Lutheran JP Newspaper
- 1900 JP translation of the *Augsburg Confession (AC)*
- 1909 JLTS, the first Lutheran seminary, offered courses
- 1917 Revised JP NT
- 1930 Noboru's version of *SC and AC*
- 1933 Noboru's version of *Large Catechism (LC)*
- 1934 Noboru's version of *Smalcald Articles (SA)*
- 1941 JELC joined UCCJ
- 1946 JELC was reestablished
- 1952 JELC joined LWF
- 1982 JP translation of the *Book of Concord (BOC)*

# JLC

- LCMS missionaries to JP [JLC] 1948
- First LCMS Sunday school 1949
- Lutheran Hour (Radio) 1951
- JLC and JELC declared pulpit 1966
- JLC joined LWF 1999
- JLC ordained women 2021
- LCMS broke with JLC

# LECC

- Mission Council included local church leaders 1961
- Theological courses were taught 1964
- A seminary was constructed 1971
- Sunday radio broadcast 1973
- SC was published 1976
- LECC as sister synod of WELS 1981
- LECC joined CELC 1993

1868-1912  
Meiji  
Restoration

1895  
The Japanese  
invasion of  
Taiwan

1904-1905  
Russo-Japanese War

1914-1918  
First World War

1937-1945  
Second Sino-Japanese War

1939-1945  
Second World War

2011 ●  
The Tohoku earthquake  
and Tsunami

## Key events for Lutheranism in Korea

# LCK

- 1900  
First Korean NT
- 1910  
First Korean Bible

- 1958  
Early Lutheran missionaries to Korea [LCK]
- 1959 Immanuel Lutheran Church  
And the Korean Lutheran Hour (Radio)
- 1959 Concordia Sa was founded
- 1961 First Lutheran magazine
- 1965 The Lutheran Theological Academy
- 1971 LCK as sister synod of LCMS
- 1972 LCK joined LWF
- 1984 First Lutheran Seminary in Korea
- 1988 Korean translation of the  
*Book of Concord (BOC)*
- 1993 LCK joined ILC
- 1999 Lutheran Study Institute
- The Korea Luther Study Society 2008
- Luther Tower in Seoul 2010

# SLC

- SLC (Original name: East Seoul  
Canaan Church [ESCC]) was established
- Canaan Language Institute (CLI) 2006
- CELC associate member 2008
- Renamed from CLI to Canaan Lutheran Academy (CLA) 2014
- Renamed from ESCC to SLC 2015
- Seoul Lutheran Theological Institute 2015

1910-1945  
Japanese  
occupation

1939-1945  
Second World War

1950-1953  
Korean War