



Reception area of Chinese Union Mission office, April 2020.

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## Chinese Union Mission

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### DANIEL JIAO

Daniel Jiao, D.Min. in leadership (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.), was born in China. He is the executive secretary of the Chinese Union Mission and has previously worked as a director of various departments and a radio broadcaster for Adventist World Radio. He has written over 300 articles in Chinese for *Last Day Shepard's Call*, *Signs of the Times*, and *Ministry Magazine*. He is married to Charlotte Lai and they have two children. In his free time, he likes to run marathons and spend time with his family.

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The Chinese Union Mission (CHUM) is an attached union to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Its headquarters is located at 12F Citimark Plaza, 28 Yuen Shun Circuit, Shatin, Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup>

CHUM is governed by an operating policy that is based on the model constitution as provided by the General Conference Working Policy and approved by the Asia Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC). Its physical and intellectual properties are held in trust by the Chinese Union Mission Limited, a company based at the CHUM headquarters.

The territory of the CHUM consists of China, and also includes the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs).<sup>2</sup>

According to the December 2019 statistical report, the Chinese Union Mission was listed as having one conference, the Hong Kong Macau Conference, and the “China Field”, with a total of 1,352 churches, 3,249 companies, and 472,107 members.<sup>3</sup>

## Main Objectives and Mission Focus

CHUM coordinates and oversees ministries in China, the Hong Kong and Macao. These ministries include providing support for local churches, operating hospitals and health centers, establishing schools for education, publishing printed materials, setup of social services, production of radio and TV programs, and promotion of Internet evangelism efforts.

Departmental ministries and services include: Ministerial Association, Youth Ministries, Media Center, Communication, Education, Adventist Mission, Health Ministries, Publishing, Literature Evangelism, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Stewardship, Women's and Family Ministry, Prayer Ministries, Religious Liberty, Children Ministries, and Special Needs Ministries.<sup>4</sup>

The mission of CHUM is “Kingdom Growth”. It is to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting Gospel embraced by the Three Angels’ Messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare those living in the CHUM territories for Christ’s soon return.<sup>5</sup>

Method. Guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, CHUM pursues this mission through God-given methods by focused efforts in three core areas of church life: spiritual, functional, and numerical growth.

Vision. In harmony with Bible revelation, Seventh-day Adventists see the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness as the climax of God’s plan.

## History of The Seventh-day Adventist Church in China and Establishment of CHUM

The Adventist work in China began as a project of one layperson, Abram La Rue. He was an American gold miner, seaman, and shepherd, who became an Adventist at an advanced age. Perceiving that the Advent message was to be given to the whole world, he attended Healdsburg College to prepare himself for the Gospel

work and requested that he be appointed to China. The General Conference Mission Board, considering him too old (he was about 65 at the time), suggested instead that he bear his witness on one of the islands in the Pacific Ocean. He went first to the Hawaiian Islands, where his work led to the establishment of the permanent Adventist work there. Still longing to carry the Adventist message to China, he went in 1888 to Hong Kong. In the same year, he visited Canton and, in 1889, he went to Shanghai, selling and distributing Adventist publications among the English-speaking residents in both places.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of 1904, there were 64 Adventists in all of China. After the General Conference sent more missionaries, two schools were opened, and regular public preaching began during the summer of that year.

Church structure began to take shape in China by 1930 when the China Division was formed. There were six union missions, twenty-nine local missions, 156 churches, 9,456 church members, 947 workers, 103 church schools, and 3,325 students. There were 17 educational institutions of secondary and college level, one publishing house, two smaller local presses, and eleven medical institutions.<sup>7</sup>

By 1950, the political climate had changed in China. The final division report indicated that the total number of Adventists in China at that time was around 21,000.<sup>8</sup> Soon after the change of government on the mainland, the work in China was separated from the rest of the Adventist Church.

After the formal church structure in China ceased to exist, the number of Adventists continued to grow. No official church membership record existed from 1950 to 1986. By the end of 2000, twenty years after China opened its door to Christianity and allowed freedom of religion, the estimated membership in China was at 297,232.<sup>9</sup> Compared to 21,000 members in 1950, Adventist Church membership at the end of 1986 was 75,000, and the growth from 1986 to 2000 was about 16,000 per year.

CHUM was established in June 1999, after the merge of East Asia Association and South China Island Union Mission, so this growth could continue.<sup>10</sup> Organizationally, CHUM was one of the unions in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

The main reasons for this restructure were three-fold: 1) To coordinate the Adventist mission work in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and beyond, 2) To develop and advance the education endeavor, especially theology education, for Chinese members, and 3) To facilitate the need of Chinese Adventists in this region and other parts of the world.<sup>11</sup>

According to a December 2019 CHUM Annual Council report, Adventist membership in this region has grown to 472,107 for China, Hong Kong, and Macau.<sup>12</sup>

In the area of Adventist mission work, CHUM has developed much closer relationships with church members and leaders in China, and this is accomplished through the work of Chinese Ministries. As more resources are devoted to visitation and training, members in this region are able to focus on church growth and share the Gospel in areas that do not yet have an Adventist presence.<sup>13</sup>

Focused efforts on lay training and theology education have yielded fruitful results. From opening a branch of Griggs University to setting up the Chinese Adventist Seminary (CAS), an entire degree program for earning a Bachelor's and a Master's in Theology in Chinese was developed. An online platform and face-to-face teaching allow increasing numbers of Chinese language graduates to receive their degrees every year.<sup>14</sup> In October 2018, CAS received official accreditation from the Adventist Accreditation Association.<sup>15</sup>

To cater to the needs of Chinese-speaking people in different regions, the Church now utilizes printed material, websites, and smartphone apps using both the traditional and simplified Chinese languages. Radio and TV programs are also being produced in Mandarin and local dialects. Missionaries are now sent to reach overseas Chinese language speaking persons at different countries in Central and South America, Southeast Asia, and Europe.<sup>16</sup>

CHUM operates and oversees several institutions on its territories.

## Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Stubbs Road

This hospital is part of the Adventist Health global network of over 160 hospitals with the common goal of providing premiere "compassionate, personalized care" to patients in all parts of the world.<sup>17</sup>

In the late 1960s, Dr. Harry Miller initiated the idea of building a hospital to serve the Hong Kong community and advance the philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Dr. Miller, with the help of Ezra Longway and Robert Milne, who were two veteran missionaries, proposed that the Seventh-day Adventist Development Board build a hospital in the current location.

Dr. Chan Shun, the founder and former chair and managing director of Crocodile Garments Limited, donated the first million dollars to this project. More donations soon flooded in, helping complete construction.

The Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Stubbs Road has grown and developed in various specialties through the decades, but it has remained a private, not-for-profit hospital. All revenues come from the provision of patient services.<sup>18</sup>

## Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Tsuen Wan

The only private not-for-profit hospital in Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong, Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Tsuen Wan has been serving its community since 1964. The hospital has been providing outstanding care in family medicine as well as specialist services in cardiology, gynecology, obstetrics, surgical, pediatrics, orthopedics, and urology.<sup>19</sup>

This hospital was also built by Dr. Harry Willis Miller, who secured a land grant from the colonial government. His friend Mr. Tong Ping Yuen, owner of the South seas Textile Factory, donated funds for the construction and establishment of an entire floor, and the government of the United States paid for the necessary equipment.

Although the new hospital was scheduled to be opened in May 1964, a shortage of funds prevented this from taking place. A generous donation from the U. S. Government allowed construction to finally be completed in June 1970.

After a few decades of operations, a new high-rise hospital building was completed by the end of 2015. It allowed the hospital to increase the number of beds from 120 to 470, build new specialist centers and operating rooms, and introduce advanced equipment.<sup>20</sup>

## Hong Kong Adventist College

It is a four-year liberal arts college founded and supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Established in 1903, it has a strong tradition of providing quality education with an emphasis on developing the potential of the whole person.<sup>21</sup>

In 1903, the Church, operating in Guangzhou, founded its first school, which formed the nucleus for the Hong Kong Adventist College. In 1937, the Sino-Japanese War broke out, plunging China into turmoil. To survive, the school was moved to Hong Kong and temporarily operated in Shatin.

In 1942, World War II erupted, bringing the people of Hong Kong under Japanese occupation. As a result, the school reverted to its prior name of "South China Training Institute" and moved back to Mainland China near the town of Laolong in Guangdong province.

With the war's ending, the campus in Clear Water Bay was confiscated by the colonial British army. To continue the long-suspended education work, the school was relocated back to its former site in the district of Tungshan in Guangdong for a year. It was not until 1947 that the school could move back to the Clear Water Bay campus.

In 1958, a strong need was felt for further training opportunities for the Seventh-day Adventist youth in China. The Far Eastern Division of Seventh-day Adventists authorized the South China Island Union Mission to open a college for providing tertiary education.

In 1981, the constituency of the South China Island Union Mission officially adopted the name "Hong Kong Adventist College" to identify the school as an independent entity separated from the secondary program of Sam Yuk Middle School.

Today, Hong Kong Adventist College is considered a member of the sisterhood of almost 4,000 Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities operated all over the world.<sup>22</sup>

## Hong Kong Adventist Academy

Hong Kong Adventist Academy was established in 2011 as a locally licensed, English-language medium private school. Their primary curriculum meets local Hong Kong Education Bureau standards, emphasizing Hong Kong

objectives in subjects like Mathematics and the Chinese language while simultaneously challenging students to meet stringent international standards in courses like English and Science.

Their secondary students enjoy an American-accredited educational program. The Griggs International Academy Secondary Program prepares students to begin their university studies with a diploma that is recognized around the world.<sup>23</sup>

## Chinese Adventist Seminary

The Chinese Adventist Seminary (CAS) grew out of the Religion Department of the Hong Kong Adventist College. It was founded in 2014 and headquartered in Hong Kong. The new tertiary institution trains church pastors, evangelists, health workers, teachers, church institution workers, and church administrators for the Adventist denomination in the Greater China Region and among the global Chinese diaspora. CAS offers college-level training programs from certificates, diplomas to baccalaureate degree programs in theology, church leadership, education, and health ministry.

Griggs University Asia, founded in 2002, was a branch of Griggs University (GU) that offered distance learning in Chinese. When GU was merged with Andrews University in 2014, the distance learning programs of GU Asia became CAS's Distance Learning Division.<sup>24</sup>

## Hong Kong-Macao Conference

On August 14, 1949, the Executive Committee of the China Division voted the establishment of Hong Kong-Macao Mission (abbreviated HKMM, Macao has also been spelled as Macau), headquarters in Hong Kong, to oversee the work in the British colony of Hong Kong and the Portuguese colony of Macao.<sup>25</sup>

It was founded with seven churches and the total membership was 540. The Mission had five departments: Education, Youth Volunteer Evangelism, Family, Literature Evangelism, and Sabbath School.

The population of Hong Kong in 1949 was two million while that of Macao was 190,000. Small though the membership was, HKMM was a spearhead for the mission into mainland China.

Early in 1981, Hong Kong-Macao Mission attained Conference status.<sup>26</sup> On July 11, 1999, it celebrated its 50th anniversary. The total population of Hong Kong and Macao was 6.98 million. The Adventist membership was 3,786 worshipping in 20 churches and five chapels. The Conference also operated five social service centers, four secondary schools, and one primary school. Its other institutions were Signs of the Times Publishing House and Eden health food company.

As of September 2019, the membership of HKMC stands at 4,634. There are 22 churches and 2 chapels.<sup>27</sup>

## List of Executive Officers

Presidents: Eugene Hsu (July 1999-July 2000), James Wu (July 2000-November 2010), David Ng (November 2010-November 2012), Robert Folkenberg, Jr. (November 2012-).

Secretaries: Stanley Ng (July 1999-November 2000), John Ash III (November 2000-November 2004), Terry Tsui (November 2004-April 2009), David Ng (April 2009-November 2010), Howard Fung (November 2011-November 2012), Daniel Jiao (November 2012-).

Treasurers: Paul Cho (July 1999-November 2005), Dan Liu (November 2005-November 2012), Johnny Wong (November 2012-November 2016), Andy Cen (November 2016-).

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