



香港聖公會

HONG KONG SHENG KUNG HUI

第七屆總議會

The 7th General Synod

香港聖公會教會政策文件

**HONG KONG SHENG KUNG HUI
CHURCH POLICY PAPER**

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Church Policy Paper

Preface

1. Since the establishment of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) in 1998, the Province has always been committed to God's ministry in Hong Kong and Macau. Soon the Province will be approaching her twentieth anniversary, this offers us a chance to reflect upon our past, examine our present, and plan for the future through our faith and tradition.

We anticipate a dynamic future for our Church: a Church which is faithful and relevant. We aim for the church to be a church serving the Lord faithfully, leading people in seeking the Lord, enabling people in response to God's calls in their own contexts and to be a blessing for our society in our time.

For a better tomorrow, the Provincial Standing Committee of the Sixth General Synod has now prepared a mission statement and related policies for the Seventh General Synod and would like to invite the Synodic members to discuss and adopt the motion.

2. This Church policy paper aims not at solving existing problems, nor is it made to respond to the current issues in Hong Kong. The purpose of drafting the Church policy paper is to serve as a reminder for every member of HKSKH that through probing the fundamental question of what is the purpose of the Church's existence, we may envision the future of HKSKH. This is done by rediscovering the core values of the church: what it is for and what it is about and then letting the Church just be Church. When the Church is connected to the Vine-the Christ and fulfills her mission in the world faithfully, the Church will grow, prosper and bear fruit accordingly.
3. This Church policy paper is about the mission and pastoral responsibility of being a church as these two elements highlight the very reason for why we exist in the first place. This will also help members to seek a deeper understanding of our rich Anglican spirituality and ethos. We hope that this policy paper can help HKSKH draw a blueprint for the future, thus facilitating a healthy and natural growth for the Church.

4. This document consists of four parts and one appendix. The contents are as follows:
 - a. What is the Church? Why does the Church exist? What is her mission?
 - b. What precious gifts has God bestowed upon HKSKH – our Church?
 - c. How has HKSKH fulfilled her meaning for existence and her mission?
 - d. What suggestions can we offer in order to minimize the discrepancy between ideal and reality?
 - e. Some specific suggestions of implementation to the policy are added in the Appendix for relevant committees responsible to take as reference.

5. This is not just a policy paper, but a record of a spiritual journey of what the church community has experienced collectively. This past year, we had conducted a number of consultation meetings, published various articles, prayers and sharing of visions in Echo in order to encourage different parts of the body of Christ to reflect and pray for the Church's tomorrow. Let us continue to pray for the Lord's guidance to HKSKH, and pave the way for the Church's future.

PART I: What is the Church?

1. The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord. Throughout history, the Church has been called by Christ to be a faithful community of disciples.

The word "church" comes from the Greek term *ekklesia*, which means "to gather". The Church originated from the calling of Christ. In the Old Testament, the word "call" originally refers to being set apart and living faithfully as the chosen people of God. When the incarnate Christ chose his disciples in the New Testament, the disciples formed the community that is later the Church. This is the continuation of God's calling to His chosen people, the extension of the New Israel.

The mission of the community of disciples is to respond faithfully to the calling of Christ. This consists of two parts:

- 1.1 Let go of our self-centeredness, the old ways of living and relationship building. Separate oneself from the old self, follow the example of Christ, and become fishers of men.
- 1.2 The Church is called not to live for herself, but to fulfill the mission given by God. The Church is the community of disciples who, through generations, lives for and faithfully follows Christ.

2. The Church carries out the mission entrusted by Christ, united in His love, and proclaims the Kingdom of God.

When God the Son became incarnate, the end of time has begun. Jesus Christ came to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the whole world. Through different parables and his own life he revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He taught his disciples to pray "May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

Praying for the Kingdom of God to come on earth as in heaven is the mission for all generations for the community of the faithful disciples. In order that individuals and the history of humanity will centre around God, proclaiming Him as our ruler in his Kingdom, the Church continues the mission of Christ by loving one another. She witnesses that God is love so that all may know that God's people is the Church and is the community of the faithful disciples of the Lord Christ united in His love.

3. The Church is the undivided Body of Christ on earth.

All believers, in every era, ought to respond to the call of Christ in unity. Not only that we are united with Christ but we are also called to be in communion with each other and become the body of Christ on Earth.

As the body of Christ, every generation of disciples should re-present the life of Christ, and build a Church that transcends time and space. The mission of the Church is to be an eternal bridge that links this world towards eternity, and continuously calls the world to be united in Christ, thus in communion with God.

4. The Church is the resurrected community of Christ, extending the living presence Christ on Earth

The Church is the risen body of Christ on Earth. Our mission is to effectively live out the resurrected life of Christ, so that when the world sees us, they see the very presence of Christ.

5. The Church is a Sacrament as described in the Scriptures

The Church continues the image of being God's chosen people, and starts a new journey since the New Testament era, centering in Christ:

- Christ is the head, the Church is his body (1 Cor 12);
- Christ is the gate for the sheep, the Church is the sheepfold (Jn 10:1-10);
- Christ is the Good Shepherd, the Church is the sheep (Jn 10:11-15);
- Christ is the Vine, the Church is the branches (Jn 15:1-5) and the vineyard (Mt 21:33-43);
- Christ is the living stone, and also is the stone rejected by the builders, but becomes the very head of the corner, the Church is the spiritual castle (1 Peter 2:4-8)
- Christ is the bridegroom, Church is the bride (Eph 5:25-27, 29; Rev 21:1-2)

The above illustrates the different images of Christ, showing us the inseparable relationship between the Church and Christ. Through the visible church seen in history, whether she is metaphorically seen as body, sheepfold, branches or spiritual castle, she has become the visible sign of Christ's salvation on Earth. This is what Sacrament means.

The Church has to be the Sacrament of Christ on Earth, and be the medium of grace; by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Temple of God is built through love (2 Cor 6:16).

PART II: The Anglican Spirit and Ethos

1. The Anglican Church is both Catholic and Reformed

The Anglican Church, as a member of the universal church, is called by Christ to be a community of disciples. She connects with other denominations, is part of the body of Christ on earth, and lives the resurrected life of Christ. In doing so she becomes the visible sign of Christ's presence on Earth.

As with other denominations, the Anglican tradition has developed her unique characters and expressions through the course of history. On the one hand she inherits the catholic faith; on the other hand she embraces the spirit of the Reformation, and is a Church that is open to the future:

- 1.1 Faithful to the historical inheritance of faith, she confesses the catholic creed and the faith confessed by the catholic councils.
- 1.2 As a Church in pilgrimage, she emphasizes the balance between the "three-legged stool" of Scripture, tradition and reason; and explores and fulfills faith matters by adopting the principle of *via media*.

2. The Anglican Church is a Church under episcopal polity.

The Anglican Church follows the episcopal polity from the catholic tradition, and through the many symbols that a bishop uses one can be reminded of the features of the church he oversees:

The Mitre symbolizes the tongues of fire that descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This indicates that the authority of Anglican bishops is founded upon the apostolic succession. The bishop, through the power of the Holy Spirit, exists as a symbol of unity unifying the different dioceses and parishes within the Church.

The Pastoral Staff symbolizes the pastoral role of the bishop in the Church which emphasizes the importance of pastoral responsibility of the Anglican Church.

The Cathedra symbolizes the bishop's role in teaching and proclaiming the truth, hence highlighting the Anglican Church's emphasis on teaching God's truth.

The Anglican Church follows the episcopacy of the catholic tradition. Unlike other episcopal Christian denominations where bishops possess absolute power, we follow the motto of "Episcopal led, Synodical governed", thus emphasizing the importance of mutual respect within the church. The Bishops, clergy, and laity all share the responsibility in managing and developing the Church under a synodical system.

3. The Anglican Church is a church which emphasizes liturgy.

Since the Reformation led by Thomas Cranmer in the 16th century, the Church of England has been reformed. Unlike other confessional churches where doctrines were used to express their faith, we emphasize the intimacy with God through worship, and molding our life of faith through liturgy.

Liturgy is a visible sign of invisible grace, and is the medium of grace from God to all believers. Through liturgy, believers' faith can be deepened. Therefore, liturgy is more than just rituals, but an important medium of spiritual nurture.

As a liturgical church, the mission of the Anglican Church is to be a visible sign of spiritual grace in this world across time and space in all eternity. In other words, the Anglican Church looks towards all eternity, at the same time she is also in the world and is concerned about missions in the world.

4. The Anglican Church is a Church that responds to the 5 Marks of Mission.

In 1984 and 1990, the Anglican Consultative Council concluded the 5 Marks of Mission as the key components of the Church's mission on Earth:

- 4.1 To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- 4.2 To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- 4.3 To respond to human need by loving service
- 4.4 To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- 4.5 To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

In other words, the Church is sent by the Lord with a bidirectional mission: outwardly we serve and proclaim, and inwardly we teach and worship.

5. The Anglican Church is open to dialogue and is a bridge to promote unity.

There are in total 38 provinces in the Anglican Communion, all striving to fulfill the commission of God. While at any given time different Provinces are identifying the unique opportunities and challenges particular to their contexts; they also recognize the differences among each another, while seeking unity in the one Anglican Communion.

Meanwhile, the Anglican Church also plays a crucial role in promoting dialogues in ecumenical movements, be it the dialogue with Orthodox Churches, Western Churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches like the Lutheran and Baptist traditions, and various agreements have been achieved and signed. The Anglican Church has also played an important role in interreligious dialogue.

When facing various controversies among different social groups and races, the Anglican Churches in different contexts have also sought ways to strive for unity through dialogue.

6. The Anglican Church focuses on incarnational theology.

The Anglican Church is a church that puts heavy emphasis on incarnational theology since Richard Hookers through the Oxford Movement and the social gospel movement in the 19th century. In the last century, our beloved Bishop R. O. Hall also emphasized on incarnational theology in Hong Kong.

The Anglican Church emphasizes the ecclesiology that the Church needs to be incarnational following the manner of the Christ's own incarnation which is fully human and divine. Through Christ, we see the full revelation of God on earth. This is in opposition to the concept of dualism between spiritual and worldly existence. God has blessed His creation with natural laws, which act as mediums that enable people in the world to approach the Truth of God.

Therefore, the Anglican Church develops various important ministries in education and social services, and with an open attitude, strives to be a church that responds to the needs of the society bearing witness to Christ's presence, and guiding people to the Lord.

PART III: Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

1. Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) was established in 1998, and is a member of the Anglican Communion. She has participated in many important decisions in the Anglican Communion, while at the same time has actively responded to the many issues in Hong Kong and Macau locally. We need to refer to the above understanding of the meaning of existence of the church, and her mission, to review the situation in Hong Kong and Macau, so that we may faithfully and suitably fulfill the mission and vision of HKSKH.
2. Fulfilling the mission of evangelism: From the very beginning in the 1843, to the recent establishment of the Province, HKSKH has all along strived to fulfill the mission of evangelism and pastoral ministry. Since the establishment of Province in 1998, each parish has attained growth in membership and offerings, which reflects the effort of evangelization all along. The Commission of Mission has completed a survey on different parishes which can serve as a platform for sharing. This fulfills the first mark of mission in terms of actively responding to the role of proclaiming the gospel as a missional church.
3. Responding to the need of spiritual renewal and nurturing: Within the structure of HKSKH, the Commission of Pastoral Care, Commission on Liturgical Matters, Ming Hua Theological Seminary, Religious Education Resource Centre, etc. serve to minister, teach, equip and guide clergy and laity alike in spiritual nurturing, publications and liturgical renewals. They support parishes by offering spiritual nourishment in the Anglican tradition. The HKSKH House of Prayer was opened in 2012 to encourage spiritual growth through retreats.
4. Responding to the call to bear witness in unity: HKSKH offers both Cantonese and English speaking parishes and serves not only Hong Kong but also Macau. With such diversity, she has to face the challenge of different needs in different contexts. While we move towards the future in unison, it does not mean our strategies will be the same. Moreover, HKSKH maintains a respectful dialogue with different Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant). HKSKH also has representatives in ecumenical organizations such as Hong Kong Chinese Churches Union and Hong Kong Christian Council.
5. Responding to the call to bear witness in society: Education and social services have always been the two strong mission arms of HKSKH in fulfilling the mission of God. The Provincial General Synod passed the Policy Papers in Education and Social Services in 2010 and 2013

respectively. This has promoted further cooperation among parishes, schools and social service units, and hence contributes to developing a holistic society.

6. Overall, HKSKH endeavours to fulfill the mission of the church in her own particular context. Since the establishment of the Province, various policies have indeed strengthened the communications among the Province, dioceses and parishes, and among the parishes, schools and social service units. Developing a mutual understanding will form an important framework in responding to God's call.

Part IV: Mission Statement and Vision

1. HKSKH is called by the one foundation Jesus Christ, and strives to seek her mission in her particular context. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, the HKSKH is a community that faithfully fulfills God's mission.
2. In order to fulfill the mission of HKSKH, the Church first needs to strengthen her faithfulness in the Lord, and build and nurture a community of faithful disciples. Moreover, following the fine tradition of our forbearers, the Church needs to be relevant to these two cities in response to the mission that God has entrusted to us. Let HKSKH become a community of faithful disciples in Hong Kong and Macau, and be the Church *within* the Cities as well as the Church *for* the Cities.
3. Developing Discipleship
We need to equip and prepare all believers to become the disciples of Christ, so that each of us can be a:
 - 3.1 Person of prayer: who emphasizes worship and yearns for spiritual growth;
 - 3.2 Pilgrim: who emphasizes the seeking of Truth and responds to life circumstances through exploring Scripture and tradition;
 - 3.3 Sojourner: who inherits the catholic faith and builds a fellowship in communion;
 - 3.4 Witness: who proclaims and lives out a life of the gospel;
 - 3.5 Servant: who follows the example of Christ and serves with passion in Church and in society;
 - 3.6 Steward: who offers oneself and lives a life that is centered in Christ.
4. Building a community of disciples, strengthening communications in and outside of the Church and sharing God's vision and mission
The Trinitarian God calls for a community, not only individuals; hence discipleship training cannot be done without any form of dialogue within the church. It is only through dialogue between church leaders and believers, among parishes, dioceses and the Province, and among the parishes, schools and social service units, that gifts can be shared. As a result, different parts of the church are connected, and communication is strengthened. It is by doing so that visions can be shared and mutual trust can be built, so that different parts of the body of Christ can grow and be better coordinated, be the salt and light on Earth, and manifest the living Christ through extending the Kingdom of God.
5. Be with the city, and exist for the city
HKSKH strives to be an incarnational Church. She understands the needs of her people, and responds accordingly so that the cities can experience the real presence of Christ.

PART V: Resolution and Outlook

1. Resolution

The General Synod of the Province shall discuss and adopt the contents above.

2. Looking towards the future

It is recommended that the General Synod adopt the above policy paper and relevant groups and organizations shall be established between the meetings of the synods to devise plans to actualize the above policy. Furthermore, it is recommended that relevant organizations be appointed to submit progress reports to the subsequent General Synod.

Appendix: Expectations and Suggestions

After numerous meetings with the clergy and laity, we have summarized the expectations of our members in the following four areas:

- 1. Church members:** In general, many members tend to be passive, and parishioners lack a sense of mission and calling. It is hoped that our youth ministry can be improved and teaching in the church in general can be strengthened.
- 2. Clergy:** A significant number of clergy will be retiring soon. It is hoped that more members of the church can respond to the call of ordained ministry. Meanwhile, the clergy in general are stressed with heavy workloads and the need of being attuned to the current issues. It is hoped that a better support system can be formed through collegial support and continuous education.
- 3. Church:** It is hoped that a mechanism can be set up for parishes to evangelize and minister in the schools, so that the strategy to evangelize in schools can be fine-tuned. Social service units have begun cooperation with parishes in the ministry, hoping that a win-win situation can be achieved through various interactions. Due to the lack of resources in many mission churches, development is often hampered. It is hoped that the Province and the dioceses can offer a greater support in this regard. Furthermore, there is still room for improvement in the communications among the Province, dioceses and parishes.
- 4. Society:** Dramatic changes have occurred in the society in recent years. Social issues are highly sensitive. When making responses, the church needs to take great caution.

According to the opinions and comments collected above, we have summarized the following suggestions, and are included here for reference of the relevant group and organization. There are four aspects in the suggestions:

1. Church members

In terms of nurturing believers, the Province should set up a **Life Plan for Discipleship**, so that from the new believers to the church leaders, from the infants to the elderly, in different stages of life and in different positions in the church, all can be nurtured spiritually, and be equipped adequately to respond to God's call in their lives.

In order to facilitate such long term discipleship training, the various committees in the Province need to be well-coordinated in devising their policies. The policies need to be implemented by the dioceses and put into practice within the parishes. This shall be carried out stage by stage. Ming

Hua Theological College and the Religious Education Centre can also play an important role in this process.

2. Clergy

The Province should actively call for more youths to respond to the call of ordained ministry. The dioceses should designate clergy to mentor these youths, and help them to discover their gifts, discern whether they are suitable for the ordained ministry, and invite the bishop to recommend those suitable be involved in a selection process followed by subsequent theological training.

The Province should also strengthen the fellowship among the clergy so that, through continuous training for the enrichment in ministry, they may serve in good health and in good spirit.

3. Church

Advocate the concept of stewardship and encourage all parishes to attain self-sufficiency. One of the signs of being a healthy parish is to support the ministry of the diocese in addition to its own parish needs.

An improved communication platform is needed for parishes, dioceses and the Province, so that the visions and the missions of the church can be shared.

A deanery system should be set up, so that resources can be shared to support and assist the weaker parishes.

The dioceses should set up working groups for the overall development on matters such as mission, finance and the general direction of the parishes.

The Province should also set up some short term goals and an assessment scheme to achieve the direction and vision of the church.

4. Society

The Province should set up a social concern committee which offers theological reflections on social issues. They should report to the House of Bishop on a regular basis, so that social controversies can be appropriately addressed, and that the church may stand with the city facing the challenges together.

In order to serve both the society and God, the church should explore the future needs of the society. Parishes, schools and social service units should cooperate to respond to the needs of the youth, the elderly, the poor, and the aging population.

For identification purpose signed by
General Secretary of the General Synod
