

Göteborg, November 3rd. 1951.

The Royal Swedish Foreign Office,
Stockholm.

Before Ambassador S. Söderblom left for China representatives of the Swedish Missionary Societies discussed with him the question of their property in China. According to a report they were unanimous in considering it appropriate to send a note to the Chinese Foreign Office in Peking re the property of the Swedish Missionary Societies in China.

I have been asked to state what has been done on behalf of the Swedish Baptist Mission. Being the last Swedish Missionary to leave China ^{not} and having been informed about the viewpoints advanced at the meeting I take the liberty also to express my personal opinion re this complicated problem of missionary property in China.

The real estate property of the Swedish Baptist Mission in China is located in the province of Shantung. A complete list of the title deeds and all the legal documents have been and are at present deposited in the Swedish Embassy in Shanghai. According to the enclosed Power of Attorney in English translation I have appointed the Baptist Churches of Kiaohsien, Kaomi, Chucheng and Yinchao each to manage and look after the property belonging to the Swedish Baptist Mission in their respective districts. A copy of the Chinese version is deposited in the Swedish Royal Embassy, Peking, and the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the People's Government, Tsingtao. It should be noted that the Swedish Baptist Mission still has legal ownership of the

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said property and that the Baptist Churches only administer it as loan. Before making out the Power of Attorney I communicated with the First Secretary of the Embassy. Mr. Brauers considered my suggestion as a good solution of the problem.

It is a fact that there is no unified policy for the solution of this property problem. This is not only true of Missionary Societies of different nationalities, but also of Swedish Societies. Three aspects seem to cover the actual situation: 1) Missionaries have evacuated their stations without making any arrangements re mission property. This happened in earlier stages of evacuation and local authorities have as a rule taken over such property. 2) Missionaries have been authorized by their Boards of Foreign Missions to give local churches or Christian unions power of attorney to manage missionary property. 3) Missionary Societies have given their property as a direct gift to the Chinese Christian churches or institutions.

Since the beginning of 1951 no foreigner can return to his home country without appointing some responsible person or organization to administer whatever private or mission property he may possess ~~and~~ or be responsible for. This had to be done by the accredited representative of the Swedish Baptist Mission in spite of the fact that at least 95% of the property had already been "borrowed" or used by local authorities for profane purposes. Financial responsibilities on behalf of the Mission were of course waved during these circumstances.

It should be noted that Missionary Societies with great investments in real estate have recently given their property to the Chinese Christians Church or some Christian

Union. This is in harmony with the original missionary plan to let the "younger churches" inherit the property of the "older churches". According to new regulations the government will decide what the native church actually needs and will be allowed to use, while the real estate of former missionary schools, hospitals and other philanthropic institutions will be taken over by the state or community.

Normally it would seem logical and righteous for the government to give compensation for foreign property used by it. Missions cannot at present sell their real estate property, and if this would be possible it would be at a great loss of the real worth. There would still remain the problem to remit such funds to foreign countries. Whether these difficulties can be ironed out by diplomacy I do not know. I do not believe that the People's Government will compensate Missionary Societies as it considers the entire missionary movement in the service of imperialism and capitalism. Protestant Missionary Societies did as a rule not accept financial compensation for losses during the Boxer Outbreak 1900 and will hardly do it now.

Under the present circumstances it is my personal opinion that all thought of compensation from the People's Government for Mission property "borrowed" by it should be excluded, that churches be accredited to administer missionary property as loan can be considered as a temporary wait-and-see-policy, that an outright gift of mission property to Christian churches or Union of churches is a realistic policy, even if it may only be a beautiful gesture. Whatever the policy of the Swedish Boards of Foreign Missions or Royal Swedish Embassy is going to be in Christianity's greatest crisis in China, I wish

to strongly emphasize that nothing be done which in any way increases the present difficulties of the Christian Churches in China on account of its foreign relationship.

Respectfully submitted,

Oscar Rinell
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(Oscar Rinell)