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The mission of ChinaSource is to be a trusted partner and platform for educating the global church on critical issues facing the church and ministries in China, and for connecting Christians inside and outside of China to advance God's kingdom globally.



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Regular readers get a variety of perspectives on current events and church responses in our blog, weekly news roundup ZGBriefs, and ChinaSource Quarterly. Our aim is to bring reliable information that will inspire prayer and collaboration among global Christians.



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COVER PHOTO: The First Chinese Baptist Church, Los Angeles (FCBCLA) located in the New Chinatown neighborhood in early 1950s.
PHOTO BY: FCBC

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BY ANDREW LEE AND SAM GEORGE

The Evolving Tapestry of the Chinese Diaspora



Dr. Sam George



Dr. Andrew Lee

As the directors of the Global Diaspora Institute at Wheaton College, we are delighted to serve as guest editors for another issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* on Chinese diaspora. This journal was birthed at the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center, and we had edited an earlier issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* in December 2020. We thank you, CSQ readers, for your feedback on that issue and we hope that the diaspora will continue to be a regular feature of the journal henceforth. For this issue, we want to acknowledge Dr. Jeanne Wu who worked closely with us in producing this issue.

The contemporary Chinese diaspora is massive and expansive. It spans continents and comes in many shades and forms. Overseas Chinese are highly diverse and weave a rich tapestry of complex histories of migration and patterns of settlements. The faith and practices of people of Chinese descent who have migrated and settled in different parts of the world are

even more composite. The different waves of migration to different destinations over a few centuries have grown into a complex web of relationships among the global Chinese diasporas. Varying ancestral origins and interaction with local cultures over many generations have led to the formation of diverse Chinese communities with distinctive traditions, spirituality, and customs. They have excelled in diverse fields, contributing substantially to their adopted countries while maintaining ties with China and Chinese worldwide. Chinese are so global now that they may claim, as the British Empire did in the past, that the sun never sets on the Chinese diaspora.

The dispersion of Chinese populations will continue to grow in the near future and the missional implications of this are enormous. The recent growth of Christianity in China and the country's political upheavals are pushing a record number to migrate overseas. Many have found new freedom upon leaving their

ancestral homelands and embraced the Christian faith in foreign lands and cultures. They have not only established vibrant Christian churches in all major cities of the world but have also emerged as a major mission force in their places of settlement and among other lands and peoples. The insightful articles from this spring issue of *ChinaSource Quarterly* detail how this is taking place in various contexts around the world.

There is a broad overview of the global Chinese diaspora from Dr. Jeanne Wu. Rev. Henry Lu addresses the recent surge in migration from Hong Kong to the UK and describes the *mission to this diaspora*. In a similar vein, Dr. David Ng reflects on the surge of migrants to Australia from the People's Republic of China and from Hong Kong, creating opportunities for evangelism to the unchurched as well as revitalizing the church with the influx of believers.

Rev. Francis Tam takes stock of *mission through diaspora* in Canada as Chinese believers evangelize Muslims. Dr. Luke Zheng reveals the urgent need for more Chinese workers in his analysis of the pressing situation in Europe. Finally, for the book review, we have chosen a publication that emerged from a recent doctoral dissertation by Dr. Jeanne Wu about Chinese in the United States. ■

Sam George, PhD, lives with his family in the northern suburbs of Chicago and serves as the Director of Global Diaspora Institute at Wheaton College Billy Graham Center near Chicago, USA. He is involved in researching and teaching about diaspora communities and world Christianity and serves as a global catalyst for the Lausanne movement.

Andrew Lee is the Associate Director of the Global Diaspora Institute at Wheaton College Billy Graham Center. He has served at the largest Chinese churches in New York City and Chicago. He has also been a seminary professor at several institutions and has written for both the academic and ministry worlds. He holds a PhD in religion.

Cover Story



The Global Chinese Diaspora Today: Overview and Mission Trends

BY JEANNE WU



According to the 2022 Statistical Yearbook of the Overseas Community Affairs Council of Taiwan, overseas

Chinese (海外華人, Haiwai Huaren), which includes ethnic Chinese (and their descendants) who emigrated from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong number 49.7 million globally.¹ The largest overseas Chinese population is in Asia (34.6 million), followed by the continent of America (about 9.8 million). Compared with the data in 2010, we can see growth in total numbers as well as in every continent (refer to Table 1). Both Europe (from 1.32 to 2.38 million) and Oceania (from 0.95 to 1.77 million) have nearly doubled in overseas Chinese population. However, the most significant growth has been observed in Africa, with an increase from 0.24 to 1.18 million—a surge of nearly 500% in just twelve years.

When studying the Chinese diaspora, we cannot overlook their relationship with their “homeland”—China. Political and economic conditions have made Chinese people move to other countries over the past several centuries. Traditionally, the Chinese diaspora was seen primarily as traders. For example, in the book *Global Diaspora*, Cohen categorizes the traditional Chinese diaspora as a “trade diaspora.”²

Following the “reform and opening up” of the People’s Republic of China in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the economy of China has grown rapidly, and the PRC has since been seen as a “twenty-first-century nation.”³ Consequently, more foreigners have begun to learn the Chinese language, and American high schools have even incorporated Chinese into their foreign language curricula. These changes have impacted the relationship between the Chinese diaspora and China, with some embracing their connection to China, while others have resisted.⁴

NEW ECONOMIC SETTLERS

Since the 1990s, China has intentionally invested in and sought allies with the majority world, including Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, collaborating in economic and political activities. Over the past ten years, since China started the One Belt, One Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013,⁵ the number of migrants from China has increased significantly in Africa and the Middle East. There are now about one million Chinese in Africa⁶ and more than half a million in the Middle East, most of whom live in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE.⁷ The impact of the BRI is reflected by the growing Chinese population in Africa. The massive investment and infrastructure projects that China brought into Africa have also opened doors for Chinese laborers, professionals, and businessmen.⁸ I personally observed the growth of the Chinese community in the Middle East. When I first visited Egypt in 2014, there were only a few Chinese in Cairo. Now there is a district in Cairo that the local people call “Chinatown,” with many Chinese restaurants and shops located on the same street and all the business owners hailing from China. Some of them can speak decent Arabic.

Another example is the UAE. In 2004, “Dragon City,” the largest Chinese goods trading market in the Middle East, was opened in Dubai. The Chinese population in the International City district in Dubai has increased dramatically since 2013. It is reported that there are more than 200,000 Chinese in the UAE with most living in Dubai.⁹ Contract laborers,

| CONTINENT | POPULATION IN 2010 | IN 2022 |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Asia | 29.82 million | 34.62 million |
| America | 7.26 million | 9.77 million |
| Europe | 1.32 million | 2.38 million |
| Oceania | 0.95 million | 1.77 million |
| Africa | 0.24 million | 1.18 million |
| Global | 39.57 million | 49.73 million |

Table 1. Overseas Chinese population in 2010 and 2022



When studying the Chinese diaspora, we cannot overlook their relationship with their “homeland”—China. Political and economic conditions have made Chinese people move to other countries over the past several centuries.





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“TO RUN AWAY”

Right after Thanksgiving 2023, *The New York Times* published an article reporting that “more than 24,000 Chinese citizens have been apprehended crossing into the United States from Mexico in the past year,” and “that is more than in the preceding 10 years combined, according to government data.”¹⁰ This news might be somewhat shocking considering the fact that China has been the world’s second largest economy and perceived as one of the rising great powers for the past ten years. Earlier in 2023, *Christianity Today* also reported the phenomenon of the current “run philosophy” (润学) among Chinese people, i.e., “To run away from China.” The article reflected on the opportunities and challenges this might bring to the Chinese church in the United States.¹¹

A friend of mine became a believer when she studied in Europe and later returned to China and got married there. About five years ago, she and her family came to the States for studies but decided to seek asylum for religious reasons and stay in the US. Although they did not experience direct persecution, “It is simply hard to be

Christians in China,” she commented to me.

Other friends of mine planted a Chinese congregation on the west coast of the US nearly ten years ago. A few months ago, I visited them right after their two-month long trip to China. It was their first homecoming after the pandemic. I asked them if they observed whether or not more Chinese people would like to immigrate to other countries. They told me that life in China is quite comfortable and convenient nowadays due to its advanced technology. For example, people can use WeChat Pay or Ali Pay to buy things both online and offline and hardly need to use cash in their daily lives. On the other hand, the three-year fight against the pandemic indeed left a toll on the economy of China, and

they are still recovering from it. My friends’ conclusion was that those who are dissatisfied with the politics and the current government will try to leave for other countries.

KEY POLITICAL EVENTS AND MISSION TRENDS

We see clearly how the political situation in the Chinese “homeland” has impacted Chinese diaspora missions. Several key political decisions made by the Chinese government recently have caused a major shift affecting Chinese diaspora missions. The first one is the BRI in 2013. It has opened the door for Christian Chinese contractors and businessmen in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa to become a potential mission force. One example is Business as Mission (BAM), which can serve in Creative Access Nations (CAN) in South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

The second significant political decision is the new Regulation on Religious Affairs, which was introduced in 2018. My previous research showed that China was the top destination for short-term mission teams from Chinese churches in the United States in the past.¹² However, the door to China has been closed in recent years since the new Regulation on Religious Affairs began to be enforced in February 2018.¹³ Since then, a new wave of persecutions and missionary expulsions has taken place. Thus, many Chinese churches in the



We see clearly how the political situation in the Chinese “homeland” has impacted Chinese diaspora missions. Several key political decisions made by the Chinese government recently have caused a major shift affecting Chinese diaspora missions.



diaspora, including my home church in the US, have been searching for new fields to continue their mission mandate and have started to reach out to non-Chinese unreached people groups. For example, some Chinese churches in the States have begun to send out short-term mission teams to the Middle East to serve refugees in recent years. I personally have observed and researched this recent short-term mission movement by the Chinese diaspora to the Middle East.¹⁴

The third political move affecting the Chinese diaspora is the passing of the Hong Kong National Security Law in 2020, following the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests. Since then, Hong Kong has been perceived as losing its previous status. In response to this change, the UK initiated a new passport program for British Nationals Overseas (BNO) passport holders since January 2021. The outcome has been a massive Hong Kong emigration wave since 2021. Chinese churches in the UK and in several other Western countries have been seeking to respond to this influx of new Hong Kong immigrants ever since.¹⁵ All these political developments in China have significantly impacted the mission work of the Chinese diaspora.

We might arguably add a fourth and fifth events related to geopolitics: The global pandemic and the recent Taiwan-China tension. The COVID-19 global pandemic during 2020–2022 originated in China and led to the closing of China’s border for three years. In addition to religious restrictions, China being physically closed made the Chinese diaspora mission to China nearly impossible. As a result, there was a shift in the mission strategy and destinations of Chinese diaspora churches.¹⁶ The global pandemic also exacerbated the mistrust between China and the US, straining relations.

Furthermore, the recent increase in tension between Taiwan and China has impacted the flow of immigrants and has caused divisions among overseas Chinese communities. Historically, the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis (during the year of the



Anglican Chinese Mission Church of the Epiphany in Melbourne, Australia. Founded in 1902.

first presidential election in Taiwan) caused a large wave of emigration from Taiwan. A similar scenario occurred in 2023 before the 2024 presidential election in Taiwan

but on a smaller scale. With the newly elected Taiwan President Lai and his pro-sovereignty party, this tension may continue in the coming years.

“
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EVALUATION AND REFLECTIONS

Missiologists are still observing and evaluating the effects and outcomes of China's rise and the related geopolitical changes. China's One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI) has opened doors for Chinese Christians to enter so-called

Creative Access Nations. More Chinese Christians are responding to the call of the Great Commission and "China's Mission" (宣教的中國). However, BRI could be a double-edged sword since locals might feel as though the Chinese are taking advantage of poorer countries by developing their infrastructure in exchange

for their natural resources, resembling a new form of colonialism. Chinese Christians should be cautious about utilizing the economic and political power of China as a means of mission, lest they might be prone to repeat the same mistakes that Western missionaries made during the colonial era.

While the new religious law in China has closed many doors of mission to China for cross-cultural kingdom workers, it also has forced mission organizations to rethink strategically about missions to China. Moreover, it has stimulated many Chinese Christians in diaspora to look further afield and reach beyond their own kinsmen.

On the other hand, while the new religious law in China has closed many doors of mission to China for cross-cultural kingdom workers, it also has forced mission organizations to rethink strategically about missions to China. Moreover, it has stimulated many Chinese Christians in diaspora to look further afield and reach beyond their own kinsmen.¹⁷ In addition, the recent exodus of Hong Kong Chinese has infused new life into the Chinese churches in diaspora and inspires a new movement of "mission through Chinese diaspora" among Chinese churches in the UK, Canada, and other Western countries.¹⁸ In all kinds of circumstances, the Lord is working.

CONCLUSION

There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Our Lord is the lord of history, and everything happens according to his plan. The recent political developments in and related to China have impacted the movement and dynamics of the global

Chinese diaspora. They have closed some doors for mission while opening others. Although there are uncertainties and possibly apprehension about the future, we have also seen opportunities opening at the same time, and these are not without their challenges. As Paul exhorts us, "Preach the word; be ready in season

and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). May we be faithful and respond to the mission that the Lord entrusts to us. ■

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 - ² Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.
 - ³ Fred E. Jandt, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007), 87, 93.
 - ⁴ David Parker, "Going with the Flow?: Reflections on Recent Chinese Diaspora Studies," *Diaspora* 14, no. 2/3 (2009): 416-17.
 - ⁵ "The Belt and Road Initiative," Chinese State website, accessed February 15, 2024, <http://english.www.gov.cn/beltAndRoad/>.
 - ⁶ 周海金, 〈在非华人生存状况及其与当地族群关系〉, 《侨务工作研究》, no. 2 (2014), accessed February 15, 2024, <http://qwgzjy.gqb.gov.cn/hwzh/177/2453.shtml>.
 - ⁷ 〈蓝皮书：阿联酋是中东地区中国移民增长最快的国家〉, *China News*, January 6, 2017, accessed February 15, 2024, <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/m/hr/2017/01-06/8116463.shtml>.
 - ⁸ See Michael Hicks, "China and Africa—An Introduction," *ChinaSource Quarterly*, Autumn 2019, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/china-and-africa-an-introduction/>.
 - ⁹ See note 7 above.
 - ¹⁰ Eileen Sullivan, "Growing Numbers of Chinese Migrants Are Crossing the Southern Border," *New York Times*, November 24, 2023, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/us/politics/china-migrants-us-border.html>.
 - ¹¹ Sean Cheng, "The 'Route Runners' Are Coming to America. Are Chinese Churches Ready?" *Christianity Today*, May 3, 2023, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/april-web-only/fleeing-china-immigration-chinese-church-mission.html>.
 - ¹² Jeanne Wu, *Mission through Diaspora: The Case of the Chinese Church in the USA* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2016), 121–126.
 - ¹³ Regulation on Religious Affairs (2017 Revision), accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/religious-affairs-regulations-2017/>.
 - ¹⁴ Jeanne Wu, "Humanitarian Tours as Short-Term Mission: A New Trend in a Time of Middle Eastern Refugee Crisis," *Journal of EMS* (Vol. 1 No. 1 2021), 65-82.
 - ¹⁵ Stefani McDade, "560 UK Churches Ready to Welcome Hong Kong Wave," *Christianity Today*, February 19, 2021, accessed November 22, 2024, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/february/hong-kong-ready-church-welcome-uk-migration.html>.
 - ¹⁶ For example, using online platform for training and holding conferences.
 - ¹⁷ Jeanne Wu, "Humanitarian Tours as Short-Term Mission: A New Trend in a Time of Middle Eastern Refugee Crisis." *Journal of Evangelical Missiological Society* 1, no. 1 (2021): 72, 73, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.journal-ems.org/index.php/home/issue/view/1>.
 - ¹⁷ Isabel Ong, "First Study of Chinese Churches in Britain Examines Boom and Possible Bust," *Christianity Today*, October 8, 2022, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2022/october/british-chinese-survey-hong-kong-churches.html>.



Jeanne Wu, PhD (TEDS), has been involved in ministries and research related to Chinese diaspora since 2003, including in Europe, US, and recently the Middle East. She and her husband have served in the Middle East since 2015. Besides frontline ministry she is also active in researching, consulting, writing, teaching, and training in both English and Chinese.

United Kingdom



Image: Markus Winkler | UnSplash

Partnership to Welcome Hong Kong Newcomers

BY HENRY LU

In January 2021, the British government began to provide Hong Kong residents, who are holders of British National Overseas (BNO) passports, with a special route to allow them and their immediate families to immigrate to the UK and obtain British citizenship after five years. The government estimated that in the next few years some 300,000 Hong Kong residents may immigrate to the UK.

As a Chinese mission organization based in Milton Keynes, UK, Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM) responded quickly by working with Christian leaders, refugee charities, and other mission

agencies to establish the UKHK platform and ukhk.org website to encourage local churches in a joint effort to welcome new immigrants from Hong Kong. More than 1,300 local churches have signed up to show their willingness to open the doors of their churches to receive and help Hong Kong newcomers who have settled in their communities.

At the same time, COCM also partnered with Chinese churches up and down the UK to pool resources together to reach out and welcome Hong Kong families moving into different parts of the UK. We are very thankful to see that Chinese and British churches are a united family in the Lord, welcoming new immigrants, caring for

them, and witnessing for Christ.

Since 2021, COCM has been involved in the projects of UKHK to help new immigrants from Hong Kong settle in the UK. Here are some of the projects we have been involved in together with hundreds of churches in the UK:

- **WELCOME MAGAZINE:**

This magazine introduces interesting facts and information about life and culture in the UK. Twenty thousand copies were printed; some were given to schools and churches, while others were distributed to families with children at the Friendship Festivals organized in cities around the UK.

- **WELCOME COURSE:**

Hong Kong newcomers were invited to join Christian churches in their neighborhoods to watch the Welcome Course videos introducing the endearing (but also possibly peculiar) aspects of British life and culture. The course has six sessions: Welcome to the UK, Understanding British Culture, Making Friends, Wellbeing, Problem Solving, and Citizenship.

- **FRIENDSHIP FESTIVALS:**

Festivals were organized in major UK cities to welcome Hong Kong newcomers. These events were mostly held in spacious outdoor areas with large performance stages featuring live music and performances, as well as offering family activities such as games, face-painting, bouncy castles, and football. Various organizations and charities, including Chinese churches and local churches, participated along with vendors providing a variety of Chinese food and snacks, as well as services for physical and mental wellbeing. Many local council representatives were present to welcome their new neighbors from Hong Kong. In September 2022, figures published by the British government showed that nearly 150,000 BNO visas had been granted to eligible Hong Kong residents, and more than 130,000 Hong Kong immigrants had arrived in the UK.

But who are these 130,000 Hong Kong newcomers who have settled in the UK? A survey in July 2022 by UKHK (ukhk.org) gives us a broad picture of the group. The survey results show that most of the Hong Kong newcomers are from the 30-60 age group and are parents with young children. A smaller percentage of people are either elderly (older than 70) or single adults from the 21-30 age group. The Hong Kong newcomers are mostly well-educated with 75.4% of the survey respondents holding college, university, or postgraduate degrees. They have solid assets brought from Hong Kong but many

still need to find jobs in the UK. More than 80% of them plan to live permanently in the UK, and 31.3% of the respondents have already bought property in the UK.

The UKHK survey results show that among the BNO Hong Kong newcomers in the UK, 41.8% are Christians (34.6% Protestant and 7.2% Catholic). This percentage is significantly higher than the 16% of Christians in Hong Kong as of 2020 (including Protestants and Catholics).

Chinese churches and local churches in the UK are working hard to welcome and shepherd the vast number of Christians from Hong Kong as soon as possible, giving them opportunities to serve, and mobilizing them to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ to non-believing Hong Kong newcomers and others in the Chinese diaspora.

We have observed the following trends:

- Attendance in existing Cantonese churches has doubled or tripled. Some churches have added more Sunday services or moved to larger meeting venues. Extra manpower is needed to expand various ministries, including children and youth ministries.
- Local British churches are involved in welcoming BNOs settling in their

areas, resulting in the need for some churches to set up Cantonese fellowship groups or even Cantonese Sunday services in addition to their regular worship services in English.

- A wave of new Cantonese church plants is sweeping across the UK.

The growth of Chinese churches in the UK has increased by 20% in the past three years. The total number of Chinese churches grew from below 170 to over 200. Hong Kong churches and Christian organizations are eager to support the BNOs who have immigrated to the UK. Many of these churches and organizations have been actively setting up bases in the UK to bring over their resources and provide training for the churches here. Chinese churches in North America are also aware of the needs of BNO immigrants in the UK. Many of them have sent short-term mission teams to go and see the current development and explore ways to offer new church plants human and financial support.

Most of the Hong Kong newcomers are families with primary school-aged children and teenagers; hence, children and youth ministries are vital to churches. It is a huge challenge for churches to care for two language groups as the second and third generations who are born and raised in the UK prefer to worship in English whereas

“
We are exploring creative ways for Cantonese-speaking and English-speaking ministry teams to collaborate in supporting the newly arrived Hong Kong families settle in a spiritual home where they feel they can belong in the UK.
”

the newly arrived young people might prefer to worship in Cantonese. The language barrier and cultural differences between the newly arrived Hong Kong youths and the locally born Chinese have made it difficult for the two groups to integrate, posing a serious problem for churches to tackle. Some parents might choose to attend local English-speaking churches with better youth ministries to meet the needs of their teenage children, while other families might stop attending church completely if their children are not cared for. We are exploring creative ways for Cantonese-speaking and English-speaking ministry teams to collaborate in supporting the newly arrived Hong Kong families settle in a spiritual home where they feel they can belong in the UK.

With the large influx of Hong Kong immigrant families to the UK, many Chinese churches saw their youth groups suddenly multiply, and the language of many youth ministries change from English to bilingual English and Cantonese. COCM's English Ministry team and Cantonese Ministry team had to work more closely than before, complementing and supporting each other in doing youth ministry. The huge challenge the ministry faced was helping the Cantonese-speaking new immigrant youths find a sense of belonging, while not neglecting the needs of the locally born next generation of Chinese, whose native language is English.

Before the pandemic, there had always

been a shortage of ministry workers among the Chinese churches in the UK. The average Chinese church has very limited resources and few full-time pastoral workers. Some churches must rely on outside support through various partnerships and collaboration with other Chinese churches and organizations. COCM missionary workers regularly provide support to many Chinese churches in different capacities.

It is exciting to see that there are many pastors and ministry workers among the BNO newcomers in the UK. They are part of this wave of immigration, and many come with a sense of calling to serve the Chinese diaspora in the UK. There are some tough challenges these new pastors must overcome. Multilingual skills are a must for pastoral workers serving in the UK, except for those who pastor a church solely for newly arrived Hong Kong people. Cantonese-speaking pastors in the UK will need to learn Mandarin and English. Another challenge is to achieve unity among congregations speaking different languages and believers coming from different backgrounds: between Chinese old immigrants and Hong Kong newcomers.

COCM provides a platform to connect the newly arrived pastoral workers with Chinese churches in the UK and Europe. We invite some of the pastors who are interested in working with COCM to become volunteer COCM associates. We arrange for them to engage with



Entrance to London's Chinatown

Image: Boris Stroujko | Adobe Stock

“
The huge challenge the ministry faced was helping the Cantonese-speaking new immigrant youths find a sense of belonging, while not neglecting the needs of the locally-born next generation of Chinese, whose native language is English.
”



Cambridge Chinese Christian Church



Chinese Church in London

suitable Chinese churches to take part in our ministry so they can get to know the congregation in a Chinese church. At the same time, we work with Chinese churches to introduce them to these new ministry workers and help match churches with suitable pastors.

COCM has been hosting an annual Oasis pastoral retreat to provide a platform to connect pastors and ministry workers from Chinese diaspora churches in the UK. In February 2021, we organized an online Pastoral Consultation, inviting pastors who had been looking after new HK immigrants to share their insights and experiences and brainstorming with Chinese church leaders on how to walk alongside these new HK immigrants to help them adapt to their new environment and integrate into UK society.

In 2023, the Oasis Pastoral Staff Retreat hosted more than a hundred pastors, including those serving in the Cantonese and Mandarin congregations from various Chinese churches. We invited key leaders from the Evangelical Alliance, Global Connections, and Lausanne Europe to

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It was eye opening to learn how the UK and Europe have become mission fields with great opportunities for diaspora churches to participate in world missions here on our doorsteps.
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share messages on the current situation of diaspora groups from various ethnicities and the great opportunities for diaspora churches to participate in global missions right here in the UK. It was eye opening to learn how the UK and Europe have become mission fields with great opportunities for diaspora churches to participate in world missions here on our doorsteps.

We pray to the Lord that the fruitful partnership among different churches to

welcome Hong Kong newcomers will expand further to the mobilization of Chinese believers to participate in global mission locally in the UK. 🇬🇧

LEARN MORE



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Henry Lu was born in Xian, China. His spiritual journey began at a young age, with a simple prayer with a house church sister in China. He then went through many years of seeking and growing, spanning three continents. After a teaching career where he engaged with university students and served in local Chinese churches in the USA as a lay leader, Henry and his family moved to the UK in 2007 to join Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM). Since then, Henry and the COCM team have been focusing on reaching out to the Chinese diaspora with the gospel, equipping them, and further encouraging Chinese Christians to be a blessing to the local communities and beyond. He holds a master's degree in mission leadership from All Nations and is currently COCM General Director.



Image: Michell Luo | Unsplash

Recent Chinese Migration Trends in Australia

BY DAVID NG

For over a century, Chinese individuals from the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan have established vibrant communities in Australia. As of 2021, the Chinese diaspora in Australia numbers 1.4 million, accounting for 5.5% of the population,¹ a figure that continues to rise.

This article focuses on the recent trends in Chinese migration in Australia, with special attention on the steady growth of the PRC migrant community, the largest among the Chinese group. Additionally, we note a significant uptick in migration from Hong Kong since 2020. The article concludes with insights into the challenges and opportunities this presents for the church in Australia today.

1. RECENT MIGRATION TRENDS FROM THE PRC

Migration from the PRC to Australia has continued to increase steadily in recent years. At the end of June 2021, 595,630 Chinese-born people were living in Australia, 53.7% more than the figure on June 30, 2011 (387,420). This makes the Chinese-born population the third-largest migrant community in Australia after the United Kingdom and India.

They constitute 7.9% of Australia's overseas-born population and 2.3% of the total population. The median age of permanent migrants is 39.7, and more women are migrating than men (56% women, 44% men). Between 2018–19 and 2022–23, approximately 20,000 permanent migration places were granted each year to those from mainland China (Table 1).²

In addition to permanent migrants, many Mainland Chinese enter Australia as temporary migrants, primarily as visitors or

students. Students from the PRC had been the largest source country for student visa grants from 2009–10 until they were surpassed by India in 2022–23, despite a record 98,506 PRC student visas granted that year. (Table 1).³

2. RECENT HONG KONG MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA: A TRIPLING OF PERMANENT MIGRATION

Increased migration from Hong Kong has been particularly noteworthy in recent years, especially since 2020. The anti-extradition law social protests in 2019 and the introduction of the National Security Law in mid-2020 are major reasons.⁴ Since then, Australia, along with other countries such as the UK and Canada, has offered new immigration pathways for migrants from Hong Kong to settle permanently. As a result, there has been a marked rise in the number of Hong Kong migrants in Australia. This marked increase resulted in Hong Kong being listed as eighth in the countries providing the greatest number of permanent migrants to Australia in 2021–22.⁵

By the end of June 2021, 104,990 people born in Hong Kong were residing in

Australia, a 22.1% increase from the figure on June 30, 2011 (85,990). This makes the Hong Kong-born population the fifteenth largest migrant community in Australia. They constitute 1.4% of Australia’s overseas-born population and 0.4% of the total population. The median age of permanent migrants is 43.3 with more women migrating than men (52.4% women, 47.6% men).⁶

From 2020–21 onwards, the number of permanent migration places granted to Hong Kong nationals has markedly increased, particularly in the “business innovation and investment” and global talent (independent) categories.⁷ Between 2019–20 and 2020–21, the number of permanent migrants approximately tripled from 1,391 to 4,312 places granted.⁸ This trend continued in 2021–22 with 4,237 places granted. However, the actual size of the permanent migration intake from China remains much larger than that from Hong Kong (Table 1).

In terms of temporary migration, the highest numbers came from visitor and student visas. Student visas granted between 2018–2022 have shown no marked increase each year, with approximately 4,000 student visas

being granted each year from Hong Kong. Recently, however, some mature migrants (aged 35 years and over) have also been opting for the study visa route after Australia introduced temporary graduate visas, which allow eligibility for permanent residency after living in the country for three to four years.⁹

Temporary migrants (visitors) to Australia from Hong Kong (and the PRC) have decreased significantly since 2017–19, mainly due to the impact of border closures in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Australia. However, there are indications that these numbers are beginning to show signs of recovery. For example, see the number of temporary migrants from the PRC in Table 1. The Department of Home Affairs reported general increases in the number of permanent places and temporary visas granted in 2022–23, which “was the first full financial year for the borders to be fully open to international travelers since 2018–19.”¹⁰

THE GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

Most permanent and temporary Chinese migrants, from both the PRC and Hong Kong, settle in either New South Wales or Victoria (45% and 31% respectively) but significant numbers are still to be found in other states (Table 2). Suburbs with a high concentration of Chinese migrants in Sydney include Chatswood, Burwood, and Hurstville, and Box Hill in Melbourne. Increasing numbers of PRC and HK migrants have also been found in regional Australia in recent years.¹²

THE REASONS

Why do migrants choose Australia over other countries? While places such as the United Kingdom continue to be attractive to many Hong Kong migrants due to their historic ties, Australia has become a preferred destination. Migrants from Hong Kong cite geographical proximity and a time zone similar to HK (unlike Canada or the UK), facilitating easier contact with family and friends. Additional factors that

| PERMANENT MIGRANTS | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| PRC | 24,282 | 18,857 | 22,207 | 18,240 | 23,936 |
| Hong Kong | 1,647 | 1,391 | 4,312 | 4,237 | 4,033 |
| TEMPORARY MIGRANTS | | | | | |
| PRC (Total) | 1,057,896 | 637,509 | 106,267 | 111,512 | |
| PRC (Visitors) | 938,136 | 544,817 | 38,844 | 44,348 | 271,550 |
| PRC (Students) | 84,819 | 67,841 | 55,157 | 53,629 | 98,506 |
| Hong Kong (Total) | 185,510 | 131,639 | 6,370 | 16,544 | 78,645 |
| Hong Kong (Visitor) | 177,835 | 124,438 | 1,111 | 9,584 | 72,301 |
| Hong Kong (Students) | 4,374 | 4,558 | 3,838 | 4,290 | 6,344 |

Table 1: Permanent and Temporary (visitor and student) visas granted since 2018–19¹¹

| POPULATION CENSUS 2021 (%) | New South Wales | Victoria | Queensland | South Australia | Western Australia | Tasmania | Northern Territory | Australian Capital Territory |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| PRC-born | 45 | 31 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| HK-born | 48 | 25 | 13 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

Table 2: Geographic Distribution of PRC-Born and HK-Born Australian migrants by Australian States and Territories (2021 census)¹³

make Australia appealing include its pleasant climate, robust social welfare system, English-speaking environment with a comparatively less stressful education system, abundant career opportunities, and a sense of political safety, especially when compared to other potential destinations like Taiwan.¹⁴

3. CHINESE MIGRATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Whether from the PRC, Hong Kong, or elsewhere, most Chinese migrants who have settled in Australia view it as an attractive place to live, work and study. According to the Lowry Institute report, “2023: Being Chinese in Australia,”¹⁵ most Chinese-Australians say that Australia is a good place to live, with three-quarters

feeling a moderate or strong sense of belonging (even across English, Mandarin, and Cantonese language groups).¹⁶

Since 2020, there has been a gradual decrease in Chinese-Australians experiencing physical threats or attacks because of their Chinese heritage or being subjected to offensive names.¹⁷ The report also indicates that while there is a difference in opinion on political issues such as Australia’s alliance relationships and the sense of connection to China, Chinese-Australians are not as suspicious of China and President Xi as the broader Australian population.¹⁸ Australia will continue to attract Chinese migrants and according to recent trends, the number of Chinese-Australians will continue to grow. This provides many ongoing challenges and opportunities for the church.

The migration of Chinese into Australia provides challenges and opportunities for the church to be intentional in *reaching out* to those who feel unsettled with the love of Christ in word and deed. It is also an opportunity for the *revitalization* of churches. In conversation with Cantonese-speaking pastors in Melbourne whose congregations were declining a few years ago, a number said that they received many Christian migrants who are now serving actively in the church, including in outreach. It is also an opportunity for reconciliation as Christians from the PRC and Hong Kong often worship alongside one another and serve in ministry teams together. These are great challenges but also God-given opportunities for us to embrace so we can learn, grow, and unite in serving his purposes in the world. 🇺🇸



It is also an opportunity for reconciliation as Christians from the PRC and Hong Kong often worship alongside one another and serve in ministry teams together. These are great challenges but also God-given opportunities for us to embrace so we can learn, grow, and unite in serving his purposes in the world.



¹ “Cultural Diversity of Australia,” Australian Bureau of Statistics, September 9, 2022, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/cultural-diversity-australia>.

² “Permanent Migration from China,” Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles/profiles/peoples-republic-of-china>.

- ³ "Australia's Migration Trends 2021–22 Highlights," Data Services Branch, Department of Home Affairs, p. 15, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2021-22.pdf>.
- ⁴ For a consideration of other factors, see for example, Yuk Wah Chan and Yvette To, "In Search of a Greener Pasture? Post-2019 Migrations from Hong Kong," *American Behavioral Scientist* (2023), 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642231194300>.
- ⁵ "Country Profiles List," Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles/profiles>. The PRC ranked second and India first in 2021–22.
- ⁶ Country Profile—Hong Kong (SAR of the PRC) in "Permanent Migration from Hong Kong (SAR of China)," Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles/profiles/hong-kong>.
- ⁷ "Permanent Migration from Hong Kong (SAR of China)," Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles/profiles/hong-kong>. The PRC and Hong Kong were the top two nationalities of all business innovation and investment visas in 2022–23 with 2,519 and 691 places respectively. "Australian Migration Trends, 2022–23," Data Services Branch, Department of Home Affairs, p. 8, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2022-23.pdf>.
- ⁸ Edmund Tadros, "Hong Kong Exodus Brings Thousands to Australia," *The Australian Financial Review*, August 19, 2022, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.afr.com/companies/professional-services/hong-kong-exodus-brings-thousands-to-australia-20220721-p5b3ix>.
- ⁹ William Yiu, "Australia's Migration Pathway for Hongkongers Spurs Sharp Rise in Numbers Studying There, Including Mature Students," *South China Morning Post*, September 10, 2023, accessed February 14, 2024, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3234010/australias-migration-pathway-hongkongers-spurs-sharp-rise-numbers-studying-there-including-mature?campaign=3234010&module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article.
- ¹⁰ "Australia's Migration Trends, 2022–23," Data Services Branch, Department of Home Affairs, p. 3, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2022-23.pdf>.
- ¹¹ 2022–23 figures obtained from the Department of Home Affairs in Australia by request. 2022–23 figures for Mainland China in the table were obtained from "Australia's Migration Trends, 2022–23," Data Services Branch, Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2022-23.pdf>.
- ¹² "Permanent Migration from China," Department of Home Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-statistics/statistics/country-profiles/profiles/peoples-republic-of-china>. Also "Permanent Migration from Hong Kong (SAR of China)" Department of Home Affairs, see note 6 above. In addition, "Australia's Migration Trends 2022–23," Data Services Branch, Department of Home Affairs, p. 6, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/migration-trends-2022-23.pdf>.
- ¹³ The Australian States and Territories referred to in this table are: NSW (New South Wales), Vic (Victoria), Qld (Queensland), SA (South Australia), WA (Western Australia), Tas (Tasmania), NT (Northern Territory), and ACT (Australian Capital Territory).
- ¹⁴ Yao-Tai Li and Bin-Jou Liao, "An 'Unsettling' Journey? Hong Kong's Exodus to Taiwan and Australia After the 2019 Protests," *American Behavioral Scientist* (2023), 11–13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642231192025>.
- ¹⁵ Jennifer Hsu, "Being Chinese in Australia," Lowy Institute Poll, April 2023, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/chinese-communities/report>. In this study, when Hsu uses the term "Chinese-Australian" she is referring to "Australian citizens, permanent residents, or long-term visa holders who self-identified as having Chinese ancestry. It should be noted that when asked, not all respondents identified as 'Chinese-Australian.' Others preferred to be identified as 'Chinese,' 'Australian,' or 'Australian-Chinese'" (p. 5). This report was the result of a national survey of 1,200 adults in Australia who self-identified as of Chinese heritage (p. 39). However, this study also tried to avoid over-representation of "younger, highly acculturated, second-generation respondents" (p. 39). A high proportion chose to compete in a language other than English, with 56.5% selecting simplified Chinese, 8.6% selecting traditional Chinese, and 34.9% completing the survey in English (p. 39).
- ¹⁶ Hsu, "Being Chinese in Australia," pp. 4, 10.
- ¹⁷ Hsu, "Being Chinese in Australia," p. 12.
- ¹⁸ Hsu, "Being Chinese in Australia," p. 4.



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Image: Sabrina | Adobe Stock

The Chinese Diaspora and Loving Muslims in Canada

BY FRANCIS TAM

The Chinese diaspora in Canada, marked by a rich history of migration and settlement, reflects a tapestry of resilience, cultural adaptation, and integration. The genesis of this diaspora can be traced back to the nineteenth century, primarily driven by economic opportunities and later by political upheavals in China. Over the decades, the Chinese community in Canada has evolved, witnessing significant shifts in immigration policies, societal attitudes, and the socio-economic landscape.

During the early part of the twentieth century, Chinese immigrants encountered significant challenges, including discriminatory policies like the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Head Tax. These policies profoundly impacted the early Chinese immigrants who came to Canada. However, despite these obstacles, the Chinese diaspora has thrived and significantly contributed to Canada's cultural, economic, and social fabric. From the 1960s onward, many Chinese churches have been established in large and small cities across Canada.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, recent socio-political developments in Hong Kong have led to an increase in

outmigration to Canada. Due to the implementation of the National Security Law, economic stagnation, and religious freedom concerns, many Hong Kong residents are seeking better opportunities and security in Canada. This recent influx is evident through the substantial increase in Cantonese-speaking congregations across Canada, adding another layer of complexity to the Chinese diaspora. These immigrants bring unique perspectives shaped by their experiences in a region undergoing rapid political change.

Today, the Chinese diaspora community is a testament to the enduring spirit of perseverance and the continuous pursuit of integration and identity within the

Canadian mosaic. The evolving narrative of the Chinese diaspora in Canada is crucial in understanding their current interactions with other immigrant communities, particularly Muslims. The shared experiences of migration, adaptation, and the quest for identity form a common ground for dialogue and mutual understanding. This historical context sets the stage for exploring the dynamics of intercultural engagement within the diaspora, particularly in Christian and Muslim relations.

Canadian Muslims live in Ontario, followed by Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia. As for the Chinese, most of them live in Ontario, followed by British Columbia and Alberta. The two diaspora communities have both population and geographical proximity, making building relationships easier.

The 2019 General Survey by the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) Canada reported over 400 Chinese churches in Canada. In contrast,

knowledge, can create barriers to effective engagement. For instance, differences in religious practices, dietary restrictions, and perspectives on social issues can lead to misconceptions and stereotyping.

Developing effective strategies for ministry and engagement between the Chinese churches and Muslims in Canada is crucial. The 2009 Diaspora Missiology Seoul Declaration underscores the importance of adopting a missiological approach sensitive to diaspora communities' cultural and religious contexts. This involves creating spaces for dialogue, fostering mutual respect, and participating in joint community initiatives.

The global surge in migration presents a significant opportunity for Chinese churches to engage in diaspora missiology, a strategic approach to God's mission among people living outside their place of origin. This approach involves adapting to the changing dynamics of global migration, focusing on reaching diverse and scattered populations everywhere. Local churches are crucial in offering practical support and relationship-building within their communities, especially in urban and multicultural contexts. This strategy complements traditional missions and calls for innovative, flexible methods to minister to and integrate migrants effectively, reflecting the role of the Chinese churches in God's redemptive plan in a borderless world.

In alignment with God's sacrificial love, the primary strategy for the Chinese churches in Canada should be cultivating an ethos of love and acceptance towards the Muslim diaspora. This approach begins with fostering a deep understanding and respect for Islamic beliefs and cultural practices. Churches may initiate interfaith dialogues, cultural exchange programs, and joint community service projects. These activities demonstrate Christian love in action and encourage mutual learning and understanding, laying a foundation for lasting relationships and meaningful community impact.

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CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING WITH MUSLIMS

The 2021 Canadian Census reveals that the Chinese population in Canada is 1.7 million, representing 4.7% of the total population. Most of the Chinese community (71.7%) reported no religious affiliation, with a diverse range of languages spoken, including Mandarin and Cantonese. On the other hand, the Muslim population in Canada has more than doubled in the last 20 years, reaching nearly 1.8 million or 4.9% of the population in 2021. This comparative growth reflects the diverse ethnocultural and religious landscape of Canada. Most

as of 2023, the Arabic Bible Outreach Ministry lists just over 20 Arabic-speaking churches in the country. This indicates a significant difference in the outreach and establishment of churches within these communities, despite having a comparable number of immigrants in Canada. This suggests potential for greater outreach efforts by the Arabic-speaking churches. Moreover, Chinese churches can offer helping hands under the Great Commission mandate!

Engaging with Muslims presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Chinese Christian diaspora in Canada. Cultural and religious differences, often caused by misunderstandings and a lack of

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Local churches are crucial in offering practical support and relationship-building within their communities, especially in urban and multicultural contexts.

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Additionally, these efforts must be grounded in prayer and guided by a deep understanding of Christian and Islamic teachings. This ensures that the engagement is respectful, informed, and aligned with the principles of Christian witness.

LOVING MUSLIMS TOGETHER

Loving Muslims Together (LMT) is a Canadian Christian initiative by Outreach Canada that aims to create meaningful connections between Christians and the Muslim community. The fundamental principle of LMT is that God's love, as demonstrated through Jesus Christ, includes Muslims. LMT focuses on the 1.8 million Muslim residents in Canada and offers support to the Canadian church to effectively engage with Muslims through various methods. LMT mobilizes prayer and action, nurtures relationships and collaboration, connects individuals to training and resources, inspires outreach and discipleship, and encourages Christians to show love and understanding towards Muslims collectively. The initiative is made up of diverse local networks and prayer groups across Canada that are dedicated to the spiritual journey and well-being of Muslims in the country.

This article presents the mission partnership between CCCOWE Canada and Outreach Canada as a case study. Starting in 2023, the partnership organizes a monthly prayer initiative, "Loving Muslims Together," to foster cultural understanding and compassion

between Chinese evangelical churches in Canada and the Muslim community. This collaboration includes organizing events and prayer meetings to equip and mobilize Chinese churches for effective cross-cultural gospel ministries.

One of the critical aspects of this partnership is the emphasis on praying for the Muslim community during significant Islamic events, such as Ramadan. The initiative encourages Christians to pray for Muslims, focusing on mercy, forgiveness, and salvation themes, especially during important Islamic observances like the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*), which commemorates the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad.

The partnership also includes special events like prayer and learning sessions. These sessions allow members of the Chinese evangelical community to learn more about Islam and the Muslim community in Canada. For instance, they have organized events where individuals can hear testimonies from former Muslims who have converted to Christianity, and from Christian leaders who have experience engaging with Muslim communities.

Engaging with Muslim friends during the Christmas season can create an opportunity to share the core values of Advent—hope, peace, joy, and love—essential to celebrating Jesus Christ's birth. This time can be utilized to invite Muslims to participate in Christmas activities, fostering mutual understanding and respect between different faith communities. Some key strategies that can be used include inviting Muslim friends to church Christmas celebrations to gain a biblical perspective of the festival, organizing Advent dinners with halal options to discuss the gospel, giving symbolic gifts such as poinsettias or food baskets to initiate deeper conversations about Christianity, and sharing scripture calendars in various languages as a culturally sensitive way to share the

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This collaboration will enhance the understanding of the Muslim faith among Chinese churches, foster a spirit of love and compassion towards Muslim neighbors, and provide essential tools and resources for effective cross-cultural ministry.



gospel. These activities are not just about festive celebrations; they are meaningful ways to build bridges and foster strong relationships between faiths.

The partnership between Chinese churches in Canada and other groups for local cross-cultural missions promises significant benefits. This collaboration will enhance the understanding of the Muslim faith among Chinese churches, foster a spirit of love and compassion towards

Muslim neighbors, and provide essential tools and resources for effective cross-cultural ministry. Such joint efforts will strengthen community ties and promote mutual understanding among diverse cultural and religious groups in Canada.

CONCLUSION

This exploration of the Chinese diaspora in Canada, particularly in their engagement with the Muslim community, underscores

the significance of intercultural dialogue and understanding. Looking forward, the Chinese churches in Canada are poised to play a vital role in bridging cultural and religious divides, exemplifying the Christian mandate of love and service in a multicultural context. This endeavor enriches individual lives and contributes positively to the broader Canadian societal fabric, setting a precedent for harmonious coexistence and mutual respect. ■

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- ¹ The Christian and Missionary Alliance is one of the largest Chinese denominations in Canada with over 110 churches. Solomon Chiang and Francis Tam outlined its church planting efforts in various cities across Canada for more than 50 years in the book *Forging Future with Tradition—The History and Development of Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches* published by the Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches Association in June 2013, accessed on Dec 27, 2023, from https://chinese.ccaca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Forging_Future_Chinese.pdf.
 - ² Francis Tam, "Global Chinese Diaspora and the Recent Outmigration of Hong Kong to Canada," a research paper presented at the Lausanne Global Diaspora Consultation, Jeju Island, South Korea, August 2023.
 - ³ Statistics Canada, "Religion in Canada," October 28, 2021, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2021079-eng.htm>.
 - ⁴ Enoch Wong, Tommy Tsui, and Wes Wong, *General Survey of the Chinese Churches in Canada (2019)*. CCCOWE Canada & Centre for Leadership Studies at CCST, 2019, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://cccowe.ca/uploads/pdf/GSCCC-2019.pdf>.
 - ⁵ Arabic Church Directory, Arabic Bible Outreach Ministry, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://www.arabicbible.com/directories/arabic-churches.html>.
 - ⁶ "The Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology," Lausanne Movement, November 14, 2009, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://lausanne.org/content/statement/the-seoul-declaration-on-diaspora-missiology>.
 - ⁷ Joy Tira Sadiri, "A Diaspora Mission Strategy for Local Churches," *Evangelica Missions Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2017): 60–65.
 - ⁸ "Loving Muslims Together" is a ministry of Outreach Canada, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://outreach.ca/Ministries/LMT/ArticleId/153/Loving-Muslims-Together>.
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Rev. Dr. Francis Tam has over 40 years' experience serving Canada's Chinese Christian community. He is the Executive Director of the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism and the Interim Principal of the Canadian Chinese School of Theology Calgary. As an ordained worker of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, Rev. Tam has a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity International University in the USA and is fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. His journey from professional engineering to being called into ministry inspires many in the diaspora. Dr. Tam is committed to mobilizing Chinese churches for their spiritual, educational, and missional objectives from a biblical perspective.



Image: Tom Sekula | Unsplash

Europe: A Missionary Field or Mission Force?

LUKE ZHENG

This article demonstrates the urgent need of European churches for pastors and ministers, particularly Chinese-speaking churches.

Despite its historical legacy as an active sender of missionaries, Europe nowadays should be considered a mission field. The speed of de-Christianization in this land is striking, leaving believers without pastors and many communities without a Christian witness. The following pages take Chinese-speaking churches as a window to show the general situation in Europe.

In 1989, the Second Lausanne World Congress took place in Manila, Philippines. During this event, Luis Bush introduced the well-known concept of the “10/40 Window,” which has had a lasting impact on church mission endeavors. The term “10/40 Window” refers to the residents of the eastern hemisphere, along with people in the European and African parts of the western hemisphere, living between the north latitudes of 10 degrees and 40 degrees.¹ They are considered the primary focus for collaborative evangelization efforts by churches and mission organizations worldwide. The rationale for such a strategy is fairly straightforward. Approximately 90% of the local population are non-believers. So they would remain if

there were not a considerable number of missionaries living among them. As one can imagine, the missionary challenges in this region are extremely formidable and urgent. There is no single church or mission organization that can meet that challenge. Therefore, the introduction of the “10/40 Window” concept aimed to encourage global churches to use their missionary efforts strategically where they were most needed. This direction quickly gained acceptance and recognition among participants and has since been promoted worldwide by pastors and missionary organizations. Even today, churches continue to invest most, if not all, resources globally in missionary work within the “10/40 Window.”

However, note that when giving examples of countries in the “10/40 Window,” those areas with Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and followers of other religions are most often highlighted. This undoubtedly captures the attention of viewers. Yet while these emphasized regions are indeed crucial missionary fields, it’s important to point out that some parts of southern Europe also fall within the “10/40 Window.” Despite this, few mission organizations define, or even consider, Europe as a mission field.

The reason why Europe has not become a focal point for various missionary organizations is clear. Throughout the 2000-year history of the Christian church, the majority of significant events in church history have unfolded in Europe—from the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome, the establishment of Christianity as the imperial faith, the missionary and crusading activities during the medieval period, to the Reformation, the formation of denominations, Puritan and pious movements, and the developments of both old and new orthodoxy. Furthermore, Christian missions in recent centuries have underlined the concept that European countries are mission forces.

It’s well known that the London Missionary Society, founded in 1795, played a pivotal role in missionary endeavors, dispatching missionaries like Robert Morrison, David Livingstone, and Eric Liddell. After World War II, that renowned society, after merging with two other institutions, became the Council for World Mission, which remains active in missions today. It is, then, understandable that anyone familiar with church history would acknowledge that Europe has been a place for nurturing, cultivating, and sending missionaries and continues to be a significant force in global missions.

Unfortunately, reality today does not align with this historical legacy. Over the past century, atheism and the populations adhering to other religions have seen rapid growth in Europe. The decline of Christianity is very much evident. Churches shrink or close. Significantly fewer people identify as Christians. As Christianity declines, churches have fewer resources to put toward missions work, both within their own communities and beyond. Because of space limitations, the following analysis will mainly focus on presenting the plight of Chinese Christians in Europe.

After World War II, Europe witnessed an influx of the first wave of immigrants from Chinese-speaking regions. In the 1980s and 1990s with China’s opening up, there was an accelerated movement of Chinese immigrants to Europe, especially in Spain and Italy, with significant numbers coming from Zhejiang province. Some of those immigrants were believers already back in China. As they moved to Europe, they brought their Christian practices along with them. Chinese Bible studies and fellowships emerged in southern Europe during that period and eventually evolved into churches when attendance hit roughly 100 people.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were several Chinese-speaking churches with more than 100 believers each in both Italy and Spain. To meet the pastoral needs of Chinese churches across Europe, the International Chinese Biblical Seminary in Europe (hereafter abbreviated as ICBSIE) was established in 2007, focusing on training Chinese ministers for Europe. Since then, the seminary has produced over 100 graduates serving in Chinese churches in 11 European countries. To put this in perspective, there are approximately 330 stable church-like gatherings for Chinese believers in Europe, with over 280 full-time ministers currently serving. Among these, 87 are graduates of ICBSIE.

The question that begs to be asked is this: Is this sufficient? The answer is clear—absolutely not, not even close. The existing Chinese-speaking churches still need many more ministers to establish roots and engage in long-term cultivation, not to mention reaching areas where there are currently no Chinese churches. According to various sources, there are approximately three million Chinese people scattered across Europe. If we calculate the average number of believers based on the ratio of local Chinese believers to the total Chinese population, Europe currently has around 25,000 to 30,000 believers. With over 280 pastors available, each minister would be responsible for shepherding around 100

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believers. While this ratio might not seem problematic at first glance, there are two significant challenges to highlight: First, there are still over two million Chinese people in Europe waiting to hear the gospel, and second, the distribution of Chinese churches and pastors among the European Chinese population is extremely uneven.

As mentioned earlier, graduates of ICBSIE are dispersed across 11 European countries, while the European Union has 27 member countries. In other words, graduates have not yet served in more than half of the EU countries. Even if we include non-graduates in the count, the coverage extends to only 17 countries. The data straightforwardly present a fact: not every country has Chinese churches and ministers. Therefore, the theoretical assumption of one minister shepherding around 100 congregants is fundamentally unrealistic. The areas where Chinese Christians reside do not necessarily have ministers nearby. This uneven distribution is more severe in Eastern European countries like Romania, Belarus, Montenegro, and Latvia. The situation is not much better, however, in Western Europe. Take France as an example. According to statistics, around 700,000 Chinese people are spread across cities like Paris, Lille, Marseille, Lyon, and Toulouse. However, approximately 95% of Chinese churches and ministers are concentrated in Paris.

What causes such an uneven distribution of pastors? There are, of course, many reasons. One obvious factor is that large cities tend to have relatively higher Chinese populations, making it easier to establish churches and carry out ministry. Correspondingly, churches with more people and resources have the capability to train and hire full-time pastors, leading to better church development. This is a Matthew effect phenomenon—a healthy church attracts more resources and grows even bigger.²

At the same time, there are many areas with relatively sparse populations waiting

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The small churches and fellowships in these areas have been shrinking, due to the lack of full-time ministers. Fellowships and Bible studies that are even smaller lack the potential capacity to hire full-time ministers.
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for full-time ministers to go there for long-term cultivation and shepherding. The small churches and fellowships in these areas have been shrinking, due to the lack of full-time ministers. Fellowships and Bible studies that are even smaller lack the potential capacity to hire full-time ministers. Even if one of the believers were moved and burdened by the spiritual need of that particular fellowship, that individual would be less likely to step out and serve full-time since he or she knew the foreseeable and practical difficulties. This vicious cycle poses a significant

challenge in many regions. Strategically speaking, many of those relatively small cities are less influenced by atheism and other religions. The Chinese residents are most likely to be as open to the Christian message as to other religions.

What can we do to respond, to turn Europe back from being a mission field to being a mission force? History has provided us with a model to draw from. Two hundred years ago, missionaries came to China to engage in evangelism and church planting. They were able to



Image: Dorian Mongel | Unsplash

endure amid difficulties, primarily due to God's grace. However, we also see that they were strongly supported by mission agencies in terms of spiritual well-being, human resources, and financial resources. The existence and operation of mission organizations, institutions that centralized the human, material, and financial resources of various churches, were key factors in the success of that golden missionary century. In the less densely populated areas of Europe where Chinese believers are not concentrated, the relatively weaker fellowships and Bible studies lack the ability to support the livelihood of full-time ministers. This is an undeniable fact. Can we pick up the kingdom mindset and courage of mission organizations in the nineteenth century and help more brothers and sisters who are willing to serve by alleviating some of their life concerns? This would enable them to engage more easily in the work of the kingdom and in building the church.

May the Lord have mercy!

Europe's Chinese churches need ministers just as much as each European country needs them. Although Europe was once one of the most active regions for sending missionaries, even as recently as the early twentieth century, it has now become a

mission field requiring support and prayer from various missionary organizations and churches worldwide. Let's pray to the Lord of the whole earth to place the needs and burdens of European churches within the hearts of his people, seeking a collective revival in this region that was once a thriving base for missions. ¹

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¹ For a brief overview, see “10/40 Window,” Wikimedia Foundation, last modified December 6, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10/40_window.

² This term, borrowed from researchers in economics and social sciences, refers to the observation that those who have wealth tend to get wealthier, while those who are poor tend to become poorer. The term gets its name from Matthew 13:12, “For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” In church growth terms, churches that are large and healthy tend to attract more members, while those that are small and struggling tend to lose members.



Luke Zheng was born and raised in China. He holds a PhD in historical theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and serves as Academic Dean at International Chinese Biblical Seminary in Europe.



Image: Joann Pittman

The Great Repositioning

BY BRENT FULTON

Current population shifts among Chinese communities globally bear the traditional marks of “push” and “pull” migration. For many in Hong Kong and the PRC, political conditions have pushed them to consider relocating elsewhere, resulting in a historic influx of Chinese into the UK, Canada, Australia, and the United States. For others, the lure of economic

opportunity beckons them to pull up roots and face the challenges of adapting to a new culture in search of a better life. As the data presented in this issue indicates, opportunities created by China’s Belt and Road Initiative have resulted in a significant increase in the Chinese populations of many African and Middle Eastern countries. Meanwhile, the number of Chinese attempting to cross the border between Mexico and the United States has skyrocketed.

In many ways the scenes that characterize Chinese migration today bring to mind the experiences of past generations. Yet, viewed through a missional lens, a different picture comes into focus.

As Jeanne Wu writes, “There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Our Lord is the lord of history, and everything happens according to his plan. The recent political developments in and related to China have impacted the movement and dynamics of the global Chinese diaspora.



There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Our Lord is the lord of history, and everything happens according to his plan. The recent political developments in and related to China have impacted the movement and dynamics of the global Chinese diaspora. They have closed some doors for mission while opening others.

J E A N N E W U



They have closed some doors for mission while opening others.”

Within the current shifts in the global Chinese diaspora, we see a sovereign hand at work, repositioning Chinese Christians to assume new roles in advancing the gospel.

In Europe, for example, a region that has gone from being at the forefront of the church’s global expansion to itself becoming a mission field, Christians from China and Hong Kong are bringing renewal and fresh vision. Luke Zheng’s challenge to get behind this migrant mission force is a wakeup call for traditional sending organizations to rethink their approach to gospel ministry in Europe.

The collaboration Henry Lu describes between Chinese Overseas Christian Mission and several other entities in the UK to welcome the large number of arrivals from Hong Kong presents a valuable case study in partnership. Together these organizations are facing head-on the challenges of integrating the


new immigrants into churches, as well as utilizing the gifts and talents of Hong Kong Christians who now join the UK’s growing Chinese community. As David Ng points out, Cantonese churches in Australia face similar challenges, with the number of new arrivals from Hong Kong more than doubling in the past five years.

In the short-term, existing churches will struggle to develop new multilingual ministries and to meet the needs of multiple age groups and demographics. Yet the very tensions posed by these challenges also point to burgeoning opportunities, including new church plants, culturally appropriate ministry models developed by immigrant believers themselves, and building on the Chinese immigrant experience to catalyze outreach to other immigrant communities.

In Canada, the Muslim-focused partnership between CCCOWE and Outreach Canada is an example of how diaspora Chinese believers can embrace the mission fields in which they find themselves. Francis Tam describes the unique contribution of Canada’s Chinese Christians:

“Looking forward, the Chinese churches in Canada are poised to play a vital role in bridging cultural and religious divides, exemplifying the Christian mandate of love and service in a multicultural context.”

As diaspora Chinese churches redirect their mission efforts due to fewer opportunities to send short-term teams to the mainland, God is taking them beyond what has traditionally been their natural field of service. Meanwhile, with the church in China sending out its own cross-cultural workers, there is the potential for Christians from the diaspora to come alongside this new mission force in Africa, the Middle East, and other countries where they are being sent.

The changing migration patterns discussed in this issue of the *Quarterly* take on eternal significance when viewed in light of the great repositioning taking place within the global Chinese church. The Lord of the Harvest is sovereignly at work, raising up laborers and sending them into new fields for his glory. 



Dr. Brent Fulton is the founder and catalyst of ChinaSource.

Resource Corner

For Further Reading on the Diaspora and Missions

BY CHINASOURCE TEAM



BAMBOO PASTORS PODCAST

Pastors Jalon Chan and Jon Mann “explore the joys and challenges of being English speaking pastors in the Chinese church.” Find them on your favorite podcast platform, and check out their Instagram and Facebook pages.



- **EPISODE 88 | “Canadian Immigration with Keith Cheung.”**
Focuses on the impact of recent wave of HK immigrants on a suburban Vancouver, Canada church.
- **EPISODE 72 | “Thriving Immigrant Churches with Dr. Peter Cha.”**
Dr. Cha, professor of Church, Culture, and Society at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL and the director of the Thriving Immigrant Congregations Initiative.
- **EPISODES 28 & 29 | “Chinese Heritage Churches with Enoch Liao.”**
What is a Chinese heritage church? Does the term accurately describe these churches’ identities?



SOLA NETWORK YOUTUBE CHANNEL

“A gospel-centered voice of Asian Americans.”

- **The Chinese Christian Diaspora in Ireland**
Interview with Tommy Kyaw Tun and Caleb Teo
- **Exploring the Nordic Chinese Christian Experience**
An Interview with Pastor Billy Lo



ASIAN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN COLLABORATIVE (AACC)



“We seek to address issues pertaining to Asian American Christians and Christianity, while remaining grounded in the historic Christian faith, rooted in Scripture, and in communion with the global Church. Our multimedia platform will offer resources that contribute to the development and understanding of Asian American theology, preaching, identity, mental health, current events, history, arts, and beyond.”



CCCOWE: CHINESE COORDINATION CENTRE OF WORLD EVANGELISM MOVEMENT



CCCOWE “strives to be the bridge between different generations, east and west, new and old, and different denominations. We strive to bring together important and forward-looking voices on global mission and discipleship, and connect Chinese Christian leaders around the world to respond to God-entrusted mission as one.” They hold gatherings, publish articles and podcasts, and keep church directories up to date. Resources are available in traditional and simplified Chinese and English.

- **“The Chinese Christian Diaspora in Britain and Its Impact on Chinese Missions.”**

Recorded lecture by Dr. Thomas Harvey. Given at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. The lecture begins at about 1:40.



 YouTube

- **A Case Study of Diaspora Mission by Enoch Wan**

April 6, 2022
A video presentation at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, part of World Christianity Focus Week.



 YouTube

- **Multi-Ethnic Outreach in the Silicon Valley: A Chinese Diaspora Reaches Out to Multi-Ethnic Diasporas by Juno Wang.**

This free e-book includes Wang’s testimony of becoming a Christian and her journey as a cross-cultural worker in the US, working with multiple ethnic groups in California’s Bay Area and Silicon Valley.

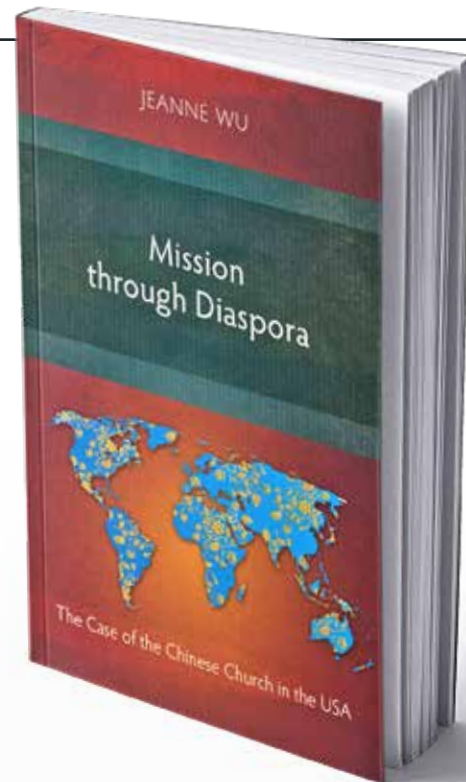


Ebook



The Chinese Church in Transition: Navigating Mission in the Diaspora

BY JACKIE J. HWANG



Diaspora mission has gained considerable attention in recent years with notable works such as Enoch Wan's *Diaspora Missiology* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2011) and Chandler Im and Amos Yong's *Global Diaspora and Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014). These books highlight how opportunities in mission are related to diasporas in their diverse contexts. Engaging with this emphasis, Jeanne Wu's book spotlights a case study of the Chinese diaspora, while using Enoch Wan's category of "missions through the diaspora" to investigate the mission focus of US Chinese churches.

Wu's book is structured as follows: chapter one introduces the evangelical attention to diaspora mission and the scope of the research covered in the book. Chapter two covers the relevant literature and offers definitions to terms such as globalization,

diaspora (in general), Chinese diaspora, diaspora missiology, and short-term mission. Chapter three delineates the research methodology behind this work and provides data on the churches included in the study. This chapter also includes a brief discussion of the transnational connections of the Chinese diaspora as background to the Chinese diaspora mission. Chapter four consists of summative charts from the research data which show the emphasis on a same-ethnicity focus in mission among US Chinese churches. It also provides reasons that lead to this focus. Chapter five draws upon additional research data to reveal the unique characteristics of short-term mission conducted by these churches. This chapter describes the nature of mission through diaspora as seen in the short-term mission activities of US Chinese churches. Chapter six contains Wu's reflections and recommendations for further research and mission direction of U.S. Chinese churches.

Some background information on Chinese migration and mission is helpful

in understanding the significance of Wu's study. On this note, it is important to recall that Chinese migration has a long history going back centuries—sometimes only for temporary sojourns and at other times resulting in permanent resettlement. Chinese migrants began to encounter Christianity in new lands around the same time that Western Protestant mission movements began to concentrate their efforts on China. Missionary zeal for China sometimes grew into a similar passion towards Chinese in the diaspora. Today, in the classic US Chinatowns and in postcolonial Southeast Asia, historic Chinese churches attest to this past in mission to diaspora populations. More recently, Chinese Christians in migration have also brought their faith with them, setting up new Chinese churches wherever they go, often converting other diasporic Chinese and thus adding to their numbers. In both older and newer models of diaspora mission, the Chinese diaspora either serves as the recipient of Christianity, or their evangelistic efforts are oriented toward those like themselves in the same region.

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In this book, however, Wu shows that Chinese churches in the US have progressed from being receivers to senders in diaspora mission, with ministry activities of their own in “*mission through diaspora*” (emphasis mine). Using short-term missions as an investigative lens, Wu uses a quantitative approach with some follow-up interviews to explore the missional priorities and activities of the Chinese church in the US. Results from surveys she collected from 317 churches confirm the general perception that Chinese churches in the US tend to put their resources into missions to ethnic Chinese (73% list missions to Chinese as top priority, p. 83)—both in China and in other countries. Because of this same-ethnicity focus, short-term mission trips originating from US Chinese churches have characteristics that differ from the approaches of US megachurches and US Korean churches.

Wu explains this focus on the same ethnicity with a threefold logic: The spiritual needs of a non-Christian majority among ethnic Chinese (p. 83), existing transnational Chinese networks (pp. 95, 97), and the advantage of sharing the same language (p. 100). She also emphasizes the same-language advantage in shaping the short-term mission’s orientation toward verbal communication of the Christian faith with attention given

to discipleship training and teaching the Bible (32.4%), evangelism and church planting (23.8%), and children’s ministries and VBS (18.6%) (pp. 129-130). Wu uses these dynamics to show the differences in short-term missions between US Chinese churches on the one hand, and US megachurches and US Korean churches on the other.

This work, which is based on Wu’s PhD dissertation from Trinity International University (Deerfield, IL), is filled with useful data on the mission attitudes and behaviors of US Chinese churches in her survey sample. Other quantitative data in the book, such as regional representation, denominational background, languages used, and congregational size, provide additional information on the makeup of US Chinese churches. Though this study was conducted in 2013, much of its information likely remains applicable today. One possible weakness of the plenitude of data, however, is that the overwhelming number of charts can sometimes be more distracting than helpful.

In my estimation, the most fascinating aspect of this book is Wu’s own reflections on the same-ethnicity mission focus found in US Chinese churches. She confesses to a change in her perspective on why these churches hold to this focus. Wu writes, “Before I started this research project, my reasoning for the mission approach of Chinese churches was simply ‘ethnocentrism.’ But after careful research,




Image: Joann Pittman



Image: Joann Pittman

I discovered that the cause behind this kind of mission practice is more complicated than ethnocentrism” (pp. 157–8). By sharing her own journey, Wu helps readers understand why a same-ethnic mission focus may still have a place in diaspora mission, thus adding nuance to the contemporary mission focus on unreached people groups (as outlined by missiologist Ralph Winter at Lausanne 1974). Although Wu is charitable about the tendency of US Chinese churches to focus on mission to Chinese people, she also recommends that these churches go further. Wu advocates beginning with mission to Chinese in their localities, then expanding outward to include mission to Chinese in other places around the world, and finally to serving non-Chinese globally. Wu’s exhortation for the Chinese Christian diaspora to participate more fully in the Great Commission is salutary and worthy of attention.

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In conclusion, this book showcases mission attitudes and activities among Chinese churches in the US. The detailed data provide in-depth explanations that simultaneously confirm the impression of a same-ethnicity focus in mission while offering more nuanced reasons why such a focus can be advantageous. For these reasons, Wu has provided a useful book for anyone who seeks a more thorough understanding of Chinese diaspora missions. 



Jackie Hwang is a Taiwanese American whose journey has taken her from Asia to the US then back to Asia. She considers herself a global citizen whose home is everywhere and nowhere. She has served with OMF International since 2010 in both Singapore and the US. She is currently a PhD candidate in World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh, focusing her research on the intersection of Chinese Christianity, diaspora missiology, and ecclesiology. She is married to an Old Testament professor and is a mother of three.

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Mission through Diaspora: The Case of the Chinese Church in the USA

by Jeanne Wu.

Langham Monographs, 2016,
 202 pages. Paperback,
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