

## **Lam Chi-fung's Transformative Role in Shaping Hong Kong Baptist Life between 1950 and 1970**

Alex Kammoon To (graduated 2018)

**ABSTRACT:** Hong Kong has the largest Chinese Baptist population in the world. Lam Chi-fung, a Baptist layman, was key to the speedy growth of Hong Kong Baptists and played a transformative role in shaping Hong Kong Baptist life between 1950 and 1970. When China turned Communist in the mid-twentieth century, large numbers of refugees flooded Hong Kong, resulting in a sudden increase of both social and spiritual needs. While recovering from its war-torn economy, the British government did not have resources to cater to the needs of its colony. After being driven out from mainland China, foreign mission agencies were reluctant to either invest their money or relocate personnel to Hong Kong, fearing that it would soon be taken over by Communist China. In view of the situation with its imminent social and spiritual needs, Lam took the initiative of inviting foreign mission groups, in particular Southern Baptists, to send as many missionaries as possible to Hong Kong and collaborated with the government to build a large number of Baptist structures in Hong Kong. Despite tensions concerning the fear that the self independent process and indigenous efforts of native Baptists would be damaged by inviting foreign missionaries and disputes if the Baptist teaching of church-state separation was being infringed when seeking government support, Lam succeeded in growing Baptists to become the largest denomination and formed a new Baptist landscape in Hong Kong.

**Dr Alex To is the Assistant Professor of Church History at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary.**