



International Conference on Civil Society and Christian Religion in Greater China

| **Date:** 8-9 December 2016 | **Time:** 9:30a.m. - 6:00p.m. |
| **Venue:** RRS 905, Hong Kong Baptist University |
| **Registration Fee:** HK\$100 |

Speakers and topics:

Nanlai CAO (Renmin University of China)

Congregation and Community among Diasporic Chinese Christians in Europe

CHAN Shun Hing (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Christians and Civil Society Building in Hong Kong: The Case of the Umbrella Movement

Fredrik FÄLLMAN (University of Gothenburg)

Reducing the Burden of Religious Activity: On Propaganda, Social Action and the Role of Chinese Christian Churches in Civil Society

HAO Zhidong (University of Macau)

A Comparative Study of the Role of Christianity in the Development of Civil Society in Greater China

Z. George HONG (Purdue University)

Civic Culture and Protestant House Church in China

HUANG Jianbo (East China Normal University)

From Rural Church in the Cities to the Urban Church in the 'Village'?

KUO Wen-Ban (National Taipei University)

Christianity and Civic Participation in Taiwan: A Global Perspective

KWOK Wai Luen (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Protestants and the Post-Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong

Richard MADSEN (UC San Diego)

Civil Religion and Civil Society in Asia: Can Christianity Contribute?

Lauren F. PFISTER (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Crossing Over the Line: Obtrusive Neon-light Crosses, New Religious Laws, and Quandaries over Civil Society in Contemporary PRC

Éric SAUTEDÉ (French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong)

Emilie TRAN (Hong Kong Baptist University)

The Role of Catholic Organizations and Catholic Figures in the Rise of Civil Society in Macau

Kristin SHI-KUPFER (Mercator Institute for China Studies)

A Christian Chinese Citizen? Chinese Intellectuals Trace Concepts of Civil Society in Christianity

TAM Yik Fai (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Macau Roman Catholic Church and Its Limited Involvements in Civil Society

Gerda WIELANDER (University of Westminster)

Rejecting the Civil Society Paradigm: Chinese Christian Values and China's Hegemonic Discourses

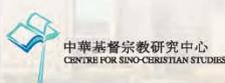
Teresa WRIGHT (California State University)

Possibilities for Civic Virtue and Sentiments of Citizenship among Christians in Mainland China

Mary YUEN (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Catholic Church and Civil Society in Hong Kong: Contributions of the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs

Organized by:



宗教及哲學系
Department of Religion and Philosophy



Abstracts

	Page
1. Nanlai CAO (Renmin University of China) Congregation and Community among Diasporic Chinese Christians in Europe	1
2. CHAN Shun Hing (Hong Kong Baptist University) Christians and Civil Society Building in Hong Kong: The Case of the Umbrella Movement	1
3. Fredrik FÄLLMAN (University of Gothenburg) Reducing the Burden of Religious Activity: On Propaganda, Social Action and the Role of Chinese Christian Churches in Civil Society	2
4. HAO Zhidong (University of Macau) A Comparative Study of the Role of Christianity in the Development of Civil Society in Greater China	2
5. Z. George HONG (Purdue University) Civic Culture and Protestant House Church in China	3
6. HUANG Jianbo (University) From Rural Church in the Cities to the Urban Church in the ‘Villages’?	4
7. KUO Wen-Ban (National Taipei University) Christianity and Civic Participation in Taiwan: A Global Perspective	5
8. KWOK Wai Luen (Hong Kong Baptist University) Protestants and the Post-Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong	5
9. Richard MADSEN (UC San Diego) Civil Religion and Civil Society in Asia: Can Christianity Contribute?	6
10. Lauren F. PFISTER (Hong Kong Baptist University) Crossing Over the Line: Obtrusive Neon-light Crosses, New Religious Laws, and Quandaries over Civil Society in Contemporary PRC	7

	Page
11. Éric SAUTEDÉ (French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong), and Emilie TRAN (Hong Kong Baptist University) The Role of Catholic Organizations and Catholic Figures in the Rise of Civil Society in Macau	8
12. Kristin SHI-KUPFER (Mercator Institute for China Studies) A Christian Chinese Citizen? Chinese Intellectuals Trace Concepts of Civil Society in Christianity	9
13. TAM Yik Fai (Hong Kong Baptist University) Macau Roman Catholic Church and Its Limited Involvements in Civil Society	9
14. Gerda WIELANDER (University of Westminster) Rejecting the Civil Society Paradigm: Chinese Christian Values and China's Hegemonic Discourses	10
15. Teresa WRIGHT (California State University) Possibilities for Civic Virtue and Sentiments of Citizenship among Christians in Mainland China	11
16. Mary Mee-Yin YUEN (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) Catholic Church and Civil Society in Hong Kong: Contributions of the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs	11

Congregation and Community among Diasporic Chinese Christians in Europe

Nanlai CAO
Renmin University of China

This study describes the migration of a highly indigenized Chinese Christianity to secular Europe through transnational Chinese trading networks. Ethnic trading communities in France and Italy serve to bind Chinese Christians together in diaspora and a strong emphasis on congregational autonomy helps embed them in a relatively closed migrant business community. Drawing on ethnographic interviews conducted during fieldwork in Paris and Rome over a five-year period, I show how Christianity has played an important role in Chinese migrants' adaptation to dramatic socioeconomic changes brought about by transnational living circumstances, and how the migrant church has become a unique civil society structure where the family, market and state intersect.

Christians and Civil Society Building in Hong Kong: The Case of the Umbrella Movement

CHAN Shun Hing
Hong Kong Baptist University

This paper examines the social engagement of Christians in the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) Movement/Umbrella Movement in 2014 and its implications for civil society building in Hong Kong. Robert Putnam proposed a model of civic community emphasizing a civic virtue which included four different aspects, namely, civic engagement; political equality; solidarity, trust, and tolerance; and civic associations. Using Robert Putnam's model of civic community, the author argues that Christians made a contribution to advocating the civic virtue embedded in civil society during the period of the OCLP/Umbrella Movement, although its effects were limited and unevenly distributed. In conclusion, the author discusses the role of Christians in strengthening civil society in the context of rising nativism in Hong Kong.

Reducing the Burden of Religious Activity: On Propaganda, Social Action and the Role of Chinese Churches in Civil Society

Fredrik FÄLLMAN
University of Gothenburg

A least since the 1990s and the start of the campaign to “adapt religion to socialist society”, Chinese party-state representatives have requested religious groups to engage more in society, to take part in the overall economic development and progress of Chinese society. More recently, there have been requests for an increased involvement of Christians in social undertakings as health and elderly care, as well as drug rehabilitation and several other fields. There is also the expectation to engage in public life in the form of participation in local public committees and councils. From studies of official propaganda about religion I have discerned a tendency that party-state propaganda about increased participation of religious groups in society simultaneously includes a request for less religious activity, that civil society action ought to “reduce the burden of religious activity”, to quote former United Front vice director Zhu Weiqun. In my paper I will investigate the issue of churches and civil society from the perspective of party-state propaganda, its actual impact, tensions and the response from churches.

A Comparative Study of the Role of Christianity in the Development of Civil Society in Greater China

HAO Zhidong
University of Macau

Equality, participation, and trust are the core components of the idea of civil society. Only when these components are recognized and practiced can we say that there is true civil society that embodies the universal principles of political and social citizenship. To what extent do the Christian churches in greater China embody and practice these ideas, then? To what extent can the Christian churches be termed as civil society organizations according to the civil society index of structure, values, environment, and impact?

Arguably civil society in greater China is on a continuum from state corporatism to civil society, with mainland China on one end and Taiwan on the other, and Macau and Hong Kong in between. There are, of course, many reasons why this is so. But does this correspond to the different roles the Catholic and Protestant churches in different places play in social and political participation, and if so, how and why?

This paper attempts to explore these issues. My argument is that the churches, as stronger or weaker civil society organizations, have played different roles, active or passive, in the development of civil society in greater China, and the extent to which they play these roles is determined by the political and cultural factors in different places and how the church leaders interpret and act on their interpretations of the local situation and thereby the role of the church. The nature of the civil society in each part of greater China correlates with the stronger and weaker roles of the church, i.e., the more active the church, the stronger the civil society, and vice versa. There may be exceptions, but the exceptions may prove the rule.

My argument is based on an examination of current literature, including that of my own research.

In greater China, religion, especially Christianity, is playing a more and more important role in building civil society. An examination of how they do or do not do it will shed light on the nature of society each place builds and how successful they are in building it.

Civic Culture and Protestant House Church in China

Z. George HONG
Purdue University

This paper addresses the positive and negative roles of the Protestant house churches in civic culture and civil society in China. It examines the civic culture as an analytical reference in discussing the common characteristics of both the Confucian culture and Chinese Communist culture in terms of their lack of individual rights, civic participation and social tolerance. Given that the principles of civic culture include individual

freedom of religion, political participation and social tolerance, this paper, first of all, illustrates the positive contributions by the house churches to enhance church members' individual rights through opposing the five "illegalities" defined by the government, including their "illegal" status, "illegal" church, "illegal" foreign church schools, "illegal" inter-regional religious activities, and "illegal" organizational collaborations with foreign churches. Furthermore, the paper addresses the house churches' contributions to political participation and civic engagement. Finally, it points out the house churches' weaknesses in support of social, cultural and religious toleration toward the government and the Three Self-Patriotic Churches. In addition, this study points towards several options for the house churches to rights protection and rights seeking in an effort to promote a civil society in China. As the house church members are ordinary citizens with their inherent citizen rights, the author suggests that they expand the public sphere for Christianity while minimizing their political connotation yet without being afraid of politics. They also should look for the "yellow light" (gray area) in their quest for religious freedom, make the best use of the "green light" (legal signals) while avoiding the "red light" (restricted activities). Meanwhile, they can use the *Bible* as a viable tool for protecting their rights. Finally, they should work to turn the government's role from a moralistic arbiter in people's spiritual lives or an umpire in all religious affairs to one that is service-oriented facilitator, thus transforming the current situation of "subordinating religion to political dominance" to one of peaceful coexistence between politics and religion.

From Rural Church in the Cities to the Urban Church in the 'Villages'?

HUANG Jianbo

East China Normal University

Christianity in urbanizing China has been changed dramatically at least in terms of its geographical and population allocations. We have observed a new type of churches emerged in the last 20 years resulted in the urbanization process. We may call it rural church in the cities, if we take the rural and urban church typology, because many of them still carry a lot of the features of the rural church though they live in the cities.

However, along with the development of the new urbanization policy implemented recently, there are more and more urban churches making efforts to influence the rural churches, esp. in theological training and church governance. In a way, another type of church dynamic might be termed as urban church in the villages. Though most of the rural churches now began to reorganize around the small cities and towns, not necessarily in the villages, they are taking more and more urban church features as many of the young church leaders received theological trainings from the major cities and some migrant worker Christians returned to their hometown and home church.

Christianity and Civic Participation in Taiwan: A Global Perspective

KUO Wen-Ban
National Taipei University

Most of Chinese Christian churches, including Catholicism and Protestantism, civic participation were either neglected or limited to educational/charity works. The idea of public religion, i.e. the prophetic role of the church, is only appreciated among a few and some of them seemed to be triggered by either religious interferences or even persecutions. Besides, at the ideological level, two major factors may be identified for the churches to overcome in order to assume their prophetic role. The traditional one can be read from Max Weber's classical study of Religion of China, and the modern one may be comprehended by way of R. Robertson's theorization of Globalization. In light of this frame of reference, the Taiwanese Presbyterian church and the Catholic Church are compared and some major points of this study are singled out.

Protestants and the Post-Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong

KWOK Wai Luen
Hong Kong Baptist University

Christian participation in the Occupy Central Movement and the Umbrella Movement in 2014 is obvious. In this paper, I will analyze the characteristics of protestant Christian participation in social action of the

Post-Umbrella Movement. I will offer two rounds of analysis. Firstly, I will analyze the patterns of activities, discourses, key participants network, and impacts of two post-umbrella movement organizations through participant observation method. Then, I will triangulate my findings through comparing them with another post-umbrella movement organization and one long-term Christian civil organization. I will point out that, in term of activities, some common features of Hong Kong Christian civil actions can be identified. In term of discourses, we can observe a convergence of liberal and evangelical theological camps in political theology. I propose that this common pattern comes from a close interpersonal connection between the key participants. Finally, I will suggest the limitations of the present practice in view of the Post-Umbrella Movement social circumstances.

Civil Religion and Civil Society in Asia: Can Christianity Contribute?

Richard MADSEN
University of California

Over the course of his fruitful career, Robert N. Bellah developed the idea of a “civil religion” as a cultural foundation for a democratic polity. In America, this civil religion drew on symbols from Christianity, but it was not the same as Christianity, and in a religiously pluralistic future it could and should draw upon symbols from other faiths. As Bellah was expanding this idea, others were expanding the idea of “civil society” as a social foundation for democracy. Although the two lines of inquiry ran parallel to each other, they came together, at least implicitly, in books like *Habits of the Heart*. In this talk, I want to make a more explicit analysis of the connection between civil religion and civil society, which I will argue mutually constitute one another. I will then discuss the conditions of possibility for the development of Asian civil religions in the context of Asian civil societies. Most current discussions assume that the basis for a Chinese civil religion would be Confucianism; but I would argue that a modern Chinese civil religion would have to draw from the plurality of the Chinese cultural tradition, including the role played by Christianity within it.

Crossing Over the Line: Obtrusive Neon-light Crosses, New Religious Laws, and Quandaries over Civil Society in Contemporary PRC

Lauren F. PFISTER
Hong Kong Baptist University

Since the beginning of the 21st century there has been a strong sense that the PRC government was gradually relaxing its constraints over the five major religious traditions that are legally recognized within the country. Nevertheless, first in July 2014 and then again in May 2016, Christian crosses and some church buildings became targets of demolition squads in the Wenzhou area, signaling signs of a harsh and focused crackdown on religious symbols that were unacceptable to local officials. Subsequently in September 2016 a new draft of religious laws was made public, increasing the sense among some that a more general restrictive attitude toward religious life in all forms of religious communities within the PRC is about to be enforced.

Here I will argue, first of all, that many overseas interpreters of these events have tended to focus on “the freedom of religion” or “the freedom of religious belief” without considering the implications of what the PRC constitution also supports under the rubric of “the freedom to have no religious belief”. In this way, legal advances found within the 2016 draft law tend to be overlooked, while fears about future restrictive conditions (that I agree are indeed restrictive) are emphasized, without consideration for other possibilities in how these laws may or may not be applied.

Secondly, I will argue that what is at stake both legally and culturally is a question of how the PRC government in particular, and any other contemporary government in general, institutes cultural conditions that would legally ensure for the freedom to have no religious belief. Here we have a quest for a “naked public square” with “Chinese characteristics”, a new attempt to enforce a form of Marxist-influenced values of “absolute secularism” that ultimately runs into conflict with all forms of late 20th century international conventions related to “religious rights”. Finally, after an analysis based upon the comparison of the body of the 2005 religious laws and the 2016 draft of a putatively new legal framework for religious laws in the PRC, I will argue that the even as the previous body of

laws were unenforceable because they were too ambiguous in their assertions, the present draft of new religious laws will be unenforceable because they will make it impossible to express the very form of “harmonious society” that the current PRC government claims to set as its social and political ideal. What essentially occurs is a restriction that promotes uniformity over harmonious diversity, and so makes creative and positive social harmony essentially unrealizable.

The Role of Catholic Organizations and Catholic Figures in the Rise of Civil Society in Macau

Éric SAUTEDÉ

French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong, and

Emilie TRAN

Hong Kong Baptist University

The role of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the society in Macau stretches back to the very beginning of the Portuguese presence in this southern China enclave under Portuguese administration. The Holy House of Mercy of Macau, arguably the first charitable organisation of the territory was established as a branch of its Lisbon parent institution in 1569, and the first ever Western university in East Asia, St. Paul's University College of Macau, was funded by a Jesuit father in 1594. Today, charities and education are still the two realms in which the Catholic Church exercise a significant influence on society in the Macau SAR, a place that was once characterized as “the City of the Holy Name of God”. It is Catholic schools under the patronage of the diocese of Macau that provide the majority of schooling in the territory, amid greater challenges though, as the gap between rhetoric and reality in the application of Catholic principles has become blatant. Yet, this paper argues that it is Catholics, old and young, who are at the forefront of the empowerment of civil society in Macau, whether this concerns social justice or political modernisation. Emphasising the role played by some Catholic associations and figures in the growing power of civil society in Macau in recent years, this study focuses on three organisations and their respective leadership: the New Macau Association, created in 1991 by legislators Ng Kuok Cheong and Au Kam San, arguably the most important democratic association in Macau; Caritas Macau, that dates back to the 1950s, and was

redeveloped by Paul Pun Chi Meng in the 1990s; and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Centre in Macau established in 1990, whose action, through the devotion of Sr Juliana Devoy, was instrumental in pushing for a recent legislation on domestic violence in the territory.

**A Christian Chinese Citizen?
Chinese Intellectuals Trace Concepts of Civil Society in Christianity**

Kristin SHI-KUPFER
Mercator Institute for China Studies

A number of Chinese intellectuals from various background and faiths have studied Christianity in the search for fruitful concept to foster civil society in China. Core questions have evolved around the relationship between loyalty to the state, faithfulness to God and the duty for civil disobedience. The role of the rule of law and notions of forgiveness and reconciliation have been also prominent ideas. This contribution analyses the respective ideas and their impact.

**Macau Roman Catholic Church and
Its Limited Involvements in Civil Society**

TAM Yik Fai
Hong Kong Baptist University

Macau was practically under Portuguese influences and rule around 450 years. Given the fact that Roman Catholicism was state religion of Portugal until 1974, it is easy to have an impression that Roman Catholic Church played a significant role in the social affairs of this tiny but important colony. I will try, firstly, to provide a historical and cultural explanation to the limited involvements of the Roman Catholic Church in local affairs in Macau. Then, I will argue, with research evidences, this limited involvements are the consequences of the interaction of the internal vision on Church's role and mission among the local Catholic; as well as the external social and political constraints of the society. At the end, I will point out that the specificities of

Macau as a “small society” poses some unique limitations on Catholic social participations and their ways of involvements in the social affairs.

**Rejecting the Civil Society Paradigm:
Chinese Christian Values and China’s Hegemonic Discourses**

Gerda WIELANDER
University of Westminster

This paper argues that the civil society and civic community paradigms as formulated by Habermas and Putnam are inappropriate frameworks to analyse the relationship between “the church” and the Chinese state. In reference to the call for a theology of the Chinese language (*hanyu shenxue*), this paper argues for a Chinese-centred theoretical approach to understanding the dynamics within which Chinese Christians negotiate their existence and their values with the authoritarian Chinese state.

The paper relies on the concept of “consensus” as proposed by Luigi Tomba in his study of Chinese neighbourhood governance (2014). The model proposes that both resistance and acceptance are accommodated within a legitimate framework of discursive and practical rules. It refers to “the existence of a space where bargaining between state and society and within society is made possible through formalized institutions, routinized practices, and discursive boundaries. [...]an arena of political interaction among the state, individuals, and private and local actors in which the state’s hegemonic discourses act as the confines, but contention is allowed to emerge – and does.” (p.169)

The paper argues that holding onto expectations of the emergence of a Chinese ‘civil society’ in Habermas’ sense, in which Chinese Christians may or may not play a crucial role, prevents us from seeing the processes of “translation” of political ideology in the social and political conditions of the different churches (these include the adoption of “suzhi” discourses, for example), but also the “translation” of Christian values into the dominant state discourse (in the form of a more emotive and spiritual rhetoric, for example). The paper will provide examples for such instances of “translation” and will argue that it is in such instances of “translation” within this “consensual space” where Chinese Christians – who inhabit many

different identities in their interaction with the Chinese state beyond being members of a specific church – can play a significant role in shaping China’s social and political landscape, without being able to change the system itself.

Possibilities for Civic Virtue and Sentiments of Citizenship among Christians in Mainland China

Teresa WRIGHT
California State University

In Mainland China, can Christianity nurture civic virtue and sentiments of citizenship among its adherents, even under Chinese Communist Party (CCP rule)? This paper argues that it is impossible to provide a single overall answer to this question, due to the many variations that are found among Christian believers and CCP practices. In terms of “civic virtue,” the paper explores the potential for Christian believers to exhibit behavior that is moral, law-abiding, disciplined, and generous. Regarding citizenship, the paper explores the potential for Christian believers to view themselves as citizens of the CCP-dominated state. In exploring these issues, the paper examines areas in which variations have been apparent, including: geographical location within China, changes in government policies and attitudes over time, differences in what has drawn Christian believers to their faith; and differences among Christian denominations.

Catholic Church and Civil Society in Hong Kong: Contributions of the Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs

Mary Mee-Yin YUEN
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Civil society is often seen as a space that promotes citizens’ full participation, ensuring that people strive towards a participatory democracy. It is a place for active exchange, discussion and interaction between the various groups in the community. This paper will examine the contributions of a faith-based organization in strengthening civil society in Hong Kong, with the case of Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs

(HKCCLA) and the affiliated labour centres as an example. HKCCLA is a church-sponsored organization that serves workers of different ethnicities, with both Catholic and non-Catholic volunteers. It aims at affirming the dignity of workers and empowering workers who have been oppressed, based on Catholic values and teachings. This paper will investigate how HKCCLA and its affiliated centres provided religious social capital to civic engagement and facilitated the cultivation of civic virtues through its work and activities, and the limitations of their programmes. In Conclusion, I shall evaluate the concept of civil society from the Catholic tradition, and discuss its research implications for future study.