

Toward a Shared Sustainable Future

The Role of Religion, Values and Ethics



Zhuo Xinping, Qiu Zhonghui, Philip L. Wickeri and Theresa Carino (eds)

**Toward a Shared, Sustainable Future:
The Role of Religion, Values and Ethics**

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Foreword

The 2016 conference on “Religions, Values, Ethics and Development,” co-organized in Nanjing by the Amity Foundation and the Institute for World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, brought together people from different religions and also scholars of religions, government officials and practitioners from faith-based organizations who were convinced that religions can and must play a significant role for ensuring the achievement of sustainable development goals in a rapidly globalizing world. To address the huge challenges confronting the planet earth will require that we work together across religions, across national borders, transcending our cultural and religious differences.

Time was set aside on December 13th to commemorate the 1937 Nanjing Massacre when 300,000 Chinese in Nanjing were massacred by invading Japanese troops. In remembering the Nanjing massacre representatives of the five major religions (Buddhism, Catholicism, Daoism, Islam and Protestant Christianity) offered prayers for peace and for those who had suffered and died. Its commemoration continues to remind us of the horrors of war and how it is imperative for us to take measures to ensure it will not be repeated again.

Unfortunately, the last decade has seen an upsurge in violence, globally generated partly by those who use and abuse religion for political ends. Religions can become instruments for igniting conflict and generating a “culture of hate” within and between nations. Inter-faith initiatives to counter these are vital as religions can and have been used to justify violence. This requires us not only to understand more deeply our own faith but also those of others. It also requires us to see peace-making as an essential goal in religious and ethical efforts for social development.

The launching of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 has brought greater attention to the invaluable role religions can play. They have traditionally played a significant role in responding to humanitarian needs and will continue to do so. At the conference, participants from different continents emphasized the positive contributions of religions, through the values they espouse, to the reduction of poverty, to disaster relief, to the advocacy of rights of vulnerable groups in a wide variety of contexts and communities. Of enormous concern have been the growing inequalities and the concomitant social and economic injustices that have arisen in the wake of rapid economic growth. Both social practitioners and scholars emphasized the positive role religions can play in ensuring that development is more inclusive and human centered.

There were a number of “firsts” at this international conference. Of great pride to Amity is that it was the first time that a separate session was included to discuss the role of women in religion and development. The session that brought together women practitioners and scholars from China and other parts of Asia, highlighted the significant contributions of “women of faith” to development and how important it is to ensure women’s empowerment as stake holders and beneficiaries of development. Equally new for Amity was the holding of a special session to discuss inter-faith initiatives, in dialogue, in education and practical cooperation, and how this is essential in the cultivation of mutual understanding, peace and justice in Asia and globally. It was also the first time that research findings were shared on the emergent philanthropic scene in China, where religious or faith-based organizations, including faith-based entrepreneurs are beginning to make some impact on the development of a more giving and caring society. The gathering of participants, not only from outside China, but also from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, to discuss religions’ role in development was also a “first” in an international conference organized by Amity. All these “firsts” demonstrated how much China had changed in the last five years. They also emphasized once again that social, political and economic challenges cut across national boundaries, and that the urgent need for cross-cultural, inter-religious and cross-sectoral collaboration is essential.

The exchange of views and perspectives among scholars, officials, members of the private sector and social practitioners on religion and development was mutually enriching and “mind-opening”. Government officials expressed the positive views they had accumulated in their

encounters with faith-based organizations and felt that the “green light” should be given for more FBO involvement in social service and development work. Reinforcing this, Chinese scholars shared their research findings on the invaluable contributions of religion both in the past and the present. There was clearly a meeting of minds between religious scholars and development practitioners that the social services provided by religions and the strong social values they transmit can help bring about positive social transformation, not only in China, but in the rest of the world.

We are confident that positive changes will take place in the next decade and that religions will increasingly play vital roles in the shaping of a development agenda that will leave no one behind. In China, religious affiliation has risen dramatically over the last two decades and faith-based organizations have grown in their capacity to deliver better services in meeting growing social needs and new challenges. The sharing of resources, best practices and the development of mutual understanding cannot be over-emphasized, especially as China begins to assume, more and more, its share of responsibility for the common development of humankind and its shared future.

It is with great pride that we bring to you some of the valuable insights shared and distilled at the December 2016 international conference in Nanjing on “Religions, Values, Ethics and Development”. I wish to thank all participants in and organizers of our 2016 conference. The papers in this report offer readers some of the important perspectives on what we have tried to accomplish.

Qiu Zhonghui

Introduction

The December 2016 international conference held in Nanjing to discuss the theme “Religion, Values, Ethics and Development” was one of the few in China to bring together both scholars of religion and faith-based development practitioners. Co-organized and hosted by the Amity Foundation and the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the conference provided a platform for the discussion of how religion can nurture sustainable development given the urgent issues confronting humanity today. It provided a golden opportunity to involve participants from different religious backgrounds in China, including those from Taiwan, Macao and Hong Kong. Overseas participants came from 15 countries in four continents. The gathering of more than 250 participants focused on religion’s positive role and the need for religions to be engaged in attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. This volume incorporates most of the papers delivered at the conference.

Keynote Speeches

In his keynote address, Zhuo Xiping emphasized the connectedness of humanity and spoke of “the common future shared by a community of humankind”. He observed that, throughout its lengthy history, religious development in China has constituted “a participating and contributing force to the continuity of the Chinese nation and the sustenance of Chinese society. Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, the three major Chinese religions, have all played constructive roles in the formation of the Chinese national spirit and embody core Chinese values.” More attention should thus be paid to the reinvigorating and motivating aspects of religions, to their close connections to human sustainable development not simply as a passive reflection of society, but as a driving force.

This was affirmed by Cornelia Fullkrueg Weitzel in her presentation on the history of Bread for the World (Germany) and its significant contributions to the practice of social service and development, not only within Germany but in partnership with FBOs around the world since the end of the 2nd World War. Its international outreach and impact in bringing about change would not have been possible without stable and mutually enforcing state-church relations. She stressed the importance for the state to recognize and safeguard religions' role and relevance for social and cultural life in society.

As social challenges have become globalized, the search for solutions must have proper platforms and mechanisms for global collaboration. Ulrich Nitschke introduced the work of PaRD, the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development. Bringing together bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, the private sector and FBOs, it is an effort of the German Ministry for Development Cooperation to further institutionalize dialogue and cooperation in development and humanitarian assistance, and to harness the positive impact of religion in these fields.

Qiu Zhonghui's presentation shows the evolution of Amity Foundation, one of China's foremost FBOs established in 1985. In the context of China's reforms, Amity has been working closely with its local and international partners, creating its own pioneering approach to social change and development. Since 1993, it has been addressing the issue of poverty through its projects in the poorer, western provinces of China, emphasizing the need for integrated and participatory development. Today, its extensive network of development projects and services help meet the needs of vulnerable populations such as the elderly, autistic children, HIV-AIDS sufferers, and abandoned children. In Amity's shift towards more advocacy work, Qiu has emphasized the critical importance of Christian ideals: "When God created human beings, He did it without discrimination. All Amity projects, without exception, put people at the center."

The impact of religious values and ideals

Expounding on the power of Christian ideals, Dietrich Werner argues that the core theological principles of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation have had profound transformative effects on social and political

development in the West. The Reformation initiated a process that led to greater respect for human dignity, social progress and biblically authentic faith. “It innovatively combined faith and education which became the key factors of the European Reformation, unleashing the immense potential of Christian communities for social service”.

This passion for engaging in *diaconia* or social service became one of the key features of the Christian missionary enterprise in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many mission societies working in China strongly supported women’s education. According to Angela Wong Wai Ching, early women’s colleges included the Ginling College for women in Nanjing and the Hwa Nan College for women in Fujian. In Asia as a whole, women’s education provided new social space for women’s autonomous activities, quietly shaking loose the constraints of traditions and nurturing women for leadership. Despite these achievements, Wong highlights the huge gender gaps that continue to exist in Asia and globally, keeping women among the poorest and the most vulnerable.

To achieve the ambitious goals of the SDGs 2030, it is imperative that the power of religion be harnessed. Martin Palmer surprised his audience when he revealed that religious organizations own about 8% of the habitable surface of the planet and run over 50% of all the schools worldwide. Even less known is the fact that religious organizations are the fourth largest investing group in the world. “Faith-consistent investing” may be a relatively new concept but the question of how assets and resources should be appropriately used and “invested” becomes a critical issue as religious organizations seek to make an ethical impact on the public sector.

Religious Values and Sustainable Development

Tang Xiaofeng, a Chinese scholar of religions, acknowledges the “essentialness of religious views” in shaping individual value systems and social behavior. Taking a philosophical approach to the idea of religious values, he discusses the interaction between cognition, moral consciousness and religious consciousness in shaping one’s value system. He posits that “if a religion deems the world a good place, its teachings and doctrines are likely to explore the good in both man and the world at large”.

Relating individually held values to collective social action, Kong Siew Huat explains how the Baha'i community has been systematically trying to bring about transformation among individuals and communities around the world and to inspire and build the capacity for giving and service. Despite the progress of science and technology, economic and social disparities have grown to an "immoral scale". In championing a life of simplicity, the Baha'i movement seeks to redefine cultural norms which have to be shaped in an inclusive manner. Nurturing a "culture of giving" is thus the common responsibility of humankind.

In his discussion of the role of "religious values" for development, Christoph Stuekelberger identifies key common values upheld by many religions: dignity, care and compassion. He believes this is why individuals and institutions that are faith-based are among the most generous donors to charity. These shared values are reflected in the new global search, across religions, for integrity in professional life, for the religious foundations of business ethics and the growing inter-faith cooperation in addressing social and ethical issues such as climate change, food security and corruption in government.

Paulos Huang believes that it is the practice of values embedded in Lutheranism that has contributed to the excellent quality of Finnish education. He links the toleration of mistakes, for instance, to the Lutheran emphasis on God's grace, which has in turn contributed to an outcome of innovation in society. Values traced to the Reformation, he argues, help us to understand why in Finland, material development does not engender greed; generous welfare coverage does not breed idleness; and the emphasis on teamwork ultimately produces the most competitive students.

Expounding on the impact of religious values on poverty reduction in Finland, Miikka Ruokanen emphasizes the role of the church which has been practicing church-run services or diaconia in an institutionalized manner since 1943. Historically, Christian charity preceded social welfare in Finland, and the church remains a powerful moral educator among the Finnish people. Every local parish has the duty to practice diaconia through its professional diaconal workers and volunteers. In recent years, the practice of diaconia has shifted from Christian charity to advocacy work that critically identifies new types of poverty and social marginalization.

Faith, Values and Ethics: The Experience and Practice of Christian Philanthropy in China

Faith and entrepreneurship is a relatively new phenomenon in contemporary China. Cao Nanlai contributes a detailed case study of how Christian philanthropic organizations have emerged “spontaneously” in China. Through their practice of business-supported philanthropy, merchant Christians have blazed a sustainable trail of “serving God through business” and “glorifying God while benefitting the people”. They conserve space for independent development while drawing together the influence of enterprises, churches and local governments. Their philanthropic acts, concludes Cao, are the innovative outcomes of Chinese Christians’ adaptation to the new development of Christianity in the era of globalization.

As a Christian entrepreneur, Cui Wantian explores the relationship between “faith and entrepreneurship” in China from an ethical perspective. He laments the fact that religious organizations have yet to provide entrepreneurs with faith support that can help address the faith crisis and ethical dilemmas they often encounter. Stressing the need for more research into the relationship between religion, economics and corporate development, he describes the role played by new institutions such as the “Kingdom Business College” (Shen Shang) in values formation among entrepreneurs.

Feng Hao believes that since China is now part of the international economic order, and continues to “deepen” its economic reforms, it is possible and “theoretically necessary” to absorb and draw lessons from Christian work ethic (as it has been practiced in the West) so as to strengthen socialist culture and promote the sustained development of the socialist market economy. It helps to recognize the “spiritual alternative” that Christianity offers in meeting social needs, the efforts that Christian believers make to actualize personal and social value, and the positive and identifiable role Christianity plays in social education and harmony.

Increasingly, Chinese scholars researching on religious philanthropy are convinced that FBOs can make a significant difference to the plight of the marginalized. Duan Qi has been researching and writing extensively on Christianity in China for several decades, showing great sympathy for the humanitarian work carried out by Catholic and

Protestant organizations. Motivated by their deep religious convictions, Catholic nuns have been working in the most remote areas serving lepers, abandoned and disabled children and the elderly. She is moved by their spirit of service and self-sacrifice and trusts that the Christian community by transmitting “the spirit of Christ’s love” can “remove the utilitarian mentality, truly serve those in need” and contribute to the “building of a harmonious and beautiful society in China”.

In the same vein, Kang Zhiljie has devoted much of her research to the history of Catholic charitable institutions in China. Her study of Catholic church-run orphanages in the late Ming and Qing Dynasties highlights the characteristics of these institutions at the operational levels. For her, Catholic Church-run orphanages demonstrated the core values of Catholic faith: the respect for, attention to and salvation of every human life, which is considered a gift from God. She observes that the care for abandoned young children, particularly those with disabilities, embodied the transmission of Christ’s love and generosity.

Writing about the diaconal practice of Protestant churches in China, Shen Zhanqing describes the majority of Chinese churches, seminaries and many church-related organizations as having yet to put the same kind of priority on social services as they do with their ministry to church congregations. Chinese churches are therefore “late starters in providing social services” and these suffer from inadequate professional training, a lack of diversity and slow growth. Given the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of Chinese society, she emphasizes the need for the church to reach out to local communities and to serve a larger number of people of different nationalities and beliefs.

Women, Religion and Development

The papers in this section attempt to identify ways in which women of faith have contributed to lifting people out of poverty and suffering. Religion, however, can be both a help and a hindrance to development. On issues of gender, religions can be major blocks to the empowerment of women. The bible, for instance, is often quoted to support patriarchal perspectives. Cathy Zhang Jing challenges this by focusing on the encounter between Jesus and the Syrophenician woman as written in the Gospel of Mark. Re-interpreting the biblical passage in the Chinese context, she singles out *métis* as the enabling and empowering element in women.

Reinforcement for the idea of women's empowerment can also be found in the practices of traditional Chinese religions. Claudia He Yun points out that in both Buddhism and Daoism, female Goddesses have played important roles in giving strength and solace to those who are suffering. The most popular deity in both traditions is the Goddess *Guan Yin*. She may fall behind the Buddha or the Jade Emperor in her celestial position but she is the one that people go to when they seek comfort and hope.

In her case study of the operational mode of Tzu Chi Foundation, a Buddhist charitable foundation with headquarters in Taiwan, Zhong Xin finds that its use of a "feminine and affective management style", that is non-hierarchical and bureaucratic, has been highly effective in motivating social practitioners and in sustaining the organization. Led by a Buddhist nun and supported primarily by volunteers, the majority of whom are women, Tzu Chi's organizational hierarchy is based on "charismatic authority".

The significant role of women in caring for the lepers and the elderly in the Evangelical Church of Vietnam-South (ECVN-S) is highlighted in the study of Le Ngoc Bich Ly. As is often the case, because women have an "inferior" and marginalized status in the church, these groups remain unnoticed and unappreciated. The fact that such invaluable work is "silent and invisible" could undermine its long-term sustainability. The study also shows up the problems pertaining to the "religious paradigm" of social work in relation to gender and the socio-political context in Vietnam.

Inter-Faith Initiatives and Approaches to Development

In recent decades, as religion, especially its more fundamentalist and extremist forms, has become increasingly intertwined with domestic and cross-border conflicts, "peace-building" activities have become crucial among FBOs and religious organizations. The inter-faith initiatives of the Asia Alliance of YMCAs have been intensified since the dire events of 9/11 which resulted in the US "war on terror". Nam Boo-Won's article details the efforts of the Asia Alliance to address root causes of religious discontent and to promote inter-faith activities in peace building in the region. Despite many of these efforts, inter-religious conflict and violence have continued to surge over the last two decades. There is thus great

urgency for developing a cross-cutting agenda on peace education that will reach all levels of educational institutions, civil society and the private sector.

Carlos Emilio Ham-Stanard stresses the importance of both intra-religious and inter-religious formation especially in times when religious fundamentalism and sectarian violence are increasing. Faith-based organizations and communities are urged not only to co-exist, but rather to “pro-exist”, empowering each other in the quest for alternatives along with secular communities. Ham-Stanard warns that so called “empowerment” can be misused or manipulated. This must be transformed into an “authentic empowerment” that is a process by which the people in need can rise as “subjects of their own lives” and of their respective communities.

The call for “religious literacy” by Kathleen Ferrier further underscores the need for more inter-faith initiatives. In an ever more divided world, where religion is abused and blamed for feelings of insecurity and identity loss, it is important to strengthen and cultivate knowledge that leads to understanding. Religious literacy aims at mutual understanding and mutual learning. As we live in an interconnected world, the challenges of our times – epidemics, terrorism, modern slavery, climate change – cannot be solved by any country alone: they cross borders, cultures and societies and their solution demands the joining of forces.

Conclusion

In his summary, Philip Wickeri challenges the claim by Christians to have a special set of ‘Christian values’ that are transformative and life-giving and therefore, universal. A cursory view of the history of Christianity will show that entirely different sets of values had been in place at different times including slavery, the subjugation of women, anti-Semitism, apartheid, homophobia, destruction of the environment, capitalist exploitation and so on. He suggests, instead, that more attention be paid to the relationship between law and virtue (or ethics) on development. We should draw from the Chinese understanding of religion. He notes that the movement from charity to social service, to development and

to advocacy in NGOs like Amity, combined with an understanding of virtue in governance and the five characteristics of religion would help us situate what we have done in this conference in a wider context.

The challenge for China today is to make the paradigmatic shift from “modernity” to “sustainability”. The normative elements in religions can provide an important critique of the extremes of modernization and the market or capitalistic economy that drives unsustainable growth today. The conference helped to identify areas in which religions and religious traditions can contribute to the attainment of sustainable development goals. Religion and faith actors can no longer be confined to the private sphere. In multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts, inter-faith initiatives in education and peace building are urgently needed. At the local levels, many new initiatives are being undertaken not only by faith based organizations but by entrepreneurs motivated by faith related ethical values.

The papers contained in this volume confirm in no uncertain terms that the shift from rapid economic growth to sustainable development cannot take place without the active participation of religious organizations and faith communities. Most important is the necessary collaboration between government, academe, business and religions in facing common threats of environmental degradation, climate change, poverty, economic and gender inequality and conflicts fueled by competition and religious misunderstanding.

The Editors

Acknowledgements

The International Conference on “Religions, Values, Ethics and Development” that was held in December 2016 was the second time that the Amity Foundation and the Institute on World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences had co-organized a conference. With participants numbering over 250, the scale of this conference and the breadth of the topics and subthemes touched by the speakers were unprecedented and the organizers owe its success to the support received from local and overseas partners who came from 15 countries, different religious organizations and government authorities in China.

We are deeply grateful to Bread for the World (Germany) without whose generous support the international conference could not have taken place and the publication of this book would not have been possible. Our sincere thanks also go to the ICCO-Cooperation (Netherlands), United Methodist Church USA, the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Churches’ China Group and the Taiwan Chinese Christian Association for Cross-Straits Communication for their financial contributions and participation in this project.

Most of the papers presented at the bilingual 2016 conference have been included in this volume. Great appreciation goes to all the speakers and paper writers for their invaluable contributions, their cooperation and infinite patience in its production. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the translators (Shen Guangqiu, Zhang Yiyun, Xia Huijin, Wen Ge, Wang Yanshuang and Wang Yun) for their professionalism and persistence

without which this book could not have been completed. Finally, we wish to thank all the many volunteers and Amity staff who gave generously of their time and energy to the organizing of the conference, especially to Ling Chunxiang, Xie Ying and Zhu Yanwei. Our deep appreciation goes to Wu Meijuan for all her hard work during the conference and in the production of this book.

The Editors

Part I

Keynote Addresses

Religions and the Sustainable Development of a Human Community with a Shared Destiny

Zhuo Xinping

The significance of religion in societies is more about a shared spiritual safeguard for co-existence than the individual pursuit of spirituality. Religion is inextricably a part of society. Our discussion today about religion and sustainable development is not only about the sustainability of religion but also about the relationship between religion and the sustainable development of human societies. To build and develop a community of shared destiny for humankind is an outcome of the construction of different human societies.

A historical review of religions will show that their formation was never socially detached. From the very beginning, religions appeared and were sustained as an intertwining presence in human societies, mirroring community landscapes through the expression of collective consciousness and spiritual character. Religions survived and grew within communities, playing a role in their expansion and transformation. Along with the growth of their respective communities, religions began to function better and increasingly exerted remarkable influences on societies. After mingling and integration, religions became anchors of national spirits and carriers of national aspirations. For these nations, religions reflected their souls and assumed a particular national character. Especially when the survival of a nation was at stake, with the destruction of its political structure, its religious communities would often resort to civil or “underground” action to demonstrate national solidarity and resilience, offering support and a driving force for the anticipated restoration. In this regard, the role of Judaism after the fall of ancient

Israel is a good example. Jewish synagogues complemented or even replaced the Holy Temple in Jerusalem after the conquest. Synagogue-centered Jewish communities have since then emerged all over the world, building up monuments for the continuation of the Jewish nation. Before the establishment of modern Israel, Judaism and Jewish communities had mostly defined the existence of Israelites. Similarly, history has shown that as nations succumbed to external occupation, their national communities were sustained through religious observances, which ultimately inspired and spiritually supported national emancipation and independence. Such was the role of Catholicism for the Poles, Orthodox Christianity for many Slavic nations and Protestantism for English settlers in North America. All these nations had experiences of a special religio-national interrelationship. In many cases, the spirit of a nation is expressed in religion. These highly regarded religious values continue to exist within modern societies and through their modes of development. Therefore, much attention should be paid in handling the relationship between state and church today.

Even though drastic secularization in human society may have driven religions into withdrawal and oblivion, and some revolutionary changes have negated their role of sustaining social traditions, religions, as a social existence and spiritual pursuit, have never been eliminated. On the contrary, their spiritual strength still remains and should be treated with social and political discretion as an active and essential mediating force. Indeed, the issue of religion is not just an ideological concern, but has to do with attitudes towards the spiritual heritage of humanity. No other markers can be mentioned in the same breath as religion in characterizing the formation of humankind and its spiritual worship, the reason why religion has been termed the “anthropological constant”. All in the past are not simply gone. For the historical heritage, discernment and innovative proclamation is necessary. Just as we uphold fine Chinese cultural traditions today, we should never adopt a radical negation towards the religious aspects of our history, nor should we exclude that part of our culture. Indeed, the connotative development of religions does constitute a participating and contributing force to the continuity of the Chinese nation and the sustenance of Chinese society. To revive the social significance of religions is nothing short of both an issue and a challenge to Chinese religions and society. Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, the three major Chinese religions, have all played constructive

roles in the formation of the Chinese national spirit and embody core Chinese values. Foreign religions, Christianity and Islam in particular, encountered both inclusion and conflict when they were introduced to China. Their arrival, at the very least, brought global perspectives and the rich diversity of world civilizations. The open-mindedness and inclusion involved in the process can be inspirational to China as it goes through stages of innovation and growth.

As spiritual pillars, religions can serve the sustainable development of human community with a shared destiny in the following ways:

Firstly, the worship of gods expresses an understanding of ultimate reality and connection, making it possible to build a communal world of gods and humanity in cosmic entirety. As it makes us aware of our limitations, it enables us to attain a detached perspective transcending time, space and history. Religions, by nature, describe the perception and enlightenment of human beings as they observe the world around them. For example, both their understanding of the rimless (infinite?) cosmos and of their craving for the innermost perceptions can be detected in religious outlooks and meditations. Different from scientific and philosophical examination, religions are affective, emotional and feature “psychological reasoning”.

In the second place, religions forge a “holy alliance” for nations or their peoples, through which “godly governance” or “rule” emerges to break secular bondages, that is, a holy dimension to examine humanity and its community for unity. The conventional “holy alliance” may not be needed by secular societies, but alliances in politics, nation and culture are still in demand. Humanity in the modern world cannot live without the sacred dimension. In fact, it is the sacredness or holiness that discloses the spirituality and transcendence of religions, the absence of which will definitely lead to the downfall or collapse of a nation or a social group.

Thirdly, religions provide a passageway between connotations and denotations, and between subjectivity and objectivity of humanity, thus creating the coexistence of external self (social self) and internal self (spiritual self). For instance, the notion of “cultivating an inner sageliness so as to rule the outer world” in the Chinese spiritual tradition reflects the interaction between internal and external transcendence. In this

regard, religions connect the whole world and channel it to a common unity through activating the subjectivity of humanity. In the West, this interconnection alleviates the duality stress by means of faith. While in the East, it acknowledges and verifies the general time-spatial dimension of spirituality by means of religious interpretations.

As a source of value for human community, religions have been closely intertwined with human history. Despite setbacks and mishaps, there has never been a moment when the need for them is ever undermined. Thus, religions still remain powerful and influential as faiths for a majority of humankind. In China where most people are not religious, an inclusive, objective, and somber attitude towards religious faith is a must. China at present is calling for concerted efforts in building a community of shared future and spirituality within the Chinese nation, and a global shared future of the entire humanity across the world. If this rare historic opportunity is to be fully tapped, our evaluation of religions should be objective, scientific, candid and constructive.

In April 2016, the Chinese government held a national conference on religious affairs, sending a key official signal to the world - a positive attitude towards religions in China. Moreover, the conference concluded that efforts were to be made to actively guide the development of religions in the country, and positively evaluate teachings and ethical rules constructively adapted to contemporary Chinese society and the core socialist values in view of their roles as interpretations of religious faiths and expressions of practical rationality and social responsibility. The intrinsic vitality of the community of shared future for mankind apparently consists of wisdom from religions and faiths. To achieve harmonious and sustainable development, cultural and pragmatic values of religions shall be recognized and respected so as to bring out their potentials. However, the action is not to be taken without a holistic and scientific appraisal. The key lies in a two-way interaction between active social guidance and religious adaptation for a win-win outcome. Up to now, considerable experiences have been accumulated and are available for sharing in the society-Christianity interaction in China. Mainstream Chinese ideology is calling for the promotion of a constructive Chinese culture (religious culture included), offering a prime opportunity for Christianity to keep abreast of the times, and to reinvigorate its social significance through sinicization. It is true that there have been mixed reactions to the global spread of Christianity, sometimes to the point of

contentiousness. For the Chinese, understanding Christianity has met with twists and turns as well. The time has arrived for us to resolve the entanglement jointly and sincerely.

Being a major component and feature of the existence and development of Christianity, faith-based social philanthropy has stood out among religious services for sustainable development in history. The motives behind Christian social services, as claimed by their initiating organizations, are “sending charcoal on snowy days” – offering support for those in need while pursuing self-integrity. Those services and philanthropy are targeted at vulnerable groups at the bottom of the social ladder when their physical and mental wellbeing are affected by natural or human-induced disasters. In this regard, the Amity Foundation has provided models of praiseworthy practices.

In a context of low social recognition and poor acceptance, where all grievances and rebuffs are in vain, the only option for religion is to lower its profile and to serve society. To put “service” ahead of “prophecy” or “to serve, and not to be served” this is what we have advocated as the rule for the survival of Christianity in China. In any case, Christian philanthropy once piloted and led social work in modern and contemporary China by setting up service models and systems. As far as we know, the first social work degree program in China was launched by Church-run universities at the start of the 20th century, paving the way for education and studies on sociology and social practices in the country. Serving societies can provide the best approach for religions to interact with societies and become humanistic religions. Inspired by Christian services, movements such as “humanistic Buddhism” or “life Buddhism” have emerged in China, focusing on bringing religion closer to the masses. Thus, despite the various criticisms of its “politically-motivated propagation” in contemporary China, Christianity has reaped rather positive reactions and recognition for its social services.

Since 1949, Chinese Christianity has been engaged in the process of sinicization through the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). New trails have been blazed and new contributions made. Nevertheless, the Christian Church’s focus on self-construction and self-development did somewhat weaken its commitment to social services despite intentions and efforts to the contrary. Since the Reform and Opening up, religions have now become more actively involved as a social force in building a harmonious society in China. Religious social services are now viewed as

a key component of China's overall social construction. The sustainable development of religions in today's China cannot be separated from the overall development of Chinese society. In fact, they have already been in the position of connecting religions to society. Theories and methodologies of social service in traditional Christian philanthropy are reappearing and undergoing improvements. Great strides have been made since official support was given through a joint announcement by several ministries of the Chinese government in 2012. The social service projects run by the Amity Foundation, for example, have won extensive recognition as a model of religion's engagement in social service for sustainable development. Together with the positive summation and evaluation of the engagement and contributions of Christian charity and services, the foundation for in-depth studies on the transformation of religious philanthropy have been laid.

For religions in today's China, opportunities and challenges co-exist in their services to the sustainable development of human community with shared destiny. All these services should take into consideration three key notions: adhering to Chinese realities, participating in the construction of human community with shared destiny, and contributing to the strategic "Belt and Road Initiative".

To set Chinese religions in the context of Chinese realities is the first and foremost guideline. For one, it fits well with the Christian tradition of local adaptation and cultural integration, a must for becoming self-sustaining. Besides political and cultural significance, this observance has a social dimension as well. Christian social work and services in China represent an important process of its sinicization, which will combine and integrate its previous global experiences into Chinese realities, like those projects conducted in urban or rural areas and remote regions or those inhabited by ethnic groups as well.

Secondly, the construction of human community with shared destiny, advocated by China, can only be carried out by all members of the global community. In this world of diversity and complexity, the construction is an exploration for sustainable development of humanity. And its success calls for the seeking of the common ground, for peace, integration and cooperation. Co-existence does not mean seeking the elimination of differences. Instead, it prioritizes respective growth, mutual empowerment and common prosperity. There is no doubt that the world is globalizing. But globalization has been accompanied by differences and

discords. Gaps, disputes and conflicts are rising instead of diminishing. Faced with such uncertainties, maintaining the ties among nations is critical. Religions, such as Christianity, can play key roles at this moment. If it does not move towards peaceful co-existence, the whole world will suffer from an ominous and disastrous global retrogression from which no one can be exempted. So religions must actively join in international and interracial dialogues for seeking the common ground and building mutual trust.

The proposed “One Belt, One Road” has been connecting the destiny of nations along their routes. To bring out its full potential, ethnicity and religion are two issues that need to be properly addressed. In view of this, we need to study the religious, historical and cultural maps of the regions along the Land and Maritime Routes of the Silk Road, and to note the development of inter-religious and international relations along them. What is more significant is the accumulation of experiences and lessons across nations and cultures. As we know, religions once played a constructive role in the creation and operation of the ancient Silk Road, and they have become a treasure house of experience for the Belt and Road Initiative. The significance of religions has been revealed through retrospection, observation and projection. Of course, to tap their potentials, we need to undertake ambitious innovation and risk assessments. As the driving force from the Belt and Road Initiative is generated, opportunities will emerge for religions to be part of the efforts to properly address international relations, regional development, and the establishment of a reasonable world order. Through such participation, religions will contribute to the sustainable development of human society.

In short, our perspectives on religions shall not only be restricted to spiritual considerations. More attention should be paid to the reinvigorating and motivating aspects of their social existence, to their close connections to human sustainable development not only as a passive reflection, but also as a driving force. Especially for China, a country uniquely associated with religions, to strike upon a succinct definition and elaboration on the interactions of religions and Chinese society, of religions and sustainable development of human community of shared destiny, is essential. All sides need to pool together their knowledge through dialogue and collaboration based on mutual trust so as to address appropriately the issue in Chinese political, economic, and cultural contexts, where religions have been understood and viewed

from a unique stand point. Besides practical explorations, we shall treat the issue of religion with political wisdom and tact. On one hand, in the enduring heritage of Chinese spirituality, “*Dao*” (the Way), in metaphysical and ontological senses, represents itself as “*De*” (Virtue) in human society. Hence, when they are combined, it is “*Dao De*”, the ways of practicing virtue, the title of a Chinese classic *Dao De Qing* with rules of virtue for Chinese to follow. On the other hand, in Christian teachings, the social expression of the *incarnation*, when the *Word (Dao) became flesh*, is really *Amity (Ai De)*: where transcendent *Love (Ai)* upholds the observance of *Virtue (De)* in society as a sign of “living in acts of amity”. It is evident that both traditions attempted to position themselves at a point both detached and linked to the secular world. As history has turned out to develop openly, a variety of opportunities will emerge from today’s world. Religions should utilize these opportunities to achieve goals compatible with the reality and developing trends in China. Through injecting positive energy into the attainment of the sustainable development of the human community with shared destiny, they are actually accomplishing their modern self-transformation, and in particular, fulfilling their sinicization.

Religions, Values, Ethics and Development: Perspectives from the Context of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development

Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel

The topic “religions, values, ethics and development” which was assigned to me is crucial for us in the German context. Since I am not fully acquainted with your context, I will restrict myself to address the topic from the social and political context from which I come from and apologize for this. In order to understand my context and perspective let me first explain about the background and role of my organization, the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung or EWDE). It has two wings: one is active in the field of national social work (under the brand-name *Diakonie Deutschland*), the other one in the field of international development and humanitarian cooperation (under the brand-name *Bread for the World*) – both seen as different expressions of the Christian mandate and responsibility to care for the needy in different ways.

Since 2012 the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development (EWDE) has been located in Berlin, the new headquarter hosting some 700 employees. EWDE is supported by all major protestant churches in Germany, representing some 34% of the German population (or approximately 22.6 million Protestant Christians; in addition there are 23.9 million Catholic Christians).

Diakonie Deutschland (formerly *Diakonisches Werk Deutschland*) represents almost one million employees working regionally and locally in the different fields of national protestant welfare work (care for the elderly, for children, for the disabled, orphans, the homeless, the sick and

dying).

Bread for the World which cooperates with partner organizations in countries outside Germany is the newer wing. It was founded only in 1959, in the post World War II context. It was an expression of gratitude from German Christian churches for the help and assistance they had experienced and received in the period of post-war reconstruction from churches in France, Britain and the US for rehabilitation and for the integration of almost millions of refugees from Central and Eastern Europe. After World War II, these funds from churches abroad had been implemented by an organizational predecessor of Diakonie Deutschland. Bread for the World therefore was founded as part of this process. It later merged with *Protestant Development Services*.

Bread for the World as the leading welfare organization in Germany

Today, Bread for the World (BfdW) is the brand name for the biggest non-governmental development organization in Germany with more than 2,000 partners worldwide. BfdW is not an implementing agency itself, but only supports, accompanies and qualifies projects of partner organizations on the ground – church-based NGOs, other religious and secular NGOs. Projects supported are always meant for and benefitting all people in need, regardless of their religious affiliation. The kind of partnering has always been and is still changing in a globalizing world. Nowadays, as more countries become affluent, governments should be able to use their own public funds for social work. NGOs in these countries – especially BRICS-countries – should be increasingly able and have more capacity to raise their own public funds for the benefit of needy people in their societies. Longstanding partnerships between our organization and partners in such countries therefore are changing in character and turning into peer-partnerships of mutual learning and dialogue about new challenges (such as climate change for example), new methods of social work and best practices. Our highly esteemed and very longstanding partnership with the Amity Foundation here in Nanjing is a good example of such change and our partnership is supported by the fact that together, we are both members of the international, Christian, ACT Alliance, where all members are equal.

BfdW is very well rooted in its Christian constituency and in its society. It is therefore financially supported by thousands of individual

Christians and well-meaning people on the local level in Germany. Individual donations and church collections are complemented by almost the same amount of funds coming from protestant churches' regional and national budgets. In addition to these church related funds, BfdW receives government funds for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The money given by the government for development cooperation comes without any conditions with regard to regions, sectors, values or way of working or any other obligations (besides proper financial management, accountability and technical standards for the partners to meet). The funds can be used – as is the case with funds coming from our two other funding sources – according to our partners' own plans and following our joint strategic decisions. The government does not intervene at all in the way we use the funds.

A major emphasis was put in 2014/2015 on the Ebola crisis in West Africa which greatly stressed national and often church funded health systems in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as coping with the humanitarian emergencies concerning the war in Iraq and Syria and the related massive refugee crisis in the Middle East as well as in southern and south-eastern Europe. Global demands on our work were heightened as the number of countries in crisis and fragile states seemed to be on the increase; thus our work is both highly respected as well as in demand by many partners in the global South.

The legal framework for diaconia and international development work: State-church partnership and cooperation

With some decades of experience, the way of working of Diakonie Deutschland as well as of BfdW are built on clear regulations between the state authorities and Christian churches in Germany. These are vital for a successful cooperation between the public sector and civil society which benefits many countries around the globe.

It will be interesting for this audience to properly understand the structural and political background for this relationship in Germany and the high involvement of Protestant (and Roman Catholic) churches in national and international diaconia, that is, social and developmental work with partial support from government funds. The background for this consists in the special type of relations between the churches and the

state in Germany which is unique in providing stability and transparency for the state in relating to the major religious communities as well as some protection against religious extremism. After the end of the state church in Germany, the Weimar Constitution of 1919 redefined the relations between church and state based on three principles: freedom of religion, neutrality of the state and self-determination of all religious actors.

The 1949 Basic Law (Grundgesetz) of the Federal Republic of Germany further codified this special relationship. The church and the state are separate entities but work closely together. We neither have a state church like the United Kingdom or Denmark nor a strict laical (or secular) system like France or Belgium (where the “laicite” principle banishes all religious affairs and expressions completely into the private realm). The Roman Catholic German Bishops’ Conference (DBK – Deutsche Bischofskonferenz) as well as the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD – Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) have the status of corporate bodies under public law (Körperschaften öffentlichen Rechts). This special status does not exclusively refer to Christian churches. Other religious entities like the Jehovah’s Witnesses or the Muslim Ahmadiyya-community enjoy the same status and possibly more religious communities will follow a similar pattern.

Although the Church and state are structurally separated, they nevertheless cooperate closely in clearly defined areas. The neutrality of the state towards churches and other religious groups does not allow the state to interfere directly into any internal religious affairs of the churches, but at the same time it does not allow for the other extreme of disinterest or complete privatization of religious life and communities either. The Weimar Constitution and the Basic Constitutional Law which followed are rather taking an intermediate way by describing an openness of the state conducting the religious freedom of its citizens. The attitude of the state towards religious communities can be described as “promotional neutrality”.

This term was developed by Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, a famous German expert in constitutional law and former judge at the Federal Constitutional Court. Böckenförde also shaped this famous dictum: “The liberal secular state lives on conditions which it cannot itself guarantee.” Religious and other communities are regarded by state officials as important prerequisites for a civil and open society, for social harmony

and welfare. The state recognizes and safeguards their role and relevance for social and cultural life in society. This attitude of the German state which promotes cooperation with all organized religious communities as expressed in the constitutional law is reflected most explicitly in the contracts between state-run bodies of the Federation, the federal states and the churches (Staats-Kirchen-Verträge). The particular form of these contracts show that the relation between state and church is characterized by independence and cooperation: state and church are separated but relate to each other. Within these contractual frameworks for state-church relations, the discussed agreements cover, for example, topics like universities, cemeteries, preservation of monuments and the broadcasting service – often the entire spectrum of state-church cooperation is visible.

One of the areas in which the strong, deliberate and sustainable partnership between church and state is manifested in specific church-state contracts is the area of religious education in schools. Christian as well as Jewish (or Muslim) education in schools is protected by law and should take place according to the values and guiding principles of self-understanding of the major Christian or other denominations. Article 7 of the German Basic Law defines that the state exercises the right of supervision for the curriculum, while the religious groups take the responsibility for the teaching contents according to their basic set of beliefs. The regulation of religious education both for Christian as well as for Muslim members of the German population under supervision of the state prevents the teaching of religious ideas (like in religious extremism) which are not in accordance with Basic German Law and would hinder the mutual dialogue and integration of different religious traditions within German society. Therefore, a transparent partnership between the church and the state protects German society also against religious extremism.

The other major area of state-church cooperation is the vast field of social services and development cooperation: Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have – as an integral part of their faith and therefore of their self-understanding – a strong commitment to social services, uplift and relief work in society which is especially visible in diaconal services and in international development cooperation.

The number of employees of the Diakonie and its Roman Catholic equivalent Caritas in Germany, amounts to around one million, that is, Protestant Diaconia Germany is one of the biggest employers in Germany since the churches are running a majority of hospitals, hospices, homes

for the elderly and handicapped, homes for the homeless, orphanages, kindergartens and the like. Both major Christian churches in Germany thus are multifaceted and vital players in the social life of our society and a backup of the democratic constitutional state. The state acknowledges the churches and other religious communities as important social protagonists and players in civil society. The key principle and directive applied by the state here is the ‘principle of subsidiarity’. Subsidiarity implies that the state only provides services within a specific social and cultural area in case no other social agencies or actors are at hand. Priority normally is given to major actors in civil society for providing social services (like the social welfare organizations amongst which the Christian churches are the biggest players). In that sense, existing competence is used, civil society is encouraged and diversity is supported. The subsidiarity principle and the related support of the state to social welfare organizations facilitates constructive participation by several actors in civil society to the common good and social uplift of disadvantaged people in German society. It gives preference to those actors working in social welfare and justice concerns which are most close to the people and their social, cultural and psychological situation and are trusted by the people in the region. By enabling the subsidiarity principle to unfold its dynamics, the state also assists churches and other welfare organizations to contribute to the stability of our democratic society.

The special arrangement in Germany which allows for a high level of Christian engagement in social services in civil society is also due to a membership fee system of the churches (the so-called “church tax”), by which a church membership fee is collected from each individual member of a Christian church who is earning an income.

With his/her income tax, every church member pays a certain percentage as a monthly church contribution which is deducted from his/her monthly salary. This church income also is used to support the social welfare or development work of the churches. By organizing it as part of the general governmental tax system, the churches benefit by saving on the expenses for the administrative structures needed for the collection of church taxes. This technical mechanism is also open to other religious communities like the Jewish community. Muslim communities with the status of a corporate body will soon follow.

In addition to the income raised through the church tax system,

Diakonie, BfdW and others have a long experience in fund raising for certain social projects within German society as well as for development and humanitarian projects (raising funds from private donations, Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR , through collections and all kinds of fundraising campaigns). Churches, private and business donors in Germany have a well developed ‘donation culture’ mainly rooted in religious convictions and traditions as people traditionally trust in church and faith-based organizations. We were glad also to share expertise on fundraising with partners in societies which became more affluent – such as Amity in China.

The social commitment of the churches in German society therefore is especially visible in the diaconal realm. The official number of full-time employees of the Diakonie in Germany is currently 449,000 and about 10 million people use their services (not only Christians, but all people in need and from all religious and non-religious traditions). The numbers of employees within the Roman Catholic Church and their organization, Caritas, are comparable. Out of the commitment of the Protestant and Catholic churches, our society draws profit in multiple ways: It profits from the special competence of the employees of Diakonie and Caritas, of the financial equity ratio provided by the churches in different sectors and last but not least, the additional commitment of volunteers numbering 700,000 in the protestant Diaconie facilities alone. Encouraging young volunteers to become engaged in social and relief work at national and international levels - in order to strengthen their sense of social responsibility - is an important priority of the German Christian churches.

Social voluntarism is a key element of civil society that is strongly supported by our government. It has proven its importance once again during the last two years when volunteers provided the backbone to help welcome and integrate hundred of thousands of refugees. Thus the church and Diakonie, within the agency EWDE, provides the possibility of benefitting all citizens and people in need from all walks of life. Thereby a unique contribution can be made for the functioning of our society.

Harmonious society and flourishing social welfare in the German context: Crucial role of public theology and civil society participation

As Protestant churches have a long tradition of being engaged in social work and diaconia, we also emphasize a high level of training for pastors

and church workers in this dimension of the churches' witness. It is not enough for people responsible for the church to be able to read the Bible and to pray. Official representatives of churches and local congregations need to be well-trained to understand the needs of people at grass-roots level and to be in dialogue with society at large and also in dialogue with people of other faith communities. Some 20 theological faculties in Germany as well as key centers for training in diaconia contribute to leadership formation in the churches so as to continue bringing their services to the whole of society. Promotion and education for "public theology", that is, the communication of ethical and spiritual values which can guide and inspire social work and transformation towards social and ecological justice, has a major importance.¹ For articulating our views as churches on certain issues related to social justice or environmental protection we need to speak a language which is communicable in the political realm as well as for broader contexts in society, while remaining firmly rooted in Christian tradition and values.

Part of our task and performance as EWDE, with its two wings, is therefore to deal with public responsibility on behalf of Christian churches by dialoguing with the German national parliament and its commissions. The German government in our context is not only open to but even inviting suggestions and proposals coming from Christian churches or religious communities. Especially when preparing for social legislation the government is even obliged by law to seek comments and advice from a number of big social welfare organizations which are granted a special advisory status to the government – including Diakonie and Caritas. Of course such advice is not restricted to broad ethical statements or submitted in religious languages, but with clear political arguments which raise the concerns of the people of need as their advocates. The more principled ethical foundation for such concrete interventions would be laid out by special commissions of the national Federation of Protestant Churches in Germany (EKD) which has the task of preparing basic documents or study papers on certain key issues with ethical implications such as global climate change, migration and refugees, peace and justice and the like. EWDE representatives would be mainly involved in these commissions as experts. All public and

¹ See: *The Church in the Public Space*. LWF Study document. 2015, available at <https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-church-public-space>

political interventions or proposals on behalf of church bodies (including Diakonie) would be articulated within the constitutional boundaries of our legal system.

The political and legal framework in Germany encourages churches or faith based organizations to contribute actively and responsibly to improve the common good, to strengthen civil society and to care for the common good globally. For instance, dialogue and key interventions of Christian churches on behalf of sustainable development, following up on the outcomes and recommendations of the Paris climate treaty, are well accepted by both the government and the German population. A sufficient space and the vibrant functioning of civil society actors is regarded as crucial for progress and harmony in society. Interventions and suggestions of the church, for example, on the situation of refugees in Germany, in the European Union and worldwide, arms exports, the marginalization of (religious) minorities, war and war crimes, and destruction of the environment sometimes contradict other positions in society and can – as part of their advocacy task on behalf of vulnerable people – also be critical of main stream opinions or government positions and may finally not find expression in national politics. But this still is regarded as vital for public and political opinion building. The government appreciates the variety of positions, expertise and viewpoints provided by civil society actors as a chance to qualify their own policies and decisions. It especially appreciates the points of view of Faith Based Organizations – such as churches – simply also because “religion matters”.

Politicians even encourage Christians and churches to come forward with clear ethical and faith based opinions as they know that a large proportion of the population is traditionally and recently influenced by religious beliefs and moral values which orient their perception of human beings and their perception of the world and influence their way of living. We are glad therefore that there is increasing interest amongst governments and within the UN discourse, in exploring how civil society actors and NGOs can meaningfully contribute to the common good and deepen core values and ethical principles that provide grounding for the new global SDG agenda.

Values and ethics for sustainable development: Christian contributions to the SDG agenda

We confirm our government’s position that development today is not just

about unlimited economic progress and growth. We also join positions in affirming that we need to adhere to basic principles of value oriented and rights based development. It has become generally accepted that in order to guide our lives as individuals, communities and nations towards a healthy and harmonious path and to maintain standards of behavior and social virtues with acceptable “good” qualities, we need guiding values which hold the human community together. A life without proper values will become chaotic and disastrous. It will be like a boat without a rudder. The values which are central to us in BfdW and in German society consist of social solidarity and justice, gender equality, responsibility for creation and protection of nature, civil participation and basic rights, including the freedom of religion both for believers of all religious traditions as well as for non-believers. As Christians we do not just emphasize individual or even individualistic rights, but we do emphasize social cohesion, social responsibility for others, social harmony and mutual support, peace between different peoples and peace between different generations, that is, the common good and welfare for all. The Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Mathew 7:12), for many religious traditions, point to the center of a set of core values for social cohesion that we can affirm together.

But values do not fall from the sky and cannot be created short handedly or top down. They are taught and transmitted from one generation to the next and need to be continuously re-contextualized. They adapt, change, mutate and transform, yet retain ingredients and some core essentials which make them relevant throughout the centuries.

Values are transmitted through the education of the young generation. And the younger generations of today need to learn values (of sustainability) and patterns of life styles oriented to eco-justice which are fundamentally different from the generation of their parents who grew up during the period of industrialization and rapid modernization. Otherwise, our common life as humanity on this earth will no longer be sustainable for all. The UN Agenda 2030 provides a welcome framework into which we have to infuse and articulate our values and visions for development globally. Every nation now has to develop a national master plan for sustainable development. Churches and faith-based organizations from different countries, such as China and Germany, can assist in learning from each other how to develop national master plans for sustainable economy and development. The lead role of China for various aspects in

the ecological transformation of industrial society can be very inspiring in this regard. What is planned in more detail in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1, 2, 3 or 13 in a country like Germany or in China can be an interesting point of exchange and mutual learning in consultations between relevant partners concerned.²

Religious values can enrich the social processes in moving towards the realization of the SDG agenda. The role of religion in meeting the SDGs as well as the Paris climate goals is well recognized by the UN and a large number of governments (including our own). Faith based organizations can also challenge a superficial and merely technical understanding of the SDG agenda and keep our eyes on the deeper levels of socio-ecological transformation. Since the current models of consumption and life-styles cannot be sustained in the long run as the resources of our earth are precious and limited, all religious communities have to join this effort.

Together with the Protestant Church in Germany we have therefore published a recent major study paper on the concept of development: “In order to have life abundantly. A Contribution on new concepts for sustainable development “(2015)³ which tries to bring together expert’s insights on a new concept of development which

- reconciles the demands of both economic progress and environmental stewardship
- moves away from the concept of unlimited material progress and articulates a vision of integral and holistic development which leaves no one behind;
- articulates the need for new tools of measuring progress in development, moving away from the predominant orientation of focusing on the gross national product,
- traces the international ecumenical debate of the World Council of Churches on justice, peace and integrity of creation as a core paradigm to be deepened and followed.

Insights and study papers on new paradigms for sustainable development are also shared and explored together with a wider network

2 SDG1 No Poverty; SDG2 Zero Hunger; SDG3 Good Health & Well Being; SDG13 Climate Action.

3 “...damit sie das Leben und volle Genüge haben sollen”. Ein Beitrag zur Debatte über neue Leitbilder für eine zukunftsfähige Entwicklung. Eine Studie der Kammer der EKD für nachhaltige Entwicklung. EKD Texte Nr. 122, August 2015.

of Christian development organizations. BfdW as well as Amity Foundation are part of the worldwide network ACT Alliance which has its main office in Geneva and consists of more than 140 similar organizations and church networks for development cooperation worldwide. In ACT Alliance we share expertise, resources, contacts and local cooperation partners and also discuss joint ethical values, common technical standards for development and humanitarian aid. Through these mechanisms of mutual accountability and sharing we ensure that, as churches, we are together on a common journey and no Christian actor in the field of development is left alone or needs to work in splendid isolation. Just as the challenges have become globalized, working on solutions need to have proper platforms and mechanisms for global collaboration.

Interfaith collaboration in humanitarian assistance and social development: Capacity building and training

How to create more capacity and to promote staff training for diaconia and international development work is crucial. We are convinced that churches all around the world (as well as secular agencies we are cooperating with) need not only more religious literacy but also more developmental literacy. Here again we do not have just one national, but several regional universities and institutions of training in which both diaconal work as well as international development projects are studied and new leadership is prepared for these vital dimensions of the churches' witness and service in our society. They have different specializations and thus are complementary, and they compete for ideas and concepts with each other. It is crucial that younger generations learn and prepare for engaging in social work, interreligious dialogue and peace building.

A special program for young volunteers in BfdW allows young people, after having finished secondary school, to spend one year abroad (while youth from overseas come to Germany) in order to learn from the other context as well as to enrich their host society and to strengthen intercultural learning and dialogue. We all realize that in a global context marked by increased fragility and challenges related to economic instability as well as religious extremism, we need to increase intercultural learning and mutual collaboration and particularly to deepen interreligious collaboration on core issues of the SDG agenda. Religious hate and extremism has created a new situation worldwide that is challenging civil society, moderate and tolerant religious organizations

and state actors alike. International development and humanitarian work is also affected by these new phenomena and needs to respond in an impartial but professional and sensitive way in some socio-political and religious contexts. Increased engagement in peace building and interreligious dialogue programs is one response in which both state and civil society actors are currently interested.

Some of our partners in the global South are providing very promising examples of how to promote interfaith collaboration which can be shared more widely as best practices:

- a) In South Africa we partner with an Environmental Institute which is supported by different faith communities and provides training on good governance in the area of renewable energy, eco-communities, ecological justice and lobbying for ecological transformation in Southern African contexts.
- b) In Egypt we collaborate with a church based Social Services Agency which promotes interfaith dialogue and job-training for young Muslims and Christians, preventing both from radicalization and enabling learning on how to exercise public responsibility in civil society.
- c) In Myanmar we collaborate with a Peace Foundation which offers interreligious training for young people from Buddhist and Christian backgrounds in conflict resolution and peaceful transformation in a country marked by severe ethnic and religious tensions.
- d) In Zimbabwe we collaborate with a national Council of Christian Churches which has established a common platform for major civil society organizations to seek ways for a peaceful transition and major social transformation in a country on the verge of a major humanitarian crisis.
- e) At the global level, we are collaborating with a Faith Movement for Gender Justice which brings together different civil society organizations as a global platform for gender justice from different faith traditions to strengthen the role of women, mothers and girls for education, work and equal participation in society.

We are grateful for the enormous work done by Amity Foundation also with regard to building up capacities of other religious traditions in China, to develop social charities and proper capacities for doing social work in Chinese society such as the Amity program for training NGOs in China.

Possible future areas of German-Chinese dialogue and collaboration in development work and Diaconia

Partnership with autonomous partners in other social contexts needs respect, transparency and frankness in dialogue and mutual learning – BfdW has a long experience and deep respect for the core standards of proper ecumenical partnership based on equality, openness and accountability without dominating the other. We are grateful for 30 years of relationship with Amity Foundation where these attitudes of a genuine partnership with a deep sense of trust and respect have grown.

While China, with its remarkable economic progress, is no longer a “developing country” entitled to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds, and Chinese organizations, in the context of the biggest emerging economy of the world, are no longer mainly in a receiving role, we are interested to continue our collaboration in mutual partnership “beyond aid”.

Just to share with you tentatively and as a first suggestion that we are interested to continue our dialogue with Chinese partners and to provide, together, more mutual learning opportunities between German and Chinese actors in social diaconia and international diaconal work, potential areas of interest for dialogue might be:

a) Integral development concepts and the SDG agenda

We would be interested to deepen the dialogue on the concept of integral and sustainable development. Which of the 17 SDGs would be most promising to deepen mutual dialogue between Chinese and German FBO partners?

b) Strengthening the role of social welfare and development organizations in civil society

We are interested to deepen the dialogue and mutual learning on how to strengthen the role of civil society actors in contributing to the goals of the SDG agenda and ecological transformation for sustainable development and climate justice. How can we contribute to the strengthening of human dignity and social cohesion in the struggle against religious radicalization in all fields of life in our respective societies?

c) Diaconia, development education and voluntarism

Building the next generation of leaders in church, diaconia and international development cooperation is vital to becoming visibly engaged in the global debate and engagement on the SDGs and the Paris climate declaration. How can we come together on issues related to education, staff training and capacity building for future staff in these vital areas? How are we to mobilize and to strengthen social voluntarism in our societies and how to encourage learning projects across national and cultural borders?

Service Advocacy, Philanthropy and Harmonious Development:

A case study of the Amity Foundation

Qiu Zhonghui

All global religions underwent political, social and cultural localization as they spread outwards from their birthplaces to other nations and regions. Only through political assimilation, social adaptation and cultural integration,¹ could mono-ethnic religions have accomplished both globalization and localization.

A review of the history of Christianity will reveal the presence of several milestones in the process of its assimilation and adaptation, such as its spread from the Jews to the Greeks, and the establishment of Christian charities by Western missionaries trying to spread the gospel. In contemporary China, the China Christian Council (CCC) has sought to adapt Christianity to Chinese conditions by prioritizing the practice of philanthropy and by using as a guideline the transition from the “Three-Self”² to the “Three-Wells”³. The establishment and growth of the Amity Foundation and the Amity Printing Company have been the two key indicators of this process.

1 Zhuo Xiping, *Political cognition, social adaptation and cultural expression – the three key components of the sinicization of Christianity* [EB/OL]. Accessible at <https://wenku.baidu.com/view/c726aebdbe1e650e53ea9927.html>

2 Self-governance, self-support and self-propagation.

3 Governing well, supporting well and propagating well .

1. Amity's birth: The Chinese Church's transition from "Three-self" to "Three-Wells".

The practice of charity has a long historical existence having evolved alongside human society. In today's China, it has developed into an organized and normalized presence closely linked to national policies on religion.

Since its foundation in 1949, the People's Republic of China has adopted the policies of "the separation of state and religion" and "the freedom of religious belief", making it necessary for churches to consider how to realistically adapt their charitable practices to the new political and social contexts.

In the 1950s, after the "Three-Self Movement" was launched, the disconnection of Chinese churches from foreign missionary societies stimulated their adaptation to socialist society in the continuation of church management and theological studies.

After China implemented the policy of Reform and Opening-up to the outside world in 1978, Bishop K. H. Ting, the leader of the Christian Church in China, put on the agenda the principle of "Three Wells" by pointing out that

Given that the decade-long disaster is over, what we should revive is the guiding principle of the 1950s, not that of the 1940s. Reviving the 1940s' principle means to abandon the 'Three Self', and to return to the old road of foreign Christianity. Reviving the 1950s' guiding principle means to go on practicing self-government, self-support and self-propagation. By taking further steps, we shall strive for governing well, supporting well and propagating well.⁴

This statement by Bishop Ting later laid the ideological foundation for the initiation of the Amity Foundation. As a fruit borne on the tree of constant doctrinal observation of Christians in China, Amity was founded on the basis of the Three Self Patriotic Movement's (TSPM) commitment to serve Chinese society by "taking on a new form and mobilizing its historical connections overseas in the new age of reform and modernization."

4 Bishop K. H. Ting. "Fourteen Points from Christians in the People's Republic of China to Christians Abroad." In Donald E. MacInnis. *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice*. Maryknoll, N.Y. : Orbis Books, 1989. p. 65.

2. Amity's growth: deeply-rooted in Chinese soil and awareness of social needs

Established at the dawn of reform and opening-up, and raised in the heat of deepening reforms, Amity has dedicated itself to addressing the needs of target groups in both urban and rural communities as it responds to national policies, follows social needs, and addresses urgent needs of common people.

2.1 Amity's focus: guided by social development and corresponding national strategies

Since its establishment, Amity's development can be divided into three ten-year phases, each directly corresponding to the changing needs of China and Chinese society.

The first decade (1985-1994) saw Amity's start-up. That was a decade right after the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy, when the drive to "boost economic growth in former revolutionary base areas, areas inhabited by minority nationalities, remote and border areas and poverty-stricken areas" was approved in the National People's Congress in March 1986 as part of the national Seventh Five-year Plan. Amity started with separate and small-scale projects on education, disability support, and rural development in east China. Those projects brought direct benefits to many economically-challenged people. In 1991, eastern provinces in China were hit by floods. As a rescue and relief force, Amity raised almost US\$2 million for emergency disaster mitigation, a feat highly appreciated by Chinese society and government.

In March 1994, the State Council drafted and issued the Seven-Year Program to Help 80 Million People out of Poverty ("80-7 Program"), covering 592 impoverished counties nationwide. The Program fell within Amity's 2nd phase of development. In fact, Amity had already shifted its target area westward as early as 1992, and had launched an array of projects on poverty-alleviation and integrated development in quite a few national poverty-stricken counties in Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Gansu and Ningxia. During the second phase, Amity actively engaged in many rural anti-poverty drives in west China by introducing advanced poverty reduction practices and ideologies to its projects in order to attain the goals set in the "80-7 Program".

The third phase of growth from 2005 to 2014 featured innovation for us, during which new trails were blazed as called for by emerging social issues and needs in China. For example, according to the 5th National Census at the end of November 2000, the population of those above sixty in China had reached 130 million or 10.2% of the total population. Using global standards, that figure meant that China had become an aging country. It was estimated that there would soon emerge the surging need for community-based senior and public services. In view of this trend, Amity plunged into efforts at community governance and services, senior care services, social organization and enterprise incubation as well as new approaches to faith-based philanthropy, project publicity and domestic fund-raising.

From 2014 onwards, when the “Belt and Road” initiative began to gain momentum as a development strategy, an increasing number of Chinese enterprises and businesses moved across national borders in search of development overseas. Amity, with its extensive network of international partners and domestic support from the Chinese government and some enterprises, took its first steps in going overseas by setting up offices in Ethiopia and Geneva in 2015 and 2016 respectively. This reflects our development strategy of being driven by a combination of philanthropy and social enterprise, contributing to the strengthening of Chinese soft power and the dream of rejuvenating the Chinese nation.

The journey Amity has taken in the last three decades has echoed the continuous transformation of Chinese society and its governance. Just as the Special Economic Zones served as pioneers of economic reform in China, the appearance and growth of Amity can be regarded as their counterpart in philanthropy – a “Special Philanthropy Zone”, in other words. The adaptation and innovation of Amity is just one road among the innovation roadmaps explored by the whole Chinese nation. At the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2013, Chinese president Xi Jinping pointed out the necessity of innovation in “improving methods of social governance, kindling the vigor of social organizations that can effectively prevent and solve social conflicts”.⁵

5 *Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, see http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/2014-01/16/content_31213800_3.htm

2.2 Amity's priorities: people's needs and human development

When God created human beings, He did it without discrimination. All Amity projects, without exception, put people at the center. Comments and suggestions of both professional consultants and project beneficiaries are given equal attention. For example, Amity's *zenia tree* reforestation project in Southern Guangxi was based on local needs as well as the suggestions of experts. That is the reason it became a model project in Guangxi and was later promoted throughout the autonomous region. Moreover, our projects in Heshun County and Zuoquan County, Shanxi Province, were designed only after participatory surveys had been undertaken in target areas. Mr. Yuwen Youyu, chief of the poverty-alleviation office in Yuci City, Shanxi Province, admitted that he had been very impressed with the resourcefulness of common folks after taking part in the participatory training program. He said that after more than ten years in poverty alleviation work, he finally realized the reason for some of his projects' failures – there had been an absence of participation by the common people.

Since the 1990s, Amity has implemented a large number of three- to five-year integrated rural development projects in Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Gansu, Qinghai and Shanxi, all in central and western China. These projects aim at promoting the continuous improvement of the local economy, education, medical services, the preservation of traditional culture, and ultimately, the reconstruction and sustainable development of rural communities.

Furthermore, self-governing farmers' collaborative organizations are created through these projects to manage sub-projects on capacity building, education, healthcare, infrastructure construction, grassland and forest reclamation, eco-friendly farming and livestock breeding, clean energy and cultural heritage preservation.

Our project design prioritizes the enhancement of beneficiaries' self-development capacity and the empowerment of women, particularly in view of the fact that a higher economic status helps elevate their household and social status. Many of Amity's integrated poverty-alleviation projects incorporate micro-finance projects for women in target areas.

In these projects, women in every five households form a group and stand as co-guarantors for one another when applying, in turn, for

loans of CNY 2,000 to 5,000. A loan center is set up in each village, run by a management team consisting of members nominated by the village administration. A total of CNY 20 million has been provided for micro-finance in western China, leading to a considerable boost in the livestock breeding and farming skills of women beneficiaries.

To prevent market risks and achieve a greater say in sales negotiations, women qualified for small-sum loans created various associations under the guidance of project officials. These associations are used as platforms for raw material procurement and experience and skills exchange, and, more significantly, as forums leading to the women's improved social skills and raised status in households.

2.3 Amity's philanthropy combines service with innovative concepts and approaches

Philanthropy started from scratch in China from the first years after Reform and Opening-up. Amity's partnership with churches and developmental organizations abroad has given Amity an international dimension ever since its inception. From these international organizations we imbibed a complete set of regulations, practices and approaches that could ensure institutional credibility and accountability, such as views on development, project management and finance, and subject them to revision and innovation in actual operations.

Among these innovations are the "three-party participation" (target population, specialist, and local government) model, the "joint stakeholder contribution" (Amity, target population and local partners) principle and the "integrated positive impact" (social, economic and ecological) goal we developed in our poverty alleviation projects in mid- and western China. All these have improved both the living standards of vulnerable groups and transformed working approaches in Chinese poverty alleviation drives.

Recent years have also witnessed our increasing focus on faith-based philanthropy. The Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund co-founded by Amity and Jiangsu Christian Council and Three Self Patriotic Movement (CC/TSPM) in 2009 and the Amity Social Service Network, with a membership of over 120 faith-based social service institutions in China in 2012, have been two of our commitments to the growth of faith-based social services in China.

Since 2015, as approved by the United Front Work Department and the Religious Affairs Bureau of Jiangsu Province, Amity has hosted the Jiangsu Interfaith Training Center, a platform for offering knowledge and information support for China's five major religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestant Christianity. To assist in capacity building and the resource mobilization of local religious public welfare institutions (for instance, Christian and Buddhist faith-based organizations), Amity constructed the Amity Way, an online fund-raising platform. Through this internet-enabled effort, Amity has advocated and spread the notion of "philanthropy by everyone", providing a stage for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

3. Amity promotes charity and social adaptation of faith-based philanthropy in China

3.1 Amity provides a model for religious engagement in social development.

More than three decades ago, the emancipation of ideas and the policy of Reform & Opening-up in China triggered the huge potentials of the Chinese economy, and subsequently set the stage for social progress. Conceived and born in that huge tide of development, Amity represents an attempt by civic forces to access the arena of social work, an outcome of the extension of reforms from the economic to the social.

Comprised of people from different walks of life, Amity has been on a journey to pursue diversified development, calling on its team members to join hands for social progress on the basis of mutual respect in faith and beliefs. On the one hand, it can be said that the story of Amity could not be told without the Reform and Opening-up of China, nor could it have grown without the extension and deepening of the latter. On the other hand, Amity, as an NGO with a religious background, has exemplified, with its growth, the success of Chinese Reform and Opening-up in the social realm.

3.2 Amity's dedication to social work echos core socialist values.

Much like the introduction of foreign capital in joint ventures and investments, social progress needs to be driven by various types of

resources for charity. The audacious introduction of overseas funds, donated to independently-run social development projects in China, piloted the opening-up of philanthropy and international civil society cooperation. Funds raised both at home and abroad have supported philanthropic projects which have been life-changing for tens of millions of Chinese in different parts of China, reflecting the positive role NGOs have played in achieving goals based on core socialist values.

3.3 Amity's religious background is its strength in overseas exchanges

Since receiving the very first batch of foreign teachers to China in 1985, Amity has received tens of thousands of overseas visitors and friends. In the last ten years, we have hosted visits from leaders of Christian Churches such as the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the present Archbishop of Canterbury and his predecessor, the General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance, as well as some key overseas religious delegations from the Anglican Global South Primates' Network and the Church of Nigeria. Our visitors have also included such political personages as Mr. Gary Faye Locke, former U.S. ambassador to China, and her Excellency, Mrs. Sharon Johnston, Vice Regal consort of Canada.

3.4 Amity's pioneering practices in faith-based philanthropy can be widely shared

In February 2012, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) of China and five other departments including the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee and National Development and Reform Commission, jointly issued *the Notice on Encouraging and Guiding Religious Groups to Perform Charitable Work*, striking a supportive policy note to religious charities in China. Correspondingly, the Department of Religious Affairs, the United Front Work Department and five other departments in Jiangsu Province issued a notice on better executing the national notice by adding four provincial measures in 2014.

Since then, religious charitable work has been placed on a faster track. However, up to the present, even though some achievements have been made, challenges and problems persist at various levels. They

range from policy and social contexts at the top, to inadequacies in self-sustaining capacity and policy interpretation as well as event and venue management at individual organizational levels, and, more critically, to the apprehension of religious charity being used for the purpose of faith propagation. All these factors have led to restrictions being imposed on the operations of religious charities. With its long-time practice of social work, Amity, an organization with a religious background, has abundant experiences and lessons to offer and share, specifically, those in areas like project management, partnership-building with government agencies and project publicity.

The presence of religious charities in a society can build up positive images of religious NGOs. However, for a religion, charity work is an intrinsic quality and one of its major social functions.⁶ To engage in faith-based philanthropy is not an action taken to respond to external pressure or policy request, but rather, an action embedded in religious faith, and a pursuit for self-perfection by religious followers.

Witnessing to God's Love is demonstrated through action. As Bishop K. H. Ting has said, the Amity Foundation "has helped more and more Chinese Christians to see the beauty of Christians identifying themselves with those who are in need of service."⁷ That's the reason why the service-based inter-religious exchanges, dialogues, cooperation and sharing promoted by the Amity Foundation can contribute to religious coexistence as well as the harmonious interaction between religions and society in China.

Among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the very first one is to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere". Both religious communities and social development institutions with religious backgrounds like Amity should and must make concerted efforts in the pursuit of the well-being of humankind through building bridges and platforms for faith-based social services.

6 Han Song. Organizational chart of religious charity in China: present and future trends [EB/OL]. Accessible at <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/Home/report/140314514-1.htm>.

7 Bishop K. H. Ting. "Remarks." In Amity Foundation. *Love in Action: On the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Amity Foundation*. 2000. p.1-2.

Partnership in Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD): a global and inclusive partnership to harness the positive impact of religion in development and humanitarian assistance

*Ulrich Nitschke and Bennet Gabriel*¹

Religion has become a hot topic of our daily news. Conflicts and crises around the world often have a religious component to them and frequently religion is made responsible for instability and violence – the Islamic State and its hijacking of a religion in its very name serves as one devastating example. Indeed, research undertaken by the Pew Research Center suggests that roughly one third of 198 observed countries experienced some kind of hostility in which religious motivations play a role.² Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Kenya or South Sudan are some of the countries, in which religion influences conflicts and their dynamics. However, the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) estimates that only 14% of all current conflicts in the world are significantly caused by religious factors³ and, according to the OECD, a multitude of factors such as social injustice, economic disparity, and corruption are to be seen as significant drivers of conflicts alongside tensions between ethnic or religious groups.⁴ Most often, it is impossible to single out just one of these factors and the causes of a given conflict

1 This article, co-authored by Ulrich Nitschke and Bennet Gabriel, first appeared in *The Ecumenical Review* vol. 68, no. 4, 2016, pp. 378-86; copyright World Council of Churches, reproduced by permission.

2 Pew Research Center, 2014

3 Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2014

4 OECD, 2015

remain a complex phenomenon,⁵ even in situations marked by self-proclaimed religious conflict parties. Equally to denying religion's role in many conflicts, it would be wrong to name religion as the one and only significant source of conflict in our times.

Without question, we acknowledge the negative role religion *can* play in development. But at the same time, we want to highlight religiously motivated actors as positive forces towards sustainable development. Subsequently, we introduce the reader to the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). The partnership's goal is to further and institutionalise dialogue and cooperation between secular and religious organisations⁶ (ROs) active in development and humanitarian assistance, and to harness the positive impact of religion in these fields.

Deneulin and Rakodi emphasise the complex role religion plays in development and demand that development researchers, practitioners and policy makers “must recognise that religion is dynamic and heterogeneous.”⁷ In their study, they name three main trends which have brought religion to the forefront of attention in development policy. One of these trends is the rise of “political Islam” and its role as a source of conflict. Religion in this perspective is clearly detrimental to development. However, the scope of this article is not to reflect on this perspective further. The second trend named by Deneulin and Rakodi is the realisation in research and public policy that religion has remained as a significant societal force shaping public life and individual identities around the world. Indeed, more than 80% of the global population affiliates with a religion, and religious values and leaders influence the thoughts and actions of billions of people.⁸ Huge variations between countries exist, but this share tends to be higher in poorer nations than in those with higher incomes.⁹ The wide acknowledgment of these two

5 Keen, David, 2007

6 PaRD uses the terminology “religious organisation” in place of other commonly used terminologies (FBO/FIO/etc.), as its scope is wider and includes religions who themselves do not identify with the terminology “faith”. A religious organisation (RO) is understood as a registered non-profit organisation or initiative whose mission and activities in the field of development and/or humanitarian assistance are explicitly inspired by religion and a peaceful and impartial approach.

7 Deneulin/ Rakodi, 2011, p. 48

8 Pew Research Center, 2012

9 Crabtree / Pelham, 2009

perspectives in public discourse, research, and policy has turned growing attention to the role of religion over the past years.

A third trend is identified in the role of ROs as providers of essential services, in particular in developing and fragile countries. ROs have tremendous significance in many regions, which has been attributed at least in part to the “pressure to downsize the state in the 1980s [which] led to renewed reliance on non-state providers in service delivery.”¹⁰ In contrast to the aforementioned trends, this positive role of religion in development has received less attention and the need for more research remains. While studies on ROs’ contribution to sustainable development are rare, the available data indicates their high significance. For example, the World Health Organisation estimates a minimum of 40% of health services in Sub-Saharan Africa are delivered by ROs.¹¹ The tremendous role of ROs becomes even more apparent in the field of humanitarian assistance: In 2013, roughly 420 million USD were spent by ROs on humanitarian assistance. Around 15-17% of all international funds for humanitarian aid were allocated to and implemented by ROs, while 11-16% of all NGOs registered with UNOCHA have a religious origin or background.¹² Furthermore, on an individual level, religion plays an important role in the lives of those affected by emergencies as their own individual religious beliefs and practices provide them with coping mechanisms in times of need.¹³ Moreover, ROs often offer ‘safe spaces’ for victims of humanitarian emergencies and refuge from being judged or marginalised.¹⁴ As indicated by several inputs at the World Humanitarian Summit and events during the 2016 United Nations General Assembly, ROs respond immediately to emergencies and turn churches into hospitals, mosques into kitchens and temples into first aid centres.

The above numbers show that many ROs and secular actors such as bi- and multilateral development agencies already cooperate extensively. Their cooperation is owed to their shared vision on sustainable development, most recently agreed upon in the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 17 expresses the need to “revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” and

10 Deneulin/ Rakodi, 2011, p. 48

11 Bandy et al., 2008

12 Stirk, 2015

13 Lassi/ Mugnaini, 2015

14 Godall, 2015

calls upon “governments, the private sector and civil society” to build “inclusive partnerships [...] upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre.”¹⁵ Clearly and openly, the SDGs encourage all actors identifying with them to work together to realise their shared goal.

Framework of PaRD

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development was established on the basis of the 2030 Agenda in February 2016 at the Berlin conference “Partners for Change – Religions and the 2030 Agenda”. Its members and partners believe it is crucial to include the positive potential of the world’s religious communities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Membership in PaRD is open to bilateral donors and multilateral development agencies as well as intergovernmental programmes active in the field of religion and development or humanitarian assistance.¹⁶ Partners of PaRD are civil society and non-governmental organisations such as religious organisations, secular NGOs, community initiatives, foundations, academic institutions, and other relevant development organisations – secular and religious alike. Through active participation in PaRD and by contributing their knowledge and insights in various ways, members and partners shape the discourse on religion and development on a global stage and on a country level. They are unified by their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and aim to better

15 Sustainable Development Goal 17: “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/> (accessed 1 August 2016)

16 As of November 2016 the 16 Members of PaRD are the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (AU ECOSOCC), the Global Fund (GFATM), the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (UNOGPRP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

understand each other's genuine approach to development and to improve their own work through mutual exchange. To that end, PaRD's goal is to further and institutionalise dialogue and cooperation between secular development actors and ROs active in development and humanitarian assistance.

In addition to the commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, PaRD's members and partners further identify with a set of guiding principles, which define the ways and means of their interaction within PaRD. Most prominently among these are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its emphasis on the equality of all human beings. Members and partners agree to leave no one behind and pay close attention to being inclusive and diverse in such aspects as regional, religious and gender representation. PaRD fosters new and increased cooperation between its members and partners. In addition, the partnership uses synergies with existing networks and initiatives to contribute towards a more coherent and effective international agenda on religion and development serving to achieve the SDGs.

In their joint work, members and partners focus on joint activities in the following areas of cooperation:

- Knowledge Sharing & Learning Exchange
- Networking & Dialogue
- Capacity Building
- Policy Advice
- Monitoring, Reviewing & Joint Learning

Members and partners agree to reciprocity by each contributing their own expertise in order to exchange ideas and learn from each other. Contributors do not cease to be owners of their intellectual property. It is crucial that governance structure and decision making procedures of all members, partners and the partnership itself are transparent and that review mechanisms are in place for regular and critical assessment of one's own work. Last but not least, the dedication to building bridges and new partnerships is vital for the success of PaRD.

Themes and cooperation between members and partners

PaRD is relatively young and has only been operational since February 2016. Being a partnership, processes to set an agenda and define the ways

in which members and partners cooperate with each other are structured as an open discourse and take their time. However, the past months have produced significant results both defining the upcoming agenda and the way in which this agenda will be pursued. So far, PaRD's members and partners have chosen three thematic areas as their focuses: "Religion, Peace and Security", "Women of Faith" and "Sexual and reproductive Health Rights". These focal areas emerged from the dialogue between members and partners: They identify the greatest need for cooperation and the greatest possibility for joint success in these areas, while sharing a long-standing history of engagement with them both in terms of their own activity and cooperating with each other.

Within PaRD, members and partners not only share knowledge and experiences. Their unique position within development cooperation is also complementary: Partners from across the globe often work closely within their local communities but lack access to the international stage of policy formation. Members, on the other hand, frequently desire a more direct connection to their beneficiaries while being present on the global political stage. In this sense, members and partners are in a strong position to cooperate and bridge these gaps. The objective of PaRD is to encourage knowledge exchange and facilitate open dialogue between actors, who until now have been largely working in *silos* from one another. Through cooperation, two huge potentials may be unlocked at once: Implementing the 2030 Agenda on a local level close to the community and at the same time being present, visible, and heard in international processes.

The World Humanitarian Summit of May 2016 is an example of effective inclusion of religious actors into the international discourse on humanitarian assistance and relief efforts through events co-convened by members and partners of PaRD. A Special Session titled "Religious Engagement" convened by the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development featured religious actors from across the globe and of different faiths alongside policy makers and secular humanitarian actors. More than 250 representatives of humanitarian organisations and ROs gathered at the special session and were addressed by speakers including His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, Cardinal Antonio Tagle, and Dr Hany El-Banna from the side of ROs as well as Gerd Müller, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and Anne Richards from the US Department of State. The special session was

successful in securing concrete commitments from religious leaders and other humanitarian actors to increase the efforts of faith-based actors in reducing humanitarian need and suffering. Simultaneously, the event highlighted the importance of including religious actors within policy and decision making efforts at all levels of the humanitarian response. In an unprecedented display of solidarity, major faith-based and humanitarian actors committed unanimously to the principles of compassion, humanity, and impartiality in providing humanitarian assistance, preventing and resolving conflicts regardless of religious components. Most notably, the value of faith and religion as a source of resilience for communities and individuals was highlighted as a crucial contribution to sustainable solutions to humanitarian crises. Thus, the event not only highlighted that ROs already engage in sustainable, impartial humanitarian relief and peacebuilding efforts, but also emphasised their efforts to be in line with the SDGs. At the same time, the genuine perspectives of ROs were prominently recognised on a global political stage highlighting their complimentary approach to humanitarian assistance provided by secular actors and states. The event demonstrates one way in which PaRD provides its members and partners with ways to build new partnerships in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

When facilitating the building of such new partnerships, PaRD emphasises the value of open collaboration and contribution. Once more, this was practiced at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016, where members and partners of PaRD participated in a variety of side events and discussions, including the side event “Bearing Witness: Combatting Human Trafficking and Forced Migration”. In cooperation with UNIATF, the World Council of Churches, the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, the Governments of Italy, Norway and Spain, and the Institute for Strategic Studies and Democracy of Malta, PaRD co-convened this event. The diverse list of conveners sheds a light on the multitude of actors attending “Bearing Witness” including concerned Member States, UN agencies, civil society from around the world, and ROs. The side event focused on the phenomena of forced migration and how they can be aggravated by human trafficking and accompanying human rights abuses. Also during the United Nations General Assembly, another session entitled “Keeping the Faith”, explored the role of FBO’s in responding

to these complex issues. Representatives from civil society such as Ms. Hajar al-Kaddo from the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations were able to directly engage with representatives of PaRD members, resulting in a diverse range of insights in an inclusive discussion. At both events, the shared agreement was reached that due to the significant role religion plays in the countries of origin, the religious dimensions of forced migration must also be recognised in receiving countries in order to provide durable and sustainable solutions to this complex emergency.

Looking ahead

These events exemplify ways in which PaRD members and partners use their unique knowledge and convening powers to create joint initiatives to further and shape the ongoing debates in development and humanitarian assistance. Given PaRD's short time of existence and the long-standing secondary role of ROs in international development policy, these can be seen as remarkable results owed to the commitment of members and partners alike to further each other's work. In the future, PaRD wishes to continue in this way while scaling and furthering cooperation on different levels.

First and foremost, PaRD should not be seen as an organisation in itself but a partnership driven by its members and partners to establish a matchmaking mechanism for all those involved in the field of religion and development. Therefore, members and partners determine on their own in which way they cooperate and what kind of activities they plan to undertake. Over the past months, the "Women of Faith" initiative has been pursued intensively within the partnership. This initiative is envisioned to build a network among religious actors and faith-inspired individuals engaged in gender equality – within their own denomination and beyond. By providing the infrastructure to plan joint activities, PaRD is capable of amplifying these voices and making them heard on a global stage. It is the clear objective of PaRD's members to establish this platform until the end of 2016 and to make it an operational platform for the exchange of ideas and planning of activities on gender equality and the role religion can play in achieving it. The unique characteristic of this platform is the balance between bilateral, multilateral, and civil society actors engaged in open discussion, each learning from one another and profiting from their distinct approaches to development.

Another initiative in the field of capacity development is to conceptualise and conduct joint learning modules furthering the understanding of both secular and religious actors of religion as a complex social phenomenon having significant impact on sustainable development. As a first product of this initiative, a strategic learning exchange titled “Engaging with Faith Organizations and Communities for Sustainable Development” will be convened by the UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development and the PaRD secretariat from November 15th-17th 2016 in Bonn, Germany. Its main goal is to increase religious literacy in development organisations as well as knowledge about the 2030 Agenda in ROs. Through increased understanding of the linkages between faith, development, and humanitarian work in the context of the 2030 Agenda, attendants are put in the position to identify and articulate opportunities, challenges and modalities for partnerships with religious communities in development and humanitarian assistance. Through critically assessing current development/humanitarian agencies’ partnerships with religious institutions and ROs, this exchange and other events of similar format will contribute crucially to PaRD’s goal of harnessing the positive impact of religion in sustainable development and humanitarian assistance.

PaRD aspires to increase its community of members and partners in order to establish such initiatives in a multitude of thematic areas not limited to our current focal areas. PaRD’s members and partners are supported by an international secretariat located in the offices of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Bonn and Berlin, Germany. The PaRD homepage offers all interested organisations the opportunity to learn more about the partnership, contact the secretariat and apply to become a partner.¹⁷

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Part II

Plenary papers

Reformation-Education-Transformation: The Relevance of the Reformation Heritage for Christian Contribution to Social Development and Diaconia

Dietrich Werner

In Germany we celebrate 500 years of Reformation in 2017 and hundreds of thousands of visitors are going to come to the Reformation sites to celebrate with us, including the Kirchentag in Berlin and Wittenberg from 24th to 28th May 2017. This lecture intends to bring to our attention the implication of the European Classical Reformation in the 16th century for our main theme “Religion, ethics, values and development” arguing that the core theological principles of the Reformation have had profound implications for transformation and social development until today. It will be argued that the Reformation was a comprehensive liberation process from factors which have hindered human dignity, social progress and biblically authentic faith by

- 1) developing a new understanding of dignity and worth of each human being as articulated in the doctrine of justification
- 2) promoting a strategic alliance between faith and education which was the key factor for the European Reformation to prove historically successful and really transform the world
- 3) unleashing the immense potential of Christian Communities for social service which in the long run provided motivation and creative energies for involvement in diaconia and the establishment of diaconal institutions all over protestant territories in subsequent centuries.

Commemorating and reinterpreting the achievements of the European Reformation is not just an issue at the national level in Germany, as “the Reformation has become a global citizen”¹ and its core principles have left marks on the history of Protestant Christianity in many non-Western countries and also in the Roman Catholic Church. This is why in Germany the Reformation Jubilee is not celebrated against, but *with* the Roman Catholic sister churches as a joint witness to the presence of Christ in both churches.² It has enormous global relevance – also for the relations between Protestantism and Catholicism in China – that Pope Francis in a recent visit to Lund in Sweden, during a joint worship with the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, expressed in a prayer explicit gratitude for the achievements of the Reformation principles and their significance for the whole Church.³ In addition, we are particularly glad that both in our country as well as in this audience we can share some of the Reformation learnings with representatives from other religious traditions, as the question how “reform”, “renewal” and “transformation” can also happen in other world religions is on the agenda in today’s global village. This can be a very creative question for future dialogues on sustainable development in multi-faith settings.⁴

Bread for the World, together with the Protestant Association of Churches and Mission (EMW) in the past two years, has undertaken a major global study and reflection process under the title “Reformation-Education-Transformation”, the so-called twin-consultation process⁵, in which – this was the twinning approach – partners from the North

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- 1 See the special issue of EKD Magazine “Reformation and the One World” for the Theme Year 2016, Hannover EKD Kirchenamt 2016; see also: Margot Käßmann/Heinrich Bedford-Strohm: *Die Welt verändern: Was uns der Glaube heute zu sagen hat*, Hannover 2016
 - 2 See: Deutsche Bischofskonferenz/EKD: *Erinnerungen heilen – Jesus Christus bezeugen. Ein gemeinsames Wort zum Jahr 2017, Gemeinsame Texte 24*, Hannover/Bonn 2016; also in: https://www.ekd.de/presse/pm119_2016_gt24_heilung_erinnerung.html
 - 3 In the Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund Cathedral, Pope Francis prayed in very significant wording: “O Holy Spirit: help us to rejoice in the gifts that have come to the Church through the Reformation, prepare us to repent for the dividing walls that we, and our forebears, have built, and equip us for common witness and service in the world“ (in: *From Conflict to Communion: Together in Hope. Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation*, Lund 2016, p. 10)
 - 4 See for instance: Henning Wrogemann: *Eine “Islamische Reformation?”*, in: Michael Biehl/ Ulrich Dehn (Hrsg), *Reformationen. Momentaufnahmen aus einer globalen Bewegung. Missionshilfe Verlag Hamburg 2015*, p. 157ff
 - 5 See results and proceedings in: <http://www.r-e-t.net/en/index.html>

and South, East and West (including participants from China and Amity Foundation) were called together in major international conferences in San Leopoldo and in Halle to share learning stories about the continuing relevance of Reformation traditions and the interconnected dynamics between church reform, Christian education and social transformation in their contexts.⁶ The astonishing result was: The Reformation principles (which in a nutshell can be articulated with the LWF's motto "Liberated by God's Grace: Salvation – not for sale; human beings – not for sale; creation – not for sale")⁷ are still at work and very much alive in many different cultural and national contexts today. There is an "Ongoing Reformation" at work in many parts of global Christianity wherever the core principles of Reformation are remembered, re-actualized and put in place again.

Reformation as spiritual transformation

The first is a new understanding of the dignity and worth of each human being as articulated in the doctrine of justification.

We should not forget that the Reformation emerged out of the need to transform "*bad religion*". Bad religion, that is, dehumanizing, oppressive and distorted religion, is a phenomenon, which also exists, both in past centuries like the Late Medieval Period as also today. Reformation emerges as a reaction against "bad religion" or bad and dehumanizing ideologies (the same applies today). Martin Luther and the Fathers of the Reformation started with the urgent feeling that the distorted and oppressive religious doctrines and practices of the late medieval Papal church were in desperate need of being renewed, purified and that the whole church, its clergy as well as the faithful, were to be brought back to the original biblical roots of the faith again. The Reformers protested against the late medieval religious-political mindset and reference system which combined four interconnected factors: a widespread religion of

6 See documentation: "Reformation – Bildung – Transformation. Beiträge zu einem ökumenischen Prozess. Epd-Dokumentation Nr. 16, 19. April 2016, Frankfurt am Main. This text can be ordered: <http://www.epd.de/fachdienst/fachdienst-dokumentation/produkte/epd-dokumentation>

7 See on LWF website: <https://2017.lutheranworld.org/content/liberated-god%E2%80%99s-grace-131>

fear and prevalent guilt complex, a culture of popular superstition, the systemic disease of corruption and a widespread attitude of economic greed which culminated together in the practices of indulgence, the enforced payment of tributes or money to the corrupt clergy to receive forgiveness and any reduction of periods of punishment to be spent in purgatory (the so-called “Ablaßbriefe”). The response of the Reformers to this commercialized religion of fear and guilt complex was quite radical in the literal sense. The church was called to return to the roots of the Gospel, with God’s reconciling work in Christ (*solus Christus*) as the sole foundation for understanding both human beings and the church.

In contrast to the teachings of that historic era, each human being was seen as being unconditionally accepted and having received ultimate and undeniable worth and dignity by God’s grace alone (*sola gratia*). God’s grace provided to each faithful, the Reformers insisted, is free. It cannot be in any way conditioned, commercialized, earned or made dependent on any human efforts, merits or religious rituals. With the message of justification by faith alone, a radically transformed religious self-perception was articulated – a sense of individual freedom and dignity returned – together with a sense of relativizing the dominating powers and the grip of the religious authorities on ordinary people. Martin Luther emphasized in the first of his famous Ninety-Five Theses that the whole life of any human being should be open for repentance and renewal and that real life repentance cannot be replaced by any liturgical ritualization of a commercialized religion.⁸

Have we realized sufficiently that the core theme of “repentance” of the Reformation is very close to the core theme (which is discussed at the level of the UN today) about the possibility and the urgency for human civilization to change its direction and to “repent”? Luther’s emphasis on the true foundation of human beings to really “repent” and to be renewed is very close to the heading of the current SDG-Agenda of the UN which is about “Transforming our world”.⁹ The classical Church Reformers of the 16th century insisted that true social transformation starts with a change of mentality and mindsets, with our openness to being radically transformed by God’s love and his pre-imminent merciful

8 See English version of the Ninety-Five Theses for instance in: <http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>

9 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Produced by Amity Foundation, December 2016, Nanjing, page 99.

justice which holds us together both in our individual lives (“*simul justus et peccator*”) as well as in society. We could also state this as follows: Spiritual transformation precedes and accompanies social and political transformation. Changes in the outer world, that is, in the political, social and economic realm, will be in vain and remain superficial and impermanent as long as they are not prepared for and accompanied by changes in the inner world which affects each individual and the masses. This involves the spiritual self-perception and the energies released by spiritual transformation alone for a different model of relating to nature, to society and to one’s neighbors. This is exactly why the role of religions and the religious sector in society need to be seen as so crucial for social transformation. The Reformation Jubilee in 2017, in that sense, is articulating a fundamental question and topic which is absolutely crucial for the survival of the whole of humankind: How can humankind be transformed, how can social systems “repent”, how can we be transformed by the wisdom of God to radically change our life-styles and renew our sense for basic values of a harmonious society and an ethics of life which is at the core of an urgently needed ecological and socially responsible civilization?¹⁰

Reformation as pedagogical revolution

Secondly, the Reformation was not only about a spiritual transformation in the religious concept and self-perception of human beings, it was also about a pedagogical revolution. This is due to the strategic alliance between biblically rooted faith and education.

During the period of Martin Luther only 1% of the population had access to education. The vast majority of people could not understand Latin, the language of the clergy. They were completely illiterate and literally left in darkness both in mind and in spirit. Luther’s passion to bring the Word of God close to the common people (the *sola scriptura* principle) presented a profound push for democratization of religious knowledge in the Late Medieval context. Luther’s translation of the New Testament on Wartburg in Eisenach (in only 11 weeks!) spread like wildfire due to new printing technologies – responding to the deep

¹⁰ See: Report of International Consultation on Ecological Civilization, Beijing 2015.

longing of people to understand religious orientation and narratives in their own mother tongue, and to be taken seriously as religious (and civil) subjects. What a tremendous gift to receive the Bible in one's own mother tongue – at that time experienced for the first time by ordinary German citizens and experienced in similar ways in thousands of settings, due to the efforts of later missionaries to provide Bible translations in indigenous languages around the world. What an achievement to read the Bible in one's own mother tongue – also supported and continued today by the global work of Amity Printing Company in Nanjing. Martin Luther, in a pamphlet to civil authorities in 1524, ordered Christian schools to be built for boys and girls in every small village.¹¹ The legal obligation for all children to attend school for the very first time was publicly declared and officially ordered in Southern Germany in 1592. The founding of Christian universities and the production of new tools for Christian family education (“Catechisms”)¹² underlined the strategic interest of the Reformation to enhance education as a precondition to understanding and personally appropriating Christian faith. Historical research has shown how Reformation traditions have changed, enforced and broadened the landscapes of institutions of education both in Europe and even more so - due to world mission – in many non-western contexts where particularly the introduction of mission schools for girls had a tremendous impact on social transformation.¹³ There is some significant research on how Christian education has changed social conditions and particularly the fate of girls both in European¹⁴ as well as in Chinese history.¹⁵ In academic research therefore, both the impact of the so called “protestant work ethics” (Max Weber) as well as the higher alphabetization rates and

11 Martin Luther 1524: “An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutschen Landes, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollten”.

12 See for instance: <http://bookofconcord.org/smallcatechism.php>

13 See the recent remarkable global study: Reiner Klingholz, Wolfgang Lutz: *Wer überlebt? Bildung entscheidet über die Zukunft der Menschheit*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/New York, 2016, p. 43ff

14 See: Sascha O. Becker and Ludger Wößmann, *Luther and the Girls: Religious Denomination and the Female Education Gap in 19th Century Prussia*, Bonn 2008; in: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp3837.pdf>

15 Theresa Carino: “Christian mission and education in China: Impact and lessons” , in: http://www.r-e-t.net/fix/files/Carino_Christian%20mission%20and%20education%20in%20China.pdf; see also the highly interesting study: Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Atola Longkumer and Afrie Songco Joye (Eds) *Putting Names with Faces: Women's Impact in Mission History*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012

educational standards in protestant territories are pointed to as key factors for more rapid social progress in comparing different countries in the world.¹⁶

Reformation as diaconal transformation

We have dealt with Reformation as spiritual transformation and as pedagogical/educational revolution, but now need to add *the third dimension*, Reformation as diaconal transformation, as the awakening of values and ethics for social responsibility.

In his dialectical understanding of human freedom, Luther could argue that the Christian is free and justified by God and therefore subjected to nobody. At the same time a Christian is free to serve and therefore subjected in the service of love to everybody.¹⁷ As the Christians do not have to worry and struggle for their eternal salvation anymore, energies were set free to look after the immediate needs of others. Luther never restricted the Reformation or the relevance of Christian Faith just to the inner realm, but rather he encouraged Christians to take up social responsibilities and he also challenged the political authorities to provide justice and peace under the law of God. It might be less known, but Luther also invented the first system of common and public social care for the urban poor by installing a sophisticated common collection box (called “Leisinger Kastenordnung”).¹⁸ Later periods in Lutheran Pietism in Eastern Germany developed new diaconal institutions in which social relief for destitute children and their education always worked hand in hand (Halle, August Hermann Francke, 17th/18th century). The emergence of voluntary associations of Christians active in diaconia (“Innere Mission”) and their first national platform 1848 in Wittenberg (foundation of the “Centralverein Innere Mission” as a forerunner of the Protestant Agency for Diaconia and Development today) can be seen as a direct continuation of the Reformation principles which cultivated a strong sense of love, of care and compassion as the other side of an

16 Reiner Klingholz, Wolfgang Lutz: *Wer überlebt? Bildung entscheidet über die Zukunft der Menschheit*, p. 69f

17 See: <http://lutheranreformation.org/theology/on-the-freedom-of-a-christian/>

18 See: <http://www.kirche-leisnig.de/index.php/leisnig/leisniger-kastenordnung?showall=1>;
<https://www.luther2017.de/kr/erleben/staedte/leisnig/>

understanding of Christian faith which regards the whole life as a gift from God.¹⁹

As a summary we can confirm again: Reformation traditions emerged out of a process of transforming “bad” and oppressive religion into liberative and life-giving religion. In the historic Reformation process as well as in current Reformation dynamics at work globally, Christian faith presents itself (again) as a *transformative religion*, which had a profound impact on social transformation processes in many parts of the world.

What is the added value then of Reformation traditions for diaconia and development? We close with 8 short affirmations

- 1) Protestant traditions do not reduce the relevance of Christian faith to the private or inner realm, but claim the public space and the *public relevance of the Gospel* – not in order to dominate in society – but to work for the common good for all and to strengthen peace, justice and social harmony in society;
- 2) Protestant traditions *affirm and promote access to education for all* and have a preferential option and bias for the type of a “reflected faith” or “educated faith” which allows for critical reasoning and understanding of the Holy Scriptures and church traditions. Therefore in the protestant “DNA” there is an inbuilt protection mechanism against religious extremism and fundamentalism (although historically not always properly applied by protestant churches as can be seen in the role played by part of the German protestant churches during the Nazi regime, while other parts of German Protestantism, like the ones associated with the Confessing Church and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, actually renewed the critical relevance of the Reformatory principles in struggling against Fascism of the Hitler regime);
- 3) Protestant traditions affirm the *competence of all believers to read the sacred texts and to get engaged with the social needs of others*, as the love of God is always something which needs

19 See for instance: Günter Banzhaf: Diakonische Impulse der Reformationszeit: in: https://www.diakonie-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/Medien/Fotos/Son_Reformation_Diakonische_Impulse.pdf; or: Hammer, Georg Hinrich. 2013. *Geschichte der Diakonie in Deutschland*, 1. Aufl. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag.

to be shared with others. Therefore protestant traditions have a natural tendency to strengthen civil society, to demand space in civil society, to protect the freedom for religious life and self-articulation and to freely engage in dialogue with other players in civil society as the space for common solidarity and discourse on priorities for social services and social harmony.

- 4) Protestant traditions have an inbuilt *sense and passion for the unity of the universal church* as they themselves grew out of a renewal movement which was focused not on founding a new church, but to contribute to the renewal of the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church and avoid the scandal of division within the church as well as in society. Protestant churches belong to the founding members of the global ecumenical movement which has the World Council of Churches as its privileged instrument and expression. United and Uniting churches as well as non-denominational or post-denominational churches are therefore regarded as crucial and proper expressions of protestant history and the heritage of the Reformation as long as they translate the Reformatory principles into actual relevance in today's contexts again.
- 5) Protestant traditions are *critical against any trend towards the commodification of religion, the totalization of any ideology and any mixture of faith, fear, corruption and economic greed* at the expense of human liberty and dignity. Protestant traditions are underlining the importance of a fundamental renewal of faith, religion and society all over again, of an "ecclesia semper reformanda";
- 6) Protestant traditions are *loyal to given political authorities*, but have rejected any attempt to absolutize political powers, as they interpret all political authorities to be and remain under the will of God to protect peace, justice and the common good for all people;
- 7) Protestant traditions affirm the *dignity of each human being as being unconditionally loved and embraced by God's justification* (simul justus et peccator) and therefore have a bias towards a rights based understanding of development;
- 8) While correcting some of the harsh views of Martin Luther on other religious communities (Jews + Muslims) as inconsistent

with his own theology²⁰, Protestantism today is *interested to learn from other religions, how they have experienced “reformation” process and movements in their own history.*

Let me close this short lecture with a personal invitation: If you have time and opportunity we would certainly warmly welcome you, in 2017 or later, to visit any important Reformation site or major Reformation Commemoration event in Germany or other European countries in order to share in the global process to re-actualize and commemorate the foundational principles of the Reformation which still are of relevance to us today.²¹

20 *Reformation und Islam, Ein Impulspapier der Konferenz für Islamfragen der EKD*, Hannover Mai 2016; https://www.ekd.de/download/reformation_und_islam.pdf See: *Die Reformation und die Juden. Eine Orientierung, Erstellt im Auftrag des wissenschaftlichen Beirates für das Reformationsjubiläum 2017*, Hannover 2016; in: https://www.ekd.de/themen/luther2017/luther_und_die_juden.html

21 For regular updates on Reformation Summer 2017 see: <https://r2017.org/en/>; or also: LWF website on <https://www.lutheranworld.org/reformation-2017/>; or WCRC website on: <http://wcr.ch/>

Towards Gender Equality: The Contribution of Christian Higher Education in Asia

Angela Wong Wai Ching

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (the United Board) is an organization with 95 years of history working first in China from 1922 then about 60 years in other parts of Asia from 1952.¹ Inspired by the Christian call to work for the welfare of humanity and for the betterment of society, the United Board represents an early effort of the missionaries to build colleges and universities in China and Asian countries where the needs were felt. In the late nineteenth century, the various missionary boards from North America and Britain began to found schools in China, with some of the earliest colleges in Shantung in 1882, Beijing and Nanjing in 1888.² By the time the Chinese government nationalized all colleges and universities in 1951, the United Board had been supporting the operation of 13 Christian universities,³ which have since evolved to become some of the best universities in China today.

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- 1 United Board currently works with 14 countries/areas in Asia including Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, East Timor, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, India and Sri Lanka.
 - 2 William P. Fenn, *Ever New Horizons: The Story of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia 1922-1975* (New York: The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 1980), 4.
 - 3 They included: Yenching University (Beijing), Shantung Christian University (Jinan), Nanking University (Nanjing), Ginling College (Nanjing), Soochow University (Suzhou), University of Shanghai (Shanghai), St. John's University (Shanghai), Hangchow University (Hangzhou), Huachung University (Wuhan), West China Union University (Chengdu), Fukien Christian University (Fuzhou), Hwa Nan College (Fuzhou), and Lingnan University (Guangzhou).

From the beginning, the missionary boards which worked for higher education in China had the vision to support women's education. In 1905, North China Union Women's College was set up along with North China College in Beijing, both of which were integrated and re-organized to become the present Peking University. Five years after the establishment of the University of Nanking, five mission boards decided to set up, alongside of it, Ginling College for women which graduated its first cohort of five women in 1919. Similarly, in Fujian in 1911 when Fukien Christian University was planned, Hwa Nan College for women was launched. In 1920, Hwa Nan College had 14 women studying arts and sciences.⁴ Until today, two of these earliest women's colleges still stand by their tradition of focusing on women's education while other Christian colleges had all expanded from men-only education to coeducation by 1936. Outside of China, similar commitments to women's education were made by the Protestant missionary boards for Japan, India, and Korea early on. Despite disruptions caused by the Second World War, special concerns for women's education resumed soon after wartime. In the United Board's work of the fifties, resources were specially allocated to close the gender gap in faculty appointment and student enrollment in higher education. It resulted in the awarding of 40 percent of the Board's faculty fellowships to Asian women and a similarly high 40 percent of western women scholars were sent by the Board to teach in Asia. There was a clear message sent out by the United Board that universities must provide an academic environment that would be conducive to women's full development.⁵

Christianity and Early Women's Education

Women's education had been a missionary priority from the beginning. There were specific historical backgrounds for it in the West. One was the changing roles of women in family, church and society dating from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, resulting first from the industrial revolution and then the First World War. This provided the context in which women gradually took up jobs outside the home,

4 Fenn, *Ever New Horizons*, 5-6.

5 Paul T. Lauby, *Sailing on Winds of Change: Two Decades in the Life of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia 1969-1990*. New York: United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 1996, 72.

including those in the mission boards at the time.⁶ Indeed, the percentage of women missionaries in China rose from 49 percent in 1830 to 60 percent in 1890. Through the program of “Women’s Work for Women” highlighted by the mission boards of the time, women missionaries in China participated in the social reformation of Chinese customs such as the abolition of footbinding, concubinage and female infanticide, among other “social problems.”⁷ Away from home in the mission field, Christian women were called to take part in a civilizing mission for their “heathen” sisters in the Far East who were suffering in darkness, being shackled by their traditional religions and cultures.⁸ Ironically, what started as an evangelical mission to educate women to become better wives (for Christian men), better house stewards and mothers so that their families would serve as a fertile ground for evangelical work, turned into an opening for women’s alternative development outside the family and home. Not always valued by the male leaders and missionaries in the Church, missionary women found new meaning in their ministry by emphasizing the importance of Christian womanhood for the nurture of Christian values in private and public life in the foreign land. Quite beyond their expectations, they contributed to the transformation of women’s lives among their converts and themselves.

Mei-mei Lin, a Taiwanese scholar who studied Anglican women missionaries, highlights the ambivalence embedded in “the cult of true womanhood,” propagated by American mission boards in the nineteenth century. The ideals of womanhood—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—reflected the general place of women and the stereotypical gender roles expected of them in the church and society of the time.⁹ And yet contrary to the original intention for women to be submissive in the family, the ideal of “true womanhood” became an encouragement

6 John Kater, “Stirrings: Emerging Women’s Ministries in the Church Of England and the Episcopal Church, and Their Impact on The Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui,” (paper presented at the conference “Christian Women in Chinese Society—the Anglican Story”, Hong Kong, June 26-27, 2015), 2.

7 Dai Yihua (Melissa Dale): “The State of Art of Modern Study of Women and Christianity in Modern China,” in *Gender and History*, ed. Tao Feiya, *Gender and History: Women and Christianity in Modern China*. Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 2006, 2.

8 A. P. Happer, “Woman’s Work for Woman,” *Records 1877*, 147.

9 See Mei-mei Lin, *Women in Missiology: The Episcopal Women Missionaries and their Evangelical Work in Nineteenth-Century China*. Taipei: Liren shuju, 2005, chapter 2.

for women to take up active roles in local and overseas missions. Despite their holding on to “good women’s virtues” as the framework for their work, the influence of the women missionaries quickly extended beyond the teaching of traditional women’s roles.¹⁰ The missionary teachers took their call as a vocation to develop young, “quality” Christians and nationals for the progress of their respective countries.¹¹ Besides imparting Christian faith, they were keen to equip young women students with Western science and knowledge and to provide them with the foundation of a broad worldview. They asked their students to become good helpmates, not servants, of their husbands when they got married. They believed education was the best way to prepare them for the needs of a changing society.¹² In short, women’s education in China served as a platform for women missionaries to transmit their increasing sense of worth as women (albeit ambivalent) to the young students of women’s colleges from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.¹³

A similar effect took place among the women converts who came into contact with these women missionaries. As part of the evangelical campaign, women converts were lifted up to be the moral guardians of the nation, contributing to the “regeneration” of society from a domestic base. Hannah More, a leading female evangelical leader of the Anglican Church, advocated the irreplaceable contribution of women to the general good if they were given the right education. Rather than being female warriors or politicians, she urged women to make their contribution to the nation “through promoting public morality, religious principle and active piety.”¹⁴ Despite the women missionaries’ teaching of conservative family values and women’s submissive roles in many Christian schools, their converts and students excelled in services to the community and mostly worked in the public sector after graduation. They became some of the first women evangelists, teachers, nurses, and doctors, pursuing their careers with a similar sense of vocation as

10 See Patricia R. Hill, introduction to *The World Their Household: The American Woman’s Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985.

11 Lin, *Women in Missiology*, 248–250.

12 Lin, *Women in Missiology*, 267.

13 Lin, *Women in Missiology*, 285.

14 Hannah More wrote a highly influential piece titled *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799). For more discussion of her work, see Clare Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790–1865*. London: Routledge, 2007, 26–32.

their teachers. Even more ironically, rather than getting married and raising families as their teachers intended them to be, many chose to remain single.¹⁵ Lin attributed the major achievement of the women's missionary movement of the time to the creation of a "women's sphere" where sisterhood was built, networks strengthened, and the exploration of different roles in society encouraged.¹⁶ Beyond anyone's plans, Christian women's education had served as a whole new social space for women's autonomous activities. Quietly they had shaken loose the roles of women in traditional societies in China and other parts of Asia.¹⁷

Education for Gender Equality

The historic United Nations Summit held in September 2015 concluded with the world leaders' adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially came into force. They are set for universal application of all countries to "mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change" over the next fifteen years. Among the 17 SDGs, Goal 5 specifies the need to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" which identifies the assurance of "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels" as one of its main tasks.¹⁸ Apparently, equal opportunity for participation and leadership is an important indicator not only for women's development but also for sustainable development in the world. And among other tools and mechanisms, women's education has been highlighted as one of the most essential to advancing a gender egalitarian society.

The "Introduction" to the *Report to Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*

15 See Adrian Bennett, "Doing More than They Intended: Southern Methodist Women in China, 1878–1898," in *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition*, vol. 2, ed. Hilah F. Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981; Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the Century China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.

16 Lin, *Women in Missiology*, 92–111.

17 Lin, *Women in Missiology*, 214–215.

18 The United Nations, "Sustainable Development Goals," at <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>, access date: March 6, 2017.

(UN-Women) dated 16 May 2011 reiterates the general situation of women in the world. Despite an increase in girls' enrollment in primary schools from 91 to 96 for every 100 boys from 1999 to 2008, disparities among men and women and among women themselves from different regions or of different classes are evident. Apparently, girls from the rural areas, ethnic minorities or indigenous groups are particularly disadvantaged worldwide; they remain at the lowest strata of literacy and education.¹⁹ The prevalent lack of equal opportunities has kept women in the two thirds of the world's illiterate and earning an average of 17 percent less than men. Despite the growing strength of the global economy recently, 53 percent of women work in vulnerable employment such as part time jobs or piecework; this number rises to 80 percent in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In 2010 there were 215 million international migrants; about half of them were women working in the unprotected informal manufacturing and service sectors. When rising food prices have pushed 44 million people into poverty since June 2010, the crisis has been felt mostly by women. Aggravated by the impact of climate change, food degradation and water scarcity are a daily reality for the poor and especially rural women.²⁰

Take the example of higher education in China. Since the massive expansion of higher education from the 1990s, gross enrolment ratio increased from 3.1% in 1990 to over 23.32% in 2010.²¹ Almost one-third of all secondary school graduates were enrolled in tertiary education by 2013.²² Among them, women's enrollment in the past two decades has increased from 38.31% to 50.86% at the bachelor level, 35.4% to 50.36% at the master level and 20.36% to 35.48% at the doctoral level from 1998 to 2010.²³ Many young women benefited from the one-child policy

19 "Introduction," Report to Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), dated 16 May 2011, p. 6, see <http://rconline.undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/UN-Women-Strategic-Plan-2011-2013.pdf>, access date: March 6, 2017.

20 "Introduction," p. 7.

21 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes," *The World Bank* at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR>, access date: April 20, 2017.

22 National Bureau of Statistics of China, "Education," *China Statistical Yearbook 2014* at <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2014/indexeh.htm>, access date: April 30, 2017.

23 Liu Hui and Ye Zhijuan, "Research on Women's Higher Education Development in China after Large-scale Expansion of University," *Journal of Yunnan Agricultural University* 5 (2012): 67-71.

because of families' concentrated investment in their only child, even if it was a girl. In spite of this, there remains a marked disparity of 20% between urban and rural women entering colleges and an unfavorable variance of 27.4% of women to men at the top public universities.²⁴ Gendered discipline stratification is evident with the example of Peking University showing a consistent ratio of 72% women in language studies and 85% men in physics and engineering subjects from 2000 to 2008.

The situation in other parts of Asia leaves a lot of room for improvement as well. Together with Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia saw the lowest representation of women in higher education.²⁵ UNESCO reports that in South Asia there are just 74 females enrolled in tertiary education for every 100 males.²⁶ Discipline stratification is also prevalent with women dominating the fields of liberal arts, home economics, nursing and teaching, and men in law, agriculture, engineering and natural sciences.²⁷ In India, because of the late efforts made by the government, enrolment of women in higher education has increased from 10% in 1950-51 to 40.5% in 2005-6.²⁸ In 2007 in Southeast Asia, Cambodia had 1.7 men to one woman enrolling or completing university education; whereas in Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia and the Philippines there was a ratio of 0.6 young men for every young woman competing for university admission. This happened despite the fact that there was a higher ratio of female to male students of 55 to 44.8 enrolled in tertiary education in the Philippines in 2003-2004.²⁹ Such a gender gap was maintained by the perpetration of certain pre-conceived beliefs about women's physical characteristics, personality traits, abilities and roles in Asian societies. It is still common for Asian parents to fear that "too much" education will

24 Xie Zuoxu, Wang Weihong & Chen Xiaowei, "A Study of Women's Access to Higher Education in Rural and Urban China," *Chinese Education and Society* 43, 4 (2010): 32-40.

25 P. B. Licuanan, "The Challenge of Women's Higher Education in Asia," *International Higher Education* (2015): 16-18.

26 The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Higher Education in South Asia: Trends in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka*, a custom research report for British Council, June 2013 at https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/sapd_british_council_south_he_report.pdf

27 Licuanan, "The Challenge of Women's Higher Education in Asia," 16-18.

28 S. Nath, "Higher Education and Women Participation in India," *Journal of Business Management & Social Sciences Research* 3, 2 (2014): 43-47.

29 Andrew Gonzalez, "The Philippines," in *Higher Education in South-East Asia*, ed. UNESCO, 178-190. At <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000538/053869EO.pdf>, access date: 30 April, 2017.

prevent their daughters from getting married,³⁰ and rural parents still tend to have higher educational expectations for boys than for girls.³¹

Rashida Manjoo, a special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women for the Commission on the Status of Women in 2011, emphasized that education provides the crucial means to empowering women to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of their societies. Quality education, she argues, has a direct effect on unlocking women's potential and generally, improving the overall well-being of women. Lack of substantive access to or the exclusion from education does not only isolate women in families and marginalize them in society, but also deprives them of their voices, leadership and representation in public policy which could make for women's empowerment and change.³² The report of UN Women echoes the dire need to establish inspirational role models of women for young people. Unfortunately, as of January 2011, even if quotas were applied, only 26 countries had achieved or surpassed the 30 percent critical mass mark for women's representation in parliament. Around the world, there were only 17 percent of ministers and 10 elected heads of State and Government who were women.³³ In the Millennium Declaration signed by 189 nations in September 2000, the Eighth Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015 is about education. Its content includes a call for the eradication of gender barriers in teaching practices, curricula and learning materials, that teachers should play a strong role in leading and guiding students for gender equality in learning, that gender mainstreaming should be institutionalized at all levels of education, research, curriculum review, teacher training and educational policy making.³⁴ In the Advocacy Brief of UNESCO in 2010, it makes it clear that higher education is not only

30 Grace C. L. Mak, "Women in East Asian Education and Society: Whose Gains in Whose Perspectives?" in *International Handbook of Urban Education*, ed. William T. Pink and George W. Noblit (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2007), 333- 358.

31 Li Danke and Tsang Mun C., "Household Decisions and Gender Inequality in Education in Rural China," *China: An International Journal* 1, 2 (2003): 224-248.

32 "Statement by Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, New York, 28 February 2011," Commission on the Status of Women: 55th Session, see http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw55/statements/SR_on_VAW.pdf, access date: March 6, 2017.

33 "Introduction," 7.

34 "55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration," Resolution adopted by the General Assembly at <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>, access date: March 14, 2017.

a site for particular forms of gender inequality but also one in which the compounded effects of accumulated educational, socio-economic, cultural and geographic disadvantage also play out.³⁵ The United Board's continued role of supporting women and gender equality in higher education is therefore of immense importance.

Higher Education for Gender Equality: A Focus of the United Board

As it was in the beginning, women's education has been given high priority in the United Board's work since the 1980s. There have been a number of women's studies and gender studies programs conducted in Asian colleges and universities with the support of the United Board over the last three decades. Today, colleges and universities for women and women or gender studies centers in higher education institutions together make a notable presence in our network institutions around Asia. As a follow up to the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) and its Fourth UN World Conference on Women (1995), the period from 1995 to 2000 saw one of the most intensive periods of program development in women's education in the United Board.

Let us have an overview of some of these programs for reference. In Northeast Asia, the United Board has partnered with eleven universities³⁶ in China in women or gender studies projects from 1995 to 2000. They covered a wide range of projects including establishing women's studies centers and supporting faculty research on women and education on topics such as ethnic Korean women, English for women's ethnic minorities, comparative studies on marriage and family, and re-training programs for retrenched women laborers from national industries. In Korea, the United Board funded women's studies in six universities for leadership training of rural women, gender awareness programs for students, and the translation and publication of materials on women's

35 Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All: UNESCO Bangkok, Advocacy Brief: Gender Issues in Higher Education, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001898/189825E.pdf>, access date: April 11, 2017.

36 Institutions that partnered with the United Board for related programs and faculty exchanges during this period included: Peking University, Nanjing Normal University, Zhengzhou University, Hangzhou University, Ginling Women's College, Hwa Nan Women's College, Shaanxi Normal University, Xiamen University, Zhejiang University, Northwest Normal University, and Yanbian University.

studies. There were also scholars' exchange between Peking University and Ewha Womens University for collaboration and mutual learning.³⁷

In India, we partnered with Lady Doak College, Stella Maris College, Madras Christian College and Union Christian College for women faculty's training, gender awareness building on campuses, studies on women's exploitation in tourist and sex industries, women's quality life and employment and women and the media. Support was also provided for the development of women's/gender studies curriculum and women's studies centers. In Southeast Asia, besides support to the women's centers, Silliman University was funded to run a training program for women on nutrition and health, Central Philippine University was supported to run a gender sensitivity training for men, and St. Scholastica's College was awarded ten faculty scholarships for a master's in women's studies in the 1990s.³⁸

One of the programs that the United Board supported stood out from the others in terms of sustainability and scope of influence. From 1997-1999, a three-year grant was awarded to Ewha Womens University in Seoul for the advancement of research and training for women's studies in Asia. Led by the Asian Center for Women's Studies (ACWS) at the University, a series of research projects and academic conferences were organized for scholars from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand. In 1997, the Center extended the *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* (AJWS) from an annual to a quarterly publication and developed a formal overseas non-degree academic program and a faculty development program for Asian women scholars. Its initial project ventured beyond the three years and in 2007 it launched, the first of its kind, Asian Association of Women's Studies (AAWS) which just had its fourth AAWS Congress in December 2016 in Vietnam.³⁹ Prof. Chang Pilwha, the founding director of the Center explained the rationale for the extensive development of women's studies programs across many countries in Asia: "There are so many international associations [for

37 "Women's Programs," in *United Board for Christian Higher Education: Annual Report 1996-1997*, 24-25. A special session designated for women's programs was included in the annual report of this year.

38 Women's programs and related activities are found most elaborately listed in the annual reports of the United Board in 1996-1997 and 1999-2000.

39 More details can be found on the website of ACWS at https://www.ewha.ac.kr/mbs/ewhaen/subview.jsp?id=ewhaen_040301010801, accessed: April 13, 2017.

women's studies] and by international, it tends to be kind of Western-led; inter-Asian interactions have been missing. That's what I felt when I was in Korea, when we talk about 'international' people tend to look to the United States or Europe, but we are part of Asia and we don't know much about Asian countries... ."⁴⁰ Chang said it very well: there is a need to strengthen exchanges among Asian universities on women's studies and ACWS has done that magnificently.

Challenges: Institutionalization of Gender Equality

Despite increased educational access for women, there is still what some scholars would call a “compounded disadvantage” for women in higher education. They include: problems of retention, incompleteness and career truncation for young women faculty; problems of segregation by discipline (e.g. STEM) and its impact on academic career and post-graduation earnings; the impact of the everyday experiences of sexual harassment and violence on faculty and students; and the absence of women faculty in leadership roles, to name but a few. In a recent speech by Peter Mathieson, the President of the University of Hong Kong, he outlined a common but unfortunate systematic gender bias prevalent in higher education institutions in Hong Kong. In 2014, for example, among the first tier senior academic leaders (deans and above) in Hong Kong universities there were 102 men (92.7%) but only 9 women (8.2%); among the second tier senior academic leaders including associate deans, department heads and unit directors, there were 342 men (81%) and only 79 women (18.7%). Even for the lower tier of leadership roles such as program directors, there were 254 men (80.1%) versus 63 women (19.9%).⁴¹ With the possible exception of the Philippines, the ratio in favor of male to female leaders in higher education is common in Asia.

Similarly, despite the setting up of women's and gender studies centers, curriculum and programs in many colleges and universities around Asia and the growing number of trained scholars who are concerned about women's and gender issues in higher education, the interest in promoting and implementing gender equality remains generally

40 Interview on April 20, 2016.

41 Peter Mathieson, “Gender (In)Equality in Universities in Hong Kong,” presented at the Asian University Leaders Program in Hong Kong, October 26-28, 2016.

marginalized on campuses. In the case of a college in China whose women's studies center was one of the first established in the 1990s, all recent proposals to establish women's studies in the College were turned down despite its being recognized as the base for women's training by the province. The faculty who was responsible for a women's project lamented, "You know, this kind of workload is not counted, meaning that it is entirely outside of your regular assignments. If one does not possess a spirit of dedication, one wouldn't like to do it. I have burdened myself with spending so much on [women's studies], and it was not always rewarding."⁴² She was particularly frustrated by the experience to organize a joint exhibition on women but was eventually reprimanded for her political insensitivity on the subject involved. "Of course, I took on all the responsibility myself. From the beginning to the end, from project planning to venue booking, there was only me doing it all."⁴³ Similar frustrations are shared by women's/gender studies faculty of other colleges and universities in Asia. Between 2015 and 2016, a survey of United Board-sponsored women and gender studies programs in the network showed that even in some women's colleges, the ratio of women in the leadership is only about 10%. In South Korea, it was reported that only 5% of the presidents of private universities are women and there is no woman president in all the national universities. Institutions of South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines and India that responded to the survey all expressed concerns about the persistent stereotypical reservation about women's leadership in their respective societies. Structural changes toward greater gender equality in leadership, management style, styles of teaching and learning and curriculum development are still not forthcoming.

In the Asian University Leaders Program of the United Board on "Gender and the Changing Face of Higher Education in Asia" in October 2016, more than 30 institutional leaders including principals, deans, department heads and unit directors gathered to reflect on measures to sustain gender awareness on campus institutionally. The experience of the University of Hong Kong has provoked discussion on the plans to move forward. As a signatory of the *HeForShe* Program initiated by the United Nations, the University has championed gender equality at all levels on

42 Interview with a faculty in May 2016.

43 Interview with a faculty in May 2016.

campus. Its plan includes a gender sensitization education program for all first year students, a thorough management review and changes in internal policies on empowerment of women faculty including mandatory female representation on all personnel panels, females on short-lists, mentorship programs for junior faculty, measures to ensure campus safety, and support for events promoting gender equality and encouragement of male employees/faculty and students to participate in them.⁴⁴ A report from a college in South India could not agree more. While the role of higher education in promoting gender equality is absolutely important, institutional leaders must attempt gender mainstreaming at all levels including the curricula, organizational structure, and the cultivation of a gender egalitarian atmosphere in all activities organized by the university.

Economic analysts have long said that the most important determinant of a country's competitiveness is its human talent – the skills, education and productivity of its workforce – and women account for one half of the potential talent base in the world. Over time, therefore, a nation's competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it educates and utilizes its female talent. To maximize its competitiveness and development potential, each country should strive for gender equality so as to give women the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as men.⁴⁵ Clearly, education is the key incubator of future talents, so unless higher education takes heart in nurturing and incubating women to share in future leadership, half of the world's potential talent will be put aside; unless gender equality is integrated into every aspect of higher education in management, research, teaching and learning, our future leaders will not be best equipped with the capacity to make the best use of a full range of diversity in talents to face all future challenges.

Two beautiful passages in the Bible affirm the vision of gender equality in the Christian religion. In Genesis 1.26-27, it says: “And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness... And God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”; and in Galatians 3.27-29, it reiterates that, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can

44 Mathieson, “Gender (In)Equality in Universities in Hong Kong.”

45 Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, Saadia Zahidi, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2007* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2007), 20. See http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2007.pdf, access date: April 30, 2017.

be no male and female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus.” Christianity believes that women and men are equally creations of God in the divine image. For the United Board, we are committed to the education of the whole person in God’s image to be intellectually engaging, morally upright, socially relevant, emotionally balanced and spiritually inspired. The United Board believes that Christian higher education is called to serve at the forefront in support of women’s education for the liberation of women’s talents for the building of a better society for all. For sure, gender equality will stay as an integral part of our mission and women’s empowerment a priority for the United Board’s continuing work in higher education in Asia.

Faith in Finance: The Business of Religions and the Ecology of Development

Martin Palmer

I have the honour of representing the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) a secular organization, established by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh in 1995. We are a sister organization of WWF International and our primary focus has been on environmental issues. It still is but alongside this we have also been working on the issue of sustainable development for many years.

We work with twelve major faiths world wide – Bahais; Buddhists; Christians; Confucians; Daoists; Hindus; Jains; Jews; Muslims; Shinto; Sikhs; Zoroastrians. But we have no interest in what unites the faiths. We are interested in the specific insights, teachings, traditions and wisdom that each different tradition within the great faiths can bring to caring for our planet. We work for example with around fifteen different Buddhist groups because what is an issue for Mongolian Buddhists is not the same issue for Sri Lankan Buddhists. We work with around sixty different Christian traditions, from the Toraja Church of Indonesia and their sacred lake, through the Orthodox Churches to the United Methodists of the USA.

We are a secular group, and receive no funding from any religious group and our role is to broker or facilitate worlds - which would otherwise never meet - to not just meet but become partners in protecting our living planet.

In particular, we work with key secular agencies such as the UN, World Bank, major conservation bodies such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and various national WWF's to ensure that the faiths are invited

to the table to help plan a more ecological and sustainable future. For too long, the secular world has ignored or belittled religions and their structures and followers. Our role is to make the point that the faiths are substantial stakeholders. They own outright about 8% of the habitable surface of the planet while a further 15% is considered sacred – sacred mountains, rivers, valleys and cities. (UN data also in State of Religion Atlas and on arcworld.org) They run over 50% of all the schools worldwide – 64% of all schools in Sub-Saharan Africa according to UNICEF. They have more newspapers and journals per week than all the countries of the EU and they are the fourth largest investing group in the world.¹

How do we work with the faiths to make a difference?

At ARC, we help and encourage faiths to use their far-reaching influence and resources for the widest possible environmental benefit, specifically in six key areas:

Land and Assets

Around the world, religions have responsibility for an enormous amount of resources. They own land and buildings where they worship and work, they are caretakers of special places sacred to their tradition, and they hold substantial funds and portfolios.

No matter how small the amount of land owned, how it is used can be a model of a faith's relationship with creation. For example, the land surrounding a place of worship can be managed to provide a habitat for birds, bats, insects and plants. On a grander scale, ownership of forests or watershed areas calls for sustainable use and development. ARC has brokered partnerships with hundreds of conservation groups to provide assistance to the faiths in managing their lands – from forest management with FSC through to solar panels on places of worship.

In terms of financial assets, they own 14% of the total world capital investment. Their potential influence on the laity is also considerable.

¹ These data are quoted from Joanne O'Brien and Martin Palmer, *The Atlas of Religion*, University of California Press, 2007.

ARC and Citigroup in a joint study estimated that the faiths, through their believers, could affect as much as 35% of the capital market.²

Education

Throughout the world, faiths are strong supporters of education, both within their faith communities and through their wider role in State or religious schools. As stated above they run 50% of all schools but they also are deeply involved with four out of the six major youth organizations worldwide reaching an estimated 400 million young people.³ ARC has brokered the first official partnerships between UNICEF and faith school systems in East Africa, setting a principle that is now rolling out worldwide through UNICEF's WASH programme. We have also helped produce the first Faith-Based Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit (ESD) which is now being adopted throughout Africa and Asia.

Media

Every faith has a significant investment in mass media whether it is through their own magazines, newspapers, newsletters, websites or through TV and radio exposure. These often unrecognized religious networks reach untold millions of people with an authority and an outreach that few other organizations can match.

Health

All religious traditions recognize that spiritual development goes hand in hand with human well-being and that the most important aspect of that is often health. Many of the great hospitals of the world were founded by religions and in some cases whole health traditions are based on religious belief. It is increasingly recognized that a poor environment, for example, air pollution, water pollution, poverty, overcrowding, destruction of woodland, soil and marine resources, can create or exacerbate problems of ill health. In recent years increased attention has been paid by faith-based health care to environmental dimensions of health often based around the plans of the faiths on ecology or in response to the SDGs.

2 See: ARC, *Faith in Finance: Faith Consistent Investment and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016, available at: <http://arcworld.org/downloads/Faith-in-Finance.pdf>.

3 Leonard Liam, and Sya B. Kedzior, eds. *Occupy the Earth: Global Environmental Movements*, Emerald Group Publishing, 2014, p. 278.

Lifestyle

Religious communities have enormous consumer power which often goes unrecognized. Through the goods or services communities and individuals use, daily decisions are made which affect our environment. We have helped faiths set up their own ethical purchasing policies on food, energy and transport. In particular, we have helped many pilgrimage cities begin to create environmental and sustainable infrastructure to handle the 400% increase in pilgrimage to all major faith sacred sites in the last 20 years. This covers waste, food, transport, energy and water supply and we are now brokering partnerships between the R20 and Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation with the faiths in over a dozen sacred cities worldwide.

Advocacy

The faiths possess a prestige and authority in many parts of the world where few others are heard. Through advocacy, the faiths can play a unique role in the creation of better environmental practice and policy. In recent years, religious leaders from various faiths have worked with international leaders to improve the environmental aspect of significant new treaties, agreements and policies.

Celebration

The environmental and development movements are not great at saying Well Done or even Thank You! We often ask, ‘Have you ever seen an environmental joke book?’ No! They don’t laugh! We know as part of the wisdom of faiths that you can ask people to fast, repent, live a simpler lifestyle for part of the year. But we also know that at the end of that period – Lent, Ramadan, Pansa – we party! People remember things they enjoy and are empowered by celebrations through which comes a sense of being part of a wider, more engaged community. Such festivals have also become major occasions for sharing faith insights, stories and teachings as well as times when specific environmental projects are launched or funding is found to enable them to take place. They build environmental concerns into the very heart – the ritual and celebratory heart – of the faith and occurring every year they become a regular aspect of faith practice.

The above list of elements of the stakeholder role of faiths emerged first in a joint ARC/UNDP programs launched in 2007 called *Long*

Term Plans for a Living Planet. These were programs launched by over eighty faith traditions around the world which addressed systematic development of environmental and development teachings and action across every sector their religious life.

In 2015 the success of the long term plans led the UN to ask ARC to co-host with them the official meeting between the major faiths and the UN over the SDGs. The meeting was held in the historic city of Bristol, UK, the Green Capital City of Europe for that year. Here 24 major faith traditions critiqued the SDGs and evaluated the 17 SDGs in terms of what they were already doing; now felt they would do; did not feel they had anything specific to contribute.

A major criticism of the SDGs was that it assumed only one economic model – essentially consumerist capitalism and attempts to modify its impact. A number of faith traditions questioned this assumption and mooted the idea of exploring alternative economic models based on their own teachings and experience. For example, anti-usury or cooperative models of economics.

The Bristol Commitments (ARC/UN Faith in the Future 2015) have acted as guidelines for many aspects of the UN’s work since 2015 including providing a blueprint for faith involvement as the fifth partner alongside municipal governments, national governments, academia and the private sector in the UN Habitat Roadmap 2030 for sustainable cities.⁴

However, it was the commitment by a number of faith groups to explore pro-active investing for environmental and sustainable development entrepreneurship/venture capital projects that created most interest. As the UN have pointed out, the SDGs cannot be achieved through conventional grant aid. Instead they will be driven by investment. As such, the potential of working with the faiths, the fourth largest investment group in the world, is of course very attractive.

In early 2016, ARC was commissioned by the UN and OECD to write a major paper on faith-consistent investment and the SDGs and I am delighted to say we are launching this paper “Faith in Finance” here today in Nanjing.

⁴ ARC, Bristol Faith Commitment, available at: <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=667>.

The response by major faiths worldwide to the development of this paper has been extraordinary. We now estimate that some forty different faith finance groups will explore how to invest in environmental and sustainable development based around the SDGs. So important is this that, in partnership with organisations such as the UN, philanthropies, national governments and business, we will be hosting a faith-consistent investment meeting in late October in Switzerland and there will launch a new movement around faith-consistent investment.

As we have said in the paper:

The major institutional faiths are amongst the largest investors in the world. In recent years this investing power has been used in a number of ways, including disinvestment, pro-active ethical investment and impact investing. This quest for a clear coordination between faith beliefs and values and investment policy is increasingly known as Faith-Consistent Investing (FCI).

In 2015 the UN launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – launched in 2000 for 15 years – focused on developing countries, the SDGs are a vision of sustainable development for the whole world. As such they envisage a massive input of finance going beyond the normal aid channels and funds. Hence the interest in investments as a motor for change. In this context the potential of the faiths is significant – the reason for this paper.

Finance is only a part of the contribution faiths are already making based on their beliefs and values. The reason that faith can be so powerful – for good and sometimes for bad – is its personal and community transformative power – which money can sometimes, but not always, assist. To understand this, we explore core beliefs and values.

A common mistake made by those with little experience of the sheer diversity of faiths is to assume that in some rather vague way they are really all the same, and that they believe in the same things. This is not so and no programme of working with the faiths will work unless the particularities of each tradition – not just each faith but each tradition within the faith – is understood. For example, within Christianity there are traditions which for specific religious reasons do not invest in alcohol,

gambling, tobacco or armaments. Other Christian traditions have no particular problem with some of these.

The SDGs can benefit from faith involvement. The goals will never be the actual underlying reason why the faiths engage with issues such as gender, primary education, health, welfare, climate change etc. Those reasons lie within the teachings, beliefs, values and traditions of the faiths, as they have done for many generations. However, the SDGs are a reminder of what is important in this world today for this generation, and by providing a structure and a frame, they will in some cases cause faiths to think differently and invest in different ways. The reason they will do so will be based on a mixture of reasons that might be practical and spiritual, economic and compassionate, systemic and in some cases experimental.

The major faiths have long had a tradition of what they will *not* invest in based upon core values. For example, Islam and Daoism traditionally ban usury; the Quakers will not support anything to do with warfare; Jainism has a strict principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence in everything its followers are engaged in.

Positive screening as a strategy to invest in companies that show evidence of corporate social responsibility is also a tool used by the faiths. Investment decisions based on the environment or employee welfare and rights policy programmes of companies, for example, are used by various Christian investors.⁵

Faiths have also been powerful exercisers of shareholder resolutions on ethical and moral issues. Examples include the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s and 1980s where investors including (and often led by) faith bodies publicly removed their investment from banks such as Barclays, which had invested in pro apartheid companies. More recently there has been a Divest Reinvest movement strongly promoted by the faiths, promulgating divesting from companies profiting from carbon fuels and reinvesting in sustainable alternatives.

In 2001 the environmental movement posed the challenging question to faith investment managers: “We know what you are against: what are you for?” This led to a movement aimed at proactive investing with some faith investments being moved for example into sustainable forestry in

5 3iG. From Faith to Faith-Consistent Investing. Religious institutions and their investment practices (2010)

Southern Africa; sustainable, organic Traditional Chinese Medicine in China; micro-finance in India; supporting alternative energy use and investing in alternative energy through the churches in the USA.

What is known within the faith communities as faith-consistent investing (FCI), (which is the term used in this paper) is also known elsewhere as impact investing, environmental, social and governance (ESG) integration, or socially responsible investing (SRI).

In brief, faith investment strategies which aim for a financial return on investment alongside high positive social return can nowadays be divided into four areas:

- negative screening;
- positive screening;
- impact investing (FCI);
- shareholder engagement;

As institutions, the faiths are of course composed not just of the formal doctrinal authorities such as the Vatican, the Sangha in Buddhism or Shari'a Law Courts in Islam. Their creativity lies in countless movements, youth organisations, voluntary bodies, education projects and so forth. The faiths have lasted this long because they actually are capable through their sheer diversity of institutions, organisations and fellowships to continuously reinvent themselves. Focusing only on legal bodies or doctrine will mean missing where the energy and drive within a faith really resides.

The key faith funds are held by major faith traditions and institutions. These funds are not managed except at a very remote level by religious leaders as such but usually by professional finance staff mandated by the Governing Body of the faith – synods, councils; boards and so on.

Our proposal is that any such meeting or next step should not make the common mistake of well-meaning bodies of inviting major religious leaders. Few if any of them know anything about how the finances of their tradition are run. The people who should be invited should be those with actual fiduciary responsibility plus those who have sought to move the faith tradition to great social involvement. This often means educationalists, media and development agency specialists from within the faith itself.

It is proposed that those invited to participate come from the following categories within the faith tradition:

- Finance officers;
- Property and real estate managers;
- Charitable foundations and their heads;
- Pension and health fund managers.
- Education departments;
- Theology/Philosophy/Religious Studies departments;
- Scholars, economists and other experts who can track data on faith-based finance, and research evidence for faith activity and contribution to the SDGs.

It is also recommended that while faith aid agencies are invited, the key groups who can seriously invest in sustainable development goals are the major faith traditions themselves, not just their aid agencies.

For the initial meeting it is proposed that the faith bodies invited will have drawn up a “guidelines” which will have been discussed internally. The guidelines will indicate the new or revised priorities which the organisation has agreed should be the guiding principles for their investment programme. While such a set of guidelines cannot be considered legally binding it can be a means for addressing the issue of the legal responsibilities of Trustees. As mentioned earlier fiduciary laws often accidentally exclude moral choices in preference for greater financial return. By adopting guidelines to guide decision making faith bodies can overcome such limitations whilst remaining within the law.

For groups not constrained by such laws it is believed that the guidelines will enable a sharper definition, not just of values and being faith consistent, but of how the faith will make decisions in the future about the use of its investments.

The hope of this paper is that not only can new partnerships be created through the proposed 2017 meeting, but that the paper will also inspire deeper reflection and action within faith organisations. Alongside this the paper should encourage secular organisations and institutions to reflect seriously about the potential of working with the faiths as investors.

I invite all of those here today in Nanjing to join us in this new and very exciting venture. Let us invest truly in a better future, side by side, guided by what is best in each of our traditions.

Part III

Religious Values and Sustainable Development

**Perfection as a person:
An Analysis of the Interactive Relationship between
Religious Consciousness, Individual Cognition and
Moral Consciousness**

Tang Xiaofeng

The formation and development of religious consciousness depends on an individual's cognitive ability and moral consciousness. Religious consciousness affects the stance of an individual's cognition and moral opinions the other way round and transcends cognitive and moral demands, aiming at a perfect individual existence.

Religious consciousness is the worship of supernatural beings and laws. The supernatural forces come in different forms: God in Christianity, Allah in Islam, Karma in Buddhism, The Way in Taoism, and Destiny or the Law in Confucianism. Religious consciousness is key to establishing and maintaining the doctrines, etiquette, organizational systems and practice. Doctrines are the inheritance of religious consciousness; etiquette is its normative manifestations. Religious organizations are its structural elements while religious practice is its external expansion. Reversely, religious consciousness has to be secured by an organization, and be conveyed by norms and emotions. Religious consciousness differs with different religions, branches, and sects. But the single key factor may still be the respect for supernatural beings and laws. Unlike cognition or moral consciousness, religious consciousness does not go through clear-cut stages.¹ But historically, religions have

¹ See also Tang, Xiaofeng. "Cognition and Conscience—Analysis of the Role of Individual Cognition in the Formation of Individual Moral Consciousness." (In Chinese. Unpublished).

followed a certain path in terms of their origin and development, which some scholars summarize as moving from idolatry, to polytheism, and then to monotheism, while others summarize as moving from natural gods to personified gods, and then to skepticism. This article will focus on the formation of individual religious consciousness and its relations to cognition and conscience.

Cognition is a prerequisite of religious consciousness

The formation of religious consciousness is closely intertwined with the formation of abstract cognition. Though unlike the one-on-one relation between moral consciousness and cognition, religious consciousness is indeed relational to the development of individual cognition. An advocate of religious evolution, Spencer compared ancient human beings' religious consciousness to children's personification of idols. He thought that ancient religious rituals underwent the worship of sorcery and objects just as children communicate with puppets and regard them as living entities. As children's cognition gets more abstract and matures, they rid themselves of the link between puppets and living entities. Similarly, ancient people eventually got over the fear of the dark and the bizarre. Freud had a different opinion, though. He did not think the ancient people were afraid of nature's unpredictability. Still he likened the development of ancient people's unlimited consciousness to that of individual cognition. In that sense, he argued that children often regard themselves to be omnipotent, thus showing unrealistic confidence in their own power and exhibiting a primitive type of aggressiveness. Likewise, early human beings had felt they were omnipotent before they projected their power onto gods.²

Even when we go beyond mankind's childhood, the formation and fortification of adults' religious consciousness cannot exist without the development of perceptual and rational cognition. In a general sense, religious consciousness takes the following forms: belief in the existence of supernatural beings and laws; belief that such things and laws influence one's destiny; and belief that belief in such mythical forces will

2 Quoted in Garry Trump. *Exploration of the Origin of Religion*. (Chinese translation.) Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1995.

change one's or one's group's destiny. The emergence and confirmation of these three factors is so closely related to individual cognition that we may declare cognition as indispensable to religious consciousness. Van Der Leeuw, the founder of religious phenomenology, describes the object of worship as "utterly uncertain, very special and contra-impression"³; Schleiermacher called it "emotional backup"; Feuerbach refers to it as "mankind's erroneous objectified subjective experience". The philosophical assertion that "man is giving himself more and more and leaving less and less to God" is also made in the same vein.⁴

Cultural anthropologist Geertz has a more in-depth expression for it. He believes that religion is much more than metaphysics and ethical norms. The faithful rendering of the essence of reality, as well as the ability to describe the world as symbols, is essential to such expression. The powerful and compulsory "ought to be" is felt to originate from the all-embracing "be". "The power of religious symbols depends on such basic considerations as whether they can bestow value to facts and whether they can explain pure entities in an understandable and normalized way." Needless to say, such a process of description, understanding and valuation is inseparable from the progress of human cognitive and logical thinking.⁵

Religious consciousness influences individual cognition

Every religious system gives the objective world, its laws, and values a "nearly perfect" explanation. It further reinforces the explanation with its symbols and rituals. To the pious followers, religion doubtlessly provides an ideal account of this world and even the afterworld. They will perceive the world in the light of such pre-existing knowledge, which determines their perspective and method when they observe the world. All Christians, for instance, believe that God created the world. More generally, if a religion deems the world a good place, its teachings and doctrines are likely to explore the good in both man and the world at large. If it deems

3 Gerardus Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A study in phenomenology*. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 1938.

4 Ludwig Feuerbach. *The Essence of Christianity*. (Chinese translation). Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1984.

5 Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (Chinese translation). Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1999. 155-161.

the world an evil place, then its teachings and doctrines will propagate the significance of salvation and redemption and condemn sin. If it deems the world a place full of hardships, it will evade it and pursue an afterlife or reincarnation. The influence of a certain religion's doctrinal system over the believer's world view is almost hereditary. Their world view determines their perception of the immediate world and their expectation of the world beyond. Sometimes it even determines the way scientific research goes. Think of Taoist alchemy and chemistry, and Christian verification of doctrines and astronomy and medicine. In this respect, Dawson's *Christianity and the Emergence of Western Civilization* is the best footnote to how religion has influenced man's approach to science. A sociologist once said "the religious account of the nature of mankind's environment or of man's needs, once formulated or systematized, will affect not just people's values but also the actual standards of certain needs".⁶ There have been people like Feuerbach who criticize religion, but there have always been others who argue that what science refutes is not religious belief in its entirety, but only some religious creeds. Religious perception of the world is more than simply the objects it aims at. It resides in the stance of perception and in the values given to the objects.

Cognition is not sufficient for the formation and development of religious consciousness

Cognition is a prerequisite of religious consciousness. Conversely, religious consciousness determines the perspective and method of cognition. But cognition is not sufficient for religious perception, just as well-learned people may not have a strong religious consciousness but may well generate what terminates religious consciousness, that is, reason and science. Less knowledgeable people may have a stronger religious consciousness and may possess what is fundamental to religious consciousness – admiration and obedience. Knowledge is a necessary tool and a neutral factor to the formation of religious consciousness. There is not enough data to show any correlations between the level of knowledge and cognition and that of religious consciousness. The former, at the most, predicts one's reserve of religious ideas and theological knowledge,

6 J. Milton Yinger. *The Scientific Study of Religion*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1970.

which is external to one's core belief. The reason behind this is that the formation of sacred knowledge, that is, one's religious consciousness, depends to a large extent on the individual person but goes beyond the individual's cognition. And there is man's respect for and reliance on the infinite, the transcendent, and the mysterious, which comes into being almost at the same time as man's perceptual and rational cognition and is out of the reach of science and reason. As Rudolf Otto so rightly said "the experience of both fearing and admiring gods gave rise to religion." In Otto's view, "some forms of reasoning predated religion, though they were not yet advanced enough to include religion." Schleiermacher went a step further and declared that "the theological system is based on the analysis of human experience, especially the universal dependent experience of all mankind." Even religious empiricist W. James had to admit that "the different types of theories of religion are secondary. If you want to get the essence of religion, you have to hold fast to feelings and behavior as its eternal elements."⁷ For another, Max Müller mistakenly stated that religion, as an inherent instinct or ethos, could exist all alone or emerge without feeling or reason. But it was also he who rightly pointed out that religion, a faculty of apprehending the infinite, "already lay dormant in the earliest senses. Just as reason developed out of something finite, our belief emerged from that earliest concept of the infinite out of our senses because we have had religious beliefs since we knew man had both sense and reason."⁸ Without such an intuition, there would be no religion, not even the most primitive idolatry or fetishism. To be forthright about it, if any religion lacks belief in the supernatural, religious consciousness, the sacred experience, will be in vain no matter how many efforts have been made to prove and establish it based on sense and reason. Religion would no longer be religion but just a synonym to cultivation or education. This has been a common feeling held by all the above mentioned scholars in religious studies.

7 William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experiences: A Study in Human Nature*. (Chinese translation). Beijing: Huaxia Press, 2008.

8 Friedrich Max Müller. *The Origin and Growth of Religion*. (Chinese translation). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1989.

Moral consciousness determines one's orientation of religious consciousness

Man's religious consciousness is not inherent, as Max Müller put it, or independent of sense and reason. But just like sense and reason, man's admiration for the infinite is inborn and finds expression in sense and reason. This is the basis of religious consciousness. Sense and reason are thus instrumental to the emergence of religious consciousness. The moral pursuit of an individual or a group and its maintenance provides an invisible impetus for the formation of religious consciousness. Philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists have all made shrewd remarks in this respect. Henri Bergson wrote in his masterpiece, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, that religion makes up for what intelligence lacks in at least two ways. Firstly, religion is nature's defensive reaction to the disassembling force of intelligence. Nature forestalls the individual's tendency to think only of himself by bringing in religious awe and taboo so as to maintain solidarity among individual human beings and their communities. Secondly, religion is nature's defensive reaction to the concept of a sure death held by human intelligence. It counterbalances death with afterlife, and fear of death with rebirth. Bergson thought that "everything the group members are accustomed to, and all individual actions expected by the group were imprinted with religion because people learned to rely on each other when they obeyed customs whereby an individual learned to get rid of his self."⁹ In his *Future of an Illusion*, Freud further traced the origin of religion to the Oedipus complex, arguing that the guilt of killing one's father had to be cleansed or atoned, thus giving rise to various religious rituals. Geertz suggested in *The Interpretation of Cultures* that the demonstration of a meaningful relation between the values a people hold and the general order of existence within which it finds itself is an essential element in all religions.¹⁰ Durkheim disagreed with Spencer and some social evolutionists who thought religion evolved from lower forms to higher ones. The basis of his theory is that religion had the same function in all societies, including the early ones. Totem was a spiritual force in primitive society because it represented a personified society.

9 Henri Bergson. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. (Chinese translation). Guizhou: Guizhou People's Publishing House, 2000.

10 Geertz, op. cit., 156.

In this sense, what early people worshipped was society itself. Society produced some symbols, rituals, and even theological systems so as to deify itself. During the process, the group's expectations and norms were transformed into a set of sacred rules over time in history, some of which were natural, others of which were social.¹¹ These ideas correlate with that of “the unpredictable laws make room for religions” [神道设教] in the Chinese tradition.

Religious consciousness influences and upholds man's moral ideals the other way around

There is no doubt that individual religious consciousness influences and maintains individual moral consciousness. Theorists have long dwelled on the relationship between religion and ethics. As has been mentioned, vague moral consciousness, to some degree, brought about and made use of the religious origin and form that was based on mankind's subjective feeling of the infinite. The aim was achieved the moment religious consciousness came into being, and it, in turn, counteracted, reinforced, and contributed to morality, its propellant. There is no religion in the world that can live without practising ethics and morality. No matter how much a religion emphasizes the importance of “belief”, its ethical aims are always pursued as means, or ends, or results. Geertz observed that “[F]or all peoples the forms, vehicles, and objects of worship are suffused with an aura of deep moral seriousness. The holy bears within it everywhere a sense of intrinsic obligation: it not only encourages devotion, it demands it; it not only induces intellectual assent, it enforces emotional commitment. Whether it be formulated as *mana*, as *Brahma*, or as the *Holy Trinity*, that which is set apart as more than mundane is inevitably considered to have far-reaching implications for the direction of human conduct.”¹² Here Geertz pointed out the influence of the morality in the objects, forms, and vehicles of worship on people's behavior. The authority and demonstration of the objects worshipped, the seriousness and edification of the forms of worship (that is, the rituals), the heritage and exemplification of the vehicles of worship (classics, architecture, arts, etc.), and above all, the norms and rules of doctrines,

11 Quoted in Garry Trump. *Exploration of the Origin of Religion*. (Chinese translation.) Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1995.

12 Geertz, op. cit., 155.

all exert influence on people's behavior and actions by means of self-discipline or peer pressure. Just like the harmony in music, religion is more than just scores. It has to be performed and put into practice. It is practised by individuals and communities. No matter how sacred religious practice is, it will have to be weighed in an ethical way. As is already stated, every religious system deems itself a description and explanation of a lifestyle and its significance. Such description, when instilled into the followers, influences not just individual cognition, but individual judgment as well. As Geertz put it, "religion, by fusing ethos and world view, gives to a set of social values what they perhaps most need to be coercive: an appearance of objectivity. In sacred rituals and myths values are portrayed not as subjective human preferences but as the imposed conditions for life implicit in a world with a particular structure."¹³

Religious consciousness, perhaps, makes a better person

The aims of morality are achieved through religious consciousness. Religion not only makes people superstitious and pious, it, in its essence in the universe and nature, intends for a better individual with a perfect personality. Religion is more than cognition and influences cognition. It serves and influences morality, too. One of its earliest goals was to shape a better individual and society. Spencer, who was a religious evolutionist, expressed his opinion on this clearly. That is why though he would argue religion originated from tales of ghosts and worship of ancestors, he was also keenly aware that all men were born with a rational and moral emotion that had made evolution possible. Early people's reaction came from fear out of the feeling of danger. It was also a type of respect and admiration.¹⁴ In this sense, Carl Jung's religious psychology is more convincing because it invites attention to the positive side of religious consciousness and categorizes the image of God as "collective unconsciousness". In Jung's opinion, mankind is naturally programmed for religion and religion is not man's "invention". The most significant part of religion is that it is connected to individual progress towards being whole and complete. This is exactly the same as Plato's claim that being complete is regarded as the same as attaining the supreme

¹³ Geertz, op.cit., 161.

¹⁴ Quoted in Garry Trump. *Exploration of the Origin of Religion*. (Chinese translation.) Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1995.

sacred principle. Such attainment is the unification of resembling gods (homoiôsis) and union with gods (henôsis). Religious rituals and vehicles have to be used because mankind cannot attain the principles without them.¹⁵ What was created by Christianity has officially achieved an ontological completeness in the perfect Christ.

The development of individual cognition is core to cognitive science and philosophical epistemology while the formation of individual moral consciousness is a focal point of ethics and pedagogical science. The origin and development of individual religious consciousness is an important topic in religious, sociological, and anthropological researches. Individual cognition is about the interface between man and the world; moral consciousness is about man's relation with society, and religious consciousness is about man's interaction with super-existence beyond nature and society. All three are closely related to mankind's world view, value system and religious view and all are indispensable dimensions of individual existence and growth. Their healthy development and harmonious interaction lays the foundation for a perfect life.

15 See Plato, *Timaeus*, 176b and Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*. 1.12.

Reflecting on the key assumptions implicit in the present acquisitive culture: A Baha'i perspective

Kong Siew Huat

No one would dispute that the world today is ailing but it may still help us to gain a better perspective by taking a closer look at some of the basic facts about human life on this planet. The contrasts below may help throw into sharp relief the state of our world today, and our roles – both the individual and collective – in contributing to such a situation.

The UN Human Development Report (1998-2000) indicates that 2.6 billion people are without access to basic sanitation, almost 1.5 billion are deprived of safe drinking water, 1.1 billion lack adequate shelter, 880 million are without access to modern healthcare services, 1 billion adults are illiterate. 2.8 billion survive on less than \$2 a day, and 1.2 billion live on less than \$1 a day. We cannot say that we do not have the potential resources to address these problems in the light of the figures below:

- 1) Universal primary education would cost \$6 billion a year (around \$8 billion in 2008) whereas \$8 billion is spent annually for cosmetics in the United States alone.
- 2) Installation of water and sanitation for all would cost \$9 billion plus some annual costs compared to the \$11 billion spent annually on ice cream in Europe and \$12 billion a year spent on perfume in Europe and the US.
- 3) Basic health care and nutrition around the globe would cost \$13 billion compared to \$17 billion a year spent on pet food in Europe and the United States.

But these are just small expenditure items compared to the \$35 billion spent on business entertainment in Japan; \$50 billion on cigarettes in Europe; \$105 billion on alcoholic drinks in Europe; \$400 billion on drugs and narcotics around the world; and \$780 billion on ammunition (\$1.55 trillion in 2008).

Twenty percent of the world's population in industrialized countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures, while the poorest 20% account only for 1.3%. The share of the poorest 20% of the world's population in global income is 1.1%. On average, developing countries have one doctor for every 6,000 people whereas industrialized countries have one doctor for every 350 people.

There is no doubt that the plight and suffering of the majority of the world's people is intensifying even as wealth is present at a level our forebears could not even have imagined just a few generations ago. The wealth gap does not reflect the absence of means but rather how wealth is allocated and spent. That demands a re-examination of how we have managed to reach such a state of affairs today. It is definitely not through a lack of effort. On the contrary, this has been the result of several decades of relentless efforts at riding the tide of superficial growth and development. People around the world have been chasing the illusion of a good life for decades but the majority have only harvested the bitter fruit of pain and suffering from this human development enterprise. It is unconscionable that a great segment of humanity is not able to make ends meet while some sections of humanity live in luxury. Unpleasant as the statistics presented above may seem, there is no sign that this model of development is slowing down. Indeed, we do not expect it to halt its steps even if from time to time, slight modifications and adjustments may happen especially in the event of a potential crisis. It is so entrenched in our collective consciousness that we can see no other viable alternative. To break the idealistic fetters imposed by its advocates is never easy.

It is a fact that the current mainstream development model relies heavily on high consumption. In such a model, endlessly rising levels of consumption are cast as indicators of progress and prosperity. This preoccupation with the production and accumulation of material objects and comforts (as sources of meaning, happiness and social acceptance) has consolidated itself in the structures of power and information to the exclusion of competing voices and paradigms. The unfettered cultivation of needs and wants has led to a system fully dependent on excessive

consumption for a privileged few, while reinforcing exclusion, poverty and inequality, for the majority. Each successive global crisis be it climate, energy, food, water, disease, financial collapse has revealed new dimensions of the exploitative and oppressive nature of the current model. Stark are the contrasts between the consumption of luxuries and the cost of basic needs. The narrowly materialistic worldview underpinning much of modern economic thinking has contributed to the degradation of human conduct, the disruption of families and communities, the corruption of public institutions, and the exploitation and marginalization of large segments of the population women and girls in particular.¹

However, if the figures and numbers above represent the fruits of development, which is unacceptable to us, it is important that we examine the roots of this tree. An important reason for this investigation is the search for a new perspective in order to address the issues that confront us. Einstein reminded us that: “You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created.” If our faith and understanding of how the world develops are being shaken, we should question those understanding closely and whether we should go on living it regardless of how subtle the shake is.

This paper attempts to investigate the dominant culture of competitive acquisitiveness at the level of assumptions. An assumption is formed when a behavior and justification or value is repeated successfully over a period of time and is then kept as “reflex” and the “right way to respond to certain problems”. In short, behind every decision or action is a set of assumptions regarding how the world really works, which is taken for granted to be irrefutable and indisputable.²

Setting the context of this investigation

This paper will investigate some of the key underlying assumptions of the acquisitive culture that is prevalent in most parts of the world today. Those assumptions made explicit through this exercise are then compared with related texts in Baha’i literature. Preliminary experiences in nurturing the culture of giving will then be introduced.

1 Baha’i International Community: *Rethinking Prosperity: Forging Alternatives to a Culture of Consumerism*, 2010.

2 Kegan R. and Lahey, L., *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*, 2009.

To undertake this exercise does not mean that one is blind to the crises that humanity is being gripped with. The conviction, nay even confidence, to do so by certain individuals and groups, including the Baha'is, is borne out of a particular reading of human history: that these crises of various kinds are only transitory in nature and would carry humanity to an even more glorious future, one that we cannot even dimly imagine today. Baha'is believe that the aggregate or collective lives of humanity could be likened to the life of an individual: it goes through different stages of childhood, adolescence, youth and adulthood, with each stage characterized by different features and powers. What humanity is experiencing in its collective life today is a crucial phase of its adolescence, characterized by tumult and uncertainty, but it is marching towards its maturity.

What will emerge from the crucible of this trial and tribulation in the present transitional phase, the Baha'is believe, is a civilization that is immensely glorious and prosperous, and one that will demonstrate the powers and attributes of humanity in its maturity. Instead of seeing a world that is teetering towards its ruinous end, they see a world that is pregnant with an emerging global civilization. We cannot reasonably expect a mother to be in a stage of gestation forever; pregnancy indeed only happens in a short span as compared to the entire life span of an individual. But, what should be acknowledged is that a lot of changes is taking place within the womb as the fetus prepares itself to be born into this world. In the same vein, the present crisis that humanity is experiencing can aptly be called a transitional phase – it is leaving behind its condition of adolescence and walking towards the threshold of adulthood. In the light of the transformation that this transition period would of necessity witness, however, some of the fundamental conceptions and assumptions underpinning our society today – what is human purpose, work and wealth, family, vision of future society and our relationship with nature, to name just a few – ought to be re-examined or even re-defined. This paper is an attempt to contribute to this discourse. It proposes that cultivating a life of simplicity would be an outcome of this examination but this life style choice by the individual has to be cultivated in the context of nurturing a culture of giving at the collective level.

Re-thinking human purpose

Indeed, our journey through this terrain would do well to start with questioning how an individual realizes the meaning of his/her life in a culture shaped by capitalism and materialism. After which we will look at what kind of conception of human nature would support a life of giving, why it is part of human nature to give, the purpose of giving, and changes in human values that must take place. This we will undertake in the context of defining what is “giving”, its distinction from the conventional sense of giving, such as philanthropy or other instrumental charity offerings.

To be sure, our understanding of who we are have been shaped by evolutionary biologists for the better part of a century and a half. “Darwinism”, a pet word in their circle, is often used with prefixes – *social-Darwinism*, *economic-Darwinism* – bringing with it the notion of “survival of the fittest” to the fore. This phrase, first coined by Herbert Spencer (1864) after his reading of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, would quickly come to dominate social and economic thought. It defines human nature as rooted in self-interest, competition, and conflict, and has subsequently been used to justify everything from colonialism to eugenics, unrestrained laissez-faire capitalism, the abandonment of the poor, and ultimately, war.

According to this world-view, we are all “economic man”, *Homo economicus*, obsessed with our own self-interest, and intent on maximizing our personal gains. *Homo economicus*, in other words, is never satisfied, but always wants more – demonstrably, measurably more – and is continually calculating to achieve that end.³ Ernst Mayr, described by Scientific American magazine as a “towering figure” in evolutionary biology, wrote in that publication in 2000 that recent research has suggested that “a propensity for altruism and harmonious cooperation in social groups is favored by natural selection. The old thesis of social Darwinism – strict selfishness – was based on an incomplete understanding of animals, particularly social species.”⁴

3 Mintzberg, H., Simons, R., & Basu, K., Beyond Selfishness, *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Fall), 2012.

4 Mayr, Ernst, Darwin’s Influence on Modern Thought, *Scientific American*, 2000:83.

Adam Smith is best remembered for this infamous saying: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.” He also describes self-interest and competition in a market economy as the “invisible hand” that guides the economy. Yunus lamented that not only has capitalism operated on the assumption that the human being is one-dimensional but that human beings actually “work extra hard to transform ourselves, as closely as possible, into one-dimensional human beings as conceptualized in the theory, to allow smooth functioning of the free market mechanism.”⁵ As a result, the other dimensions of our lives – political, emotional, social, spiritual and environmental – which are the very essentials of human life, had been deliberately ignored. As human beings have been endowed with limitless qualities and capabilities, Yunus further proposed that “our theoretical constructs should make room for the blossoming of those qualities, and not assume them away.”⁶ The current financial crisis and the un-sustainability of the current development model give us no other choice but to ponder over the very question of “who we are”.

Closer to home, some sore spots of traditional Chinese values such as “人不为己，天诛地灭” (a selfless person will be doomed) are also being seized upon to justify, if not glorify, self-interest. Even statements such as the following are being re-interpreted as a way to encourage “enlightened self-interest”: “安分守己”, “各人自扫门前雪，莫管他家瓦上霜” (do your duty just by sweeping the snow on your doorsteps and not minding the frost on the others’ roof). In contrast, values discouraging the pursuit of self-interest are often marginalized for their inability to trigger growth, the magnet of most economies.

To be precise, self-interestedness is the very fuel for the engine of liberal capitalism. Likewise, motivation theories that favor self-interestedness or materialism have become the dominant lens in understanding human behavior. Existentialism, an off-spring, if not a twin, of “survival of the fittest” also directs its believers to be self-interested. In many cases, the scarcity of resources in the face of huge population pressure is used to justify putting aside virtues such as generosity.

5 Yunus, M., Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism that Serves Humanity’s Most Pressing Needs, *Public Affairs*, 2007. 243

6 Yunus, *ibid.*

The Baha'i Faith, however, views humanity from a different perspective. As Bahá'ís see it, distinct from the natural instincts of animals, wisdom and spirituality should be the highlights defining humanity. The Bahá'í Faith does not negate the endless pursuit of self-interest, but opposes the reductionist view of humanity, which regards humanity as selfishness itself.

“Man is in the highest degree of materiality, and at the beginning of spirituality,” Abdul-Baha, one of the central founding figures of the Baha'i Faith, would often argue. “[T]hat is to say, he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the last degree of darkness, and at the beginning of light . . . he is the sum of all the degrees of imperfection, and . . . he possesses the degrees of perfection.” Human beings, Abdul-Baha said, are capable of both the most degraded behavior and the most saintly. “Not in any other species in the world of existence,” he added, “is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction and opposition as in the human species.”⁷

He repeatedly took on Social Darwinism, and the idea of the survival of the fittest. “There is no lower degree nor greater debasement for man,” Abdul-Baha said, “than this natural condition of animalism.”⁸ Instead, he articulated a distinct conception of human nature rooted in the factors that make us different: consciousness, abstract thought, scientific advancement, moral reasoning, and qualities such as love, compassion, and justice. While most cultures implicitly promote self-interest, this paper would argue that this is an incomplete understanding of our reality as human beings. To remove the shackles of capitalism and consumerism, we should adopt the new outlook of humanity as follows:

*...man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may enjoy wealth; he should enjoy trouble for himself that others may enjoy happiness and well-being. This is the attribute of man....He who is so hard-hearted as to think only of his own comfort, such an one will not be called man. Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life must he be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind.*⁹

7 Abdu'l-Bahá, *Baha'i World Faith*. US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976.

8 Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2014.

9 Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2014.

A life of giving

From the above, it is clear that the Baha'is have a new conception of what it means to be human these days. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, "...the honor and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world's multitudes should become a source of social good."¹⁰ Just as a candle's purpose is to provide light, the human soul was created to give generously. We fulfil our highest purpose in a life of service, in which we offer our time, energy, knowledge, and financial resources. "[Y]e must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom."¹¹

As one reads the following passage, which the Baha'is regard as the golden rule for living, one can see the different dimensions of life that the individuals are capable of giving and what they should be learning to give: "Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility."¹²

10 Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2013.

11 Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Part II: From the Persian, Tr. Li Shaobai, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2009.

12 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2005.

From this one can see that many indeed are the forms of giving, such as time, resources, energy, knowledge, love, just to name a few. If the “golden rule” results in a life of simplicity, it is not out of mere restraint, it is arising from a certain knowledge of trying to be a source of social good and an attempt to be a promoter of social well-being. Not only that it should prevent degradation to either the recipients or the givers, “giving” as described here could only lead to the raising of capability or nobility of the parties involved. However, training and education are necessary to the practice of “giving”. Abdul-Baha offers this image of what individuals should strive for: “the happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the pleasure and peace, of an individual hath never consisted in his personal wealth, but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breadth of his learning, and his ability to solve difficult problems.”¹³ Hence, the need for education and training that will lead to a culture of giving rather than acquisitiveness, is apparent here.

In a world shaped by materialism and competitive acquisitiveness, many are obsessed with certain kinds of distinctions, many of which are material in nature. Growth in material wealth, often represented by economic growth as measured by GDP, is something that most societies or nations pursue. The deep underlying belief is that the planet earth would be able to support unlimited and perpetual growth, and the present financial system in particular demands that continual growth takes place. Appeals like “making the cake bigger” so that everyone would have a share or “all the boats would float when the tide rises” or “spend more for more growth” frequent our lips for we take them as indisputable truths. Economic activities occupy a central position in our social existence and human motivation is linked directly to the pursuit of material benefits or advantages. However, the Baha’i scriptures are very explicit as to the real distinction. They are not to set their sights on “financial distinction”, “not scientific, commercial, industrial distinction” but on “spiritual distinction”, which implies becoming “distinguished in all the virtues of the human world” for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord

13 Abdul Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2013.

with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace.”¹⁴

What is being proposed here is that the way we measure the success of a person living in the culture of giving is one that is essentially spiritual in nature. In the same vein, a successful society cannot be defined solely in terms of material wealth. For the Baha’is, “the centrality of *knowledge to social existence*”¹⁵ is a principle that they consider sacrosanct. To them, “[T]he progress of the world of humanity dependeth upon knowledge, and its decline is due to ignorance.”¹⁶ They envision that the emergence of a global civilization which is prosperous in both its material and spiritual dimensions implies that the spiritual and practical aspects of life are to advance together. Through faith and reason, it becomes possible to discover the powers and capacities latent in individuals and in humanity as a whole, and to work for the realization of these potentialities. Recognition of the fundamental harmony of science and religion also allows for the generation, application, and diffusion of spiritual and material knowledge among all the world’s inhabitants.¹⁷ This demands that we re-examine the nature and role of material resources in human society. Instead of occupying a central position in our social existence, material resources would then rightfully play a complementary role. The choice of life style for the individual would have to be made with due consideration to the roles of material and non-material resources in our lives.

It is important to note that, in giving, the Baha’is are neither motivated by the hope of recognition and reward nor by the fear of punishment. “Giving” ultimately is rendered out of a love for the Creator and hence completely non-instrumental. One gives because that has value and is an end in itself. A life of service to humanity implies humility and detachment, not self-interest and ostentation. It is important to contrast this with the popular notion of enlightened self-interest or supposedly acts of altruism which ultimately benefit the self. In most societies, individuals are being persuaded to give so that they themselves will ultimately reap

14 Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2014:137.

15 The Universal House of Justice, *Ridvān Message*, 2010.

16 Abdu’l-Bahá, *Message to the believers in the cradle of the faith*, June 17, 2010

17 Available at www.bahai.org.

the benefit from such acts. This is often formulated cleverly as “win-win” situations. Even young toddlers are coaxed to share their toys on the understanding that other children would in turn share theirs with them. Companies take on corporate social responsibility because it makes good business sense: it helps win the trust and confidence of old customers, and attracts new ones. Though there is empirical evidence to suggest that those who volunteer to provide help, making introductions, sharing knowledge, and mentoring, without asking for anything in return, are likely to end up being successful themselves.¹⁸

The premise of this paper is that “giving” is an inherent nature of human beings. It is a spiritual muscle that needs to be exercised. Giving from an individual springs from his/her conscious observation of faith and personal integration, not from direct or indirect external influences. Abdul-Baha states:

*Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor; they should expend their substance for the poor; but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force. For the harvest of force is turmoil and the ruin of the social order. On the other hand voluntary sharing, the freely chosen expending of one's substance, leadeth to society's comfort and peace. It lighteth up the world; it bestoweth honour upon humankind.*¹⁹

To reach this level of consciousness whereby giving becomes voluntary requires an understanding of oneself: people need to gain knowledge of who they are and the purpose of their lives. An important proposition of this paper is that the human is essentially spiritual in nature, though we have a material dimension as well. Nurturing a life of simplicity has to be built upon the knowledge that we are essentially spiritual beings. The spiritual dimension of our existence has to be acknowledged if the problems confronting our global society are to be addressed and the community of common destiny constructed. In fact, many of the problems that we face today are fundamentally spiritual in nature but, unfortunately, we have been focusing almost all of our energy and attention on just the material and technological dimensions of those

18 Grant, A., *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*, Penguin, 2015.

19 Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2015.

issues. The figures cited at the beginning of this paper show that people's priorities relate ultimately to how they understand their true nature. This brings us to another question: What is the source of knowledge that might produce the consciousness which can nurture a life of generous giving? In addition to science, the Baha'is see another system of knowledge and practice having important roles to play, as is evidenced below:

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife. The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquility of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God.²⁰

It is not uncommon for people to pronounce, at times quite dismissively and casually, that religion has lost its social relevance today. Others, a little more generous in their analysis of religion, are quick to propose that religion could guide people towards goodness (“导人向善”) and assign religious communities the roles of providing charity to or relieving the sufferings of those at the margins of society. The Baha'i Faith not only acknowledges religion's social relevance today but sees its relationship to some of the key concepts often associated with civilization building in this age. As Arbab has noted, this shift of emphasis to the progress of humanity is also reflected in the importance given to specific qualities that Bahá'ís are enjoined to acquire, qualities that promote pro-social behavior and lead to unity: for example, justice is stressed more than charity, and the acquisition of attitudes conducive to human solidarity is valued over simple tolerance. Even the qualities of love and of detachment from the material world are conceived of as active and social rather than passive and inwardly directed:

...the social dimension is also enhanced through the expansion of the meaning of most qualities to include a social vision. Love includes the abolition of social prejudices and the realization of the beauty of diversity in the human race. Detachment from the world is not taught in a way that leads to idleness and to the acceptance of oppression: it is acquired to free us from our own material interests in order to dedicate ourselves to the well-being of others. To this expansion of the meaning of almost all qualities is also added a constant endeavor to acquire social

20 Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2016.

*skills, to participate in meetings of consultation, to work in groups ... to reach and carry out collective decisions.*²¹

Thus, he concludes, the Bahá'í path of spiritualization “should not be confused with one that defines goodness passively and produces a human being whose greatest virtue is not to harm anyone; it is a path to create social activists and agents of change.”²²

Work and wealth

To live a life of generous giving does not imply that one should lead an ascetic life, becoming socially detached and avoiding work and material wealth. After all, even “the progress and execution of spiritual activities” is “conditioned upon material means”.²³ But, one cannot agree with the common assertion that giving has to be preceded by adequate material wealth or ample free time. A life of giving is possible regardless of one's material wealth and living conditions. What we should examine here is the purpose and meaning of work. In a culture that emphasizes acquisitiveness, one works hard in order to prove one's worth or to gain as much material wealth as possible. Among the religious traditions, there are some that regard the accumulation of material wealth as a sign that they are the chosen ones of God²⁴ and there are others that choose to shun material wealth, seeing it as a source of impurity. Before we share a few comments on wealth and work, it is important to clarify one concept – detachment – which also correlates with a life of simplicity and giving. According to Baha'i scriptures:

*Detachment does not consist in setting fire to one's house, or becoming bankrupt or throwing one's fortune out of the window, or even giving away all of one's possessions. Detachment consists in refraining from letting our possessions possess us. A prosperous merchant who is not absorbed in his business knows severance. A banker whose occupation does not prevent him from serving humanity is severed. A poor man can be attached to a small thing.*²⁵

21 Arbab, Farzam, “The Process of Social Transformation” in *Bahá'í Faith and Marxism*, Ottawa: Baha'i Studies Publications, 1986.

22 Ibid.

23 Shoghi Effendi. *Principles of Baha'i Administration*. US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.

24 Weber, M., *The Protestant Spirit and the Spirit of Capitalism*, SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013.

25 Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, Tudor Press, 1918.

The workplace, where a working person spends most of his waking hours, is where an individual gives the most of himself in many aspects. Here, the spiritual principle that can help define a proper attitude towards wealth is one that is consistent with the real nature and purpose of work. Work is both an exigency of life on this planet and an urge inherent to the human character. Through it, the human soul finds fulfillment and many of its potentials are realized. To accomplish its purpose, however, work cannot be reduced to a mere struggle for survival. Nor can its aim be solely the satisfaction of the demands of the self. Work's highest station is service to humanity, and when performed in that spirit, becomes an act of worship.

The noblest fruit of work is spiritual and intellectual attainment. But work must also produce the material means to sustain the individual and society and make progress possible. The prosperous world civilization now within humanity's grasp will call for the production of wealth on a scale hitherto unimagined. The success of such an effort will depend on a rigorous definition of the parameters of wealth ownership so as to avoid the pitfalls of both excessive state control and the unbounded accumulation of riches by the relatively few. Extremes of wealth and poverty are closely interconnected; the latter cannot be abolished while the other is allowed to exist.

Seen in such a light, personal wealth is acceptable so long as it fulfills certain conditions. It must be earned through honest work, physical or intellectual, and its acquisition by the individual must not be the cause, no matter how indirectly, of the impoverishment of others. Moreover, the legitimacy of material possessions depends equally on how they are earned and how they are used. One should enjoy the fruits of one's labors and expend one's wealth not only for the good of one's family, but also for the welfare of society.²⁶

The structure of relationships which encourages giving

For a person living in isolation, it would be quite irrelevant to talk about giving. But, unlike all other creatures, "man cannot live singly and alone. He is in need of continuous cooperation and mutual help." "Therefore,

26 Arbab, Farzam, "Promoting a Discourse on Science, Religion and Development" in Sharon Harper (ed.) *The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science, Religion and Development*, Ottawa: Kumarian Press, 2000.

he is in need of cooperation and reciprocity.” An individual in fact needs other fellow beings in order to nurture his many capacities, not the least of which is the practice of giving. This being the case, how should we relate to one another, or more specifically, what is the social structure which would promote a culture of giving? In this regard, the Baha’is foresee that there would be “an organic change in the structure of present-day society”, as humanity transitions towards the stage of maturity. This would suggest that relationships based on domination, manipulation, rivalry or contest, which admittedly are the dominant ones at the present, would have to give way to other relationship structures.

As to the structures of relationships, it would be instructive to look at one significant principle of the Baha’i Faith: the Oneness of humankind. Though many seers of the past, including those from the Chinese tradition, had alluded to this vision, the Baha’i conception of how human beings should be perceived collectively is relevant to our present discussion, as can be seen in the passage below:

In a letter addressed to Queen Victoria over a century ago, and employing an analogy that points to the one model holding convincing promise for the organization of a planetary society, Bahá'u'lláh compared the world to the human body. There is, indeed, no other model in phenomenal existence to which we can reasonably look. Human society is composed not of a mass of merely differentiated cells but of associations of individuals, each one of whom is endowed with intelligence and will; nevertheless, the modes of operation that characterize man's biological nature illustrate fundamental principles of existence. Chief among these is that of unity in diversity. Paradoxically, it is precisely the wholeness and complexity of the order constituting the human body – and the perfect integration into it of the body's cells – that permit the full realization of the distinctive capacities inherent in each of these component elements. No cell lives apart from the body, whether in contributing to its functioning or in deriving its share from the well-being of the whole. The physical well-being thus achieved finds its purpose in making possible the expression of human consciousness; that is to say, the purpose of biological development transcends the mere existence of the body and its parts.²⁷

The cells in the body are given the free choice to serve or to dominate and be served. But from the above, it would seem to make sense for individual cells to live a life of giving and serving, as opposed to “a

27 Baha’i International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995.

life of competitive acquisitiveness” or domination over others. There is no future for those cells that are bent on dominating other cells or those that choose to exploit others in order to gain advantage over other cells, neither is it good for the body as a whole.

With the oneness of humankind as an organizing principle, the Baha’is are advised to

*...at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.*²⁸

Further, it should not be about giving something to another person of his own kind only. However, “Kindness cannot be shown the tyrant, the deceiver, or the thief, because, far from awakening them to the error of their ways, it maketh them to continue in their perversity as before” though the society must be “founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul.”²⁹ Grant echoes this perspective when he cautions the “givers” not to be taken for a ride by the perpetual “takers”.³⁰

In the Baha’is’ perspective, the fundamental relationship is essentially based on the principle of the subordination of “every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national, to the paramount interests of humanity....”³¹ This principle, in turn, is based on the idea that, in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations, the advantage of the part is best reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the whole are ignored or neglected. However, the common interests of humanity must not be conceptualized as a vague abstraction that can be appropriated by a particular dominant group and interpreted as identical with its own interests, but rather as a complex dynamic relationship

28 Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu’l-Bahá*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2015:1.

29 Ibid. 138.

30 Grant, A., *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*, Penguin, 2015.

31 Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh: Selected Letters*, Macau: New Millennium Publication International, 2000.

between the parts and the whole, in which the viability of the whole is served by ensuring the well-being of all its individual parts, an enterprise for which all share responsibility. Cooperation between society and the individual is stressed, as is the fostering of “a climate in which the untold potentialities of the individual members of society can develop....” Such a relationship, as it is envisioned, must allow ‘free scope’ for ‘individuality to assert itself’ through modes of spontaneity, initiative and diversity that ensure the viability of society. Thus, even while the will of the individual is subordinated to that of society, “the individual is not lost in the mass but becomes the focus of primary development....” The fulfillment of individual potential is to be sought not in pursuing self-centered desires but in contributing to the well-being of others, and “become a source of social good.”³²

Within the family unit, which is the nucleus of human society, it provides a vital setting for the development of praiseworthy qualities and capacities, including the practice of giving. Through its harmonious functioning and the development and maintenance of the bonds of love that join together its members, it gives constant expression to the truth that the well-being of the individual is inextricably bound to the progress and well-being of others. But, in all that they do, they would not instill “in the rising generations feelings of estrangement towards an illusory ‘other’ or nurturing any instinct to exploit those relegated to this category.”³³

Stewardship of nature

Finally, it is important to consider the relationship between humanity and nature. What has to be acknowledged is that, under the spell of self-interestedness and acquisitiveness, the Earth has been treated as a warehouse of material resources to be exploited in ways which can only be characterized as hostile and irresponsible. The resulting ecological disaster today has forced world leaders to reexamine the meaning of progress and the appropriate relationship between humanity and nature.

32 Heller, W.M. and Mahmoudi, H., “Altruism and Extensivity in the Bahá’í Religion”, 1989. Retrieved from <http://www.bahai.org/documents/essays/heller-wendy-m-and-mahmoudi-hoda/altruism-extensivity-bahai-religion>

33 UHJ, The Universal House of Justice. Extracted from: <http://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/>

No matter how one might choose to examine it, there is no going back to the culture of acquisitiveness for the havoc that it has clearly wrought on our natural environment. The culture of “giving” can only be manifested as stewardship of nature. It is premised on the conviction that human beings aspire to transcend the limitations of the material world through maintaining an attitude of respect and cooperation with nature that is in harmony with the oneness of existence.

It upholds a vision of wholeness and interconnectedness throughout creation, which includes both nature and human consciousness, the former being an expression of God's will in the contingent world and the latter an imperative of a higher order of existence. Stewardship of nature, then, constitutes an inescapable role that humanity, from among countless species in the biosphere, must play – the role of being a conscious, compassionate, and creative participant in the evolution of the life of the planet.³⁴

Nurturing the culture of giving

At the heart of this pattern of thought and behavior which promotes giving is a set of assumptions or underlying beliefs. It is through individual or collective actions that opportunities to practice them are created. Though actions may sometimes be unconscious, they serve to raise our understanding from a level of sub-consciousness to consciousness. What should be acknowledged is that this pattern of thought and behavior that we call “culture” is able to demonstrate capabilities above and beyond those of individuals and institutions. Cultural capacities are higher just as institutional capacities are more complex than those of individuals.

The assumptions that shape this culture of giving include the following:

- Human beings have limitless potential to be both selfless and self-centred, but certain kind of education will enable selflessness to override self interestedness;
- Like individual human beings, the aggregate life of humanity goes through different phases, and our collective life at the moment is marching towards maturity, which demands that “giving” be its defining characteristic;

³⁴ Arbab, 2000.

- Humanity resembles a body with cells, tissues and organs. Reciprocity and cooperation, which can best be fueled by giving, would help ensure the health of the body;
- The community of common destiny must have the “oneness of humankind” as its organizing principle, and the principles of justice must be re-examined in this context. The culture of giving is one of the fruits of the community of common destiny.

In the passages above, two proposals are offered: first, a particular conception of human nature has given rise to a life of generous giving by individuals; two, certain structures of social relationships would promote giving. When the individual and the institutions are working in harmony, they produce a culture of giving that in turn acts on both the individual and the institutions. The culture of giving will be able to demonstrate certain capabilities, as follows: promoting an environment distinguished by truthfulness, equity, trustworthiness, and generosity; enhancing the ability to resist the influence of competitive acquisitiveness; demonstrating the value of cooperation and reciprocity as organizing principles for action; encouraging stewardship of nature; engendering work as a kind of worship and generating a new kind of lifestyle, with giving as its core. A life of simplicity will then be shaped or moderated by this culture of giving.

Conclusion

Cultural transformation involves deliberate changes in individual choices and in institutional norms and structures. It is a long and at times, painful process. After all, “to most people it is easier to give away one’s wealth than give up a bad habit. Understanding those assumptive powers shaping our thinking and behavior patterns is hard too, let alone changing them.”³⁵ But, history has provided us with ample evidence that those underlying assumptions can be changed as well.

For close to two decades now, the worldwide Baha’i community has been endeavoring systematically to effect a transformation among individuals and communities around the world to inspire and build the

35 Schein, E.H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, 1985.

capacity for giving and service. The framework for action guiding these activities has been rooted in a dynamic of learning characterized by action, reflection, and consultation. In thousands of communities, Baha'is have set into motion neighborhood-level processes that seek to empower individuals of all ages to recognize and develop their spiritual capacities and to channel their collective energies towards the betterment of their communities. Children's classes belong to one of their efforts to lay the foundations of a noble and upright character. For youth aged 11 to 14, they have created a learning environment which helps them form their moral identity at this critical phase in their lives and to develop skills which empower them to channel their constructive and creative energies toward the betterment of their communities. All are invited to take part in small groups of participatory learning around core concepts and themes which encourage individuals to become agents of change in their communities within a dynamic of learning and an orientation towards service.

The cultural shifts taking place are evident in the greater capacity to carry out collective action, to see oneself as an agent of change in the community, as a humble learner, as an active participant in the generation, diffusion and application of knowledge. The continuous cycle of learning through action, reflection and consultation has raised awareness of the needs and resources across communities as well as strengthened the mechanisms for collective action and deliberation. However, this movement is still in its infancy and in need of joint collaboration with other forces or movements that are integrative in nature. In other words, nurturing a culture of giving is the common responsibility of humankind. Ultimately, the movement to redefine cultural norms in light of the exigencies of justice and sustainability has to be shaped by the experiences of women, men, children, the rich, the poor, the governors and the governed, as each one is enabled to play their rightful role in the construction of a new society.³⁶ It is in this context that the question of a life of simplicity ought to be cast.

36 Bahai International Community, *Rethinking Prosperity: Forging Alternatives to a Culture of Consumerism*, 2010.

Dignity, Care, Compassion: The Role of Religious Values for Development

Christoph Stückelberger

Faith-based people and organizations can contribute much to human and environmental sustain-able development in China and globally. As I have visited Nanjing a number of times in the last 20 years, I notice that Jiangsu province is a pioneer in very constructive cooperation between state and different not-for-profit organisations, with religious and non-religious background and with a variety of religions such as Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity. A common value-basis in China are Socialist and Confucian values. Bishop K. H. Ting, the key figure in building the Church in China, the China Christian Council and the Three Self Movement, and founder of the Amity Foundation, prepared the path for the contribution of Christian ethics to Chinese society. He had written as early as in 1989: “Religion has its ethical dimensions and these play a positive and supplementary role in socialist society. ... Religion can be compatible with socialism.”¹

But what are ethical values? What is *moral* or *morality* (伦理学) and what is *ethics* (道德)? In international ethical discourses, *morals* refer to a set of values and virtues, mainly transmitted by education through social and family traditions. Ethics is the critical reflection of existing morality by seeking truth in the light of a value system such as an ideology or religion. Ethics seeks answers to the simple question “How should I decide and act?”, “What is good and what is evil?”

1 K.H. Ting, “Recent Developments in the Study of Religion” (1989), in K.H. Ting, *Love Never Ends*, Nanjing: Amity Printing, 2000, 348-364 (354, 357).

Values are benchmarks for decisions, with long term validity and rather general. Examples are justice, peace, freedom, community and sustainability. They are valid for individuals, communities and organisations up to a multilateral level. Sustainability is the core value of the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.²

Virtues are benchmarks for individual behaviour. They are also long-term but normally less used for institutions. Honesty, integrity or righteousness express an individual attitude. Values and Virtues can be rooted in philosophical and secular worldviews, but on all continents, they have strong religious roots. Our question therefore is, what these values and virtues contribute to sustainable development. In this article I will concentrate on three values as examples: dignity, care and compassion.

1. Enable Identity, Restore Dignity

Religions and religious institutions often represent two realities: they contribute to peace and fuel war, they enable community and destroy community, and so on. They are both constructive and destructive forces. The question is whether this is rooted in the holy texts themselves or only a result of different interpretations of these foundational texts by the believers and the representatives of the religious institutions. Both, in fact, is true. This means that holy texts need careful interpretation and ongoing translation into a new context. Thus, for example, violence in the Old Testament cannot justify today's violence but is to be interpreted in the light of Jesus' teaching.

1.1 The Enabling Role of Religions

Let us first look at three positive enabling roles of religions:

² Sanjoy Mukherjee and Christoph Stückelberger (eds.), *Sustainability Ethics. Economy, Ecology and Ethics*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2014.

Basic human needs: All human beings have basic human needs such as food, water, clothing, shelter, education, community, recognised also by the SDGs.³

1. But all human beings also need identity. To know who I am or can be – this is key for physical and psychological survival. Culture, religion, gender, language, race, world view, values-orientation, security and belonging to a community are key elements which build identity. Religions strongly contribute to enabling identity.
2. Identity is a key part of dignity: Identity means to be a person and not an anonymous number. The passport and identity card are the outer signs of it. But identity is much more. It means to be respected as we are, independent from our qualities and capacities. The inalienable dignity of each human being,⁴ as a human being without conditionality, is expressed in the first article of the universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1946.
3. Religions are key to enabling identity and dignity. Religions in manifold forms help to heal, to restore lost and endangered identity and violated dignity. Violated dignity is often a reason for violence and revolution. Religions enable dignity through identity and through the affirmation and blessing of the divine: “I am loved by GOD as I am” or “I found the inner SELF as my true identity” or “I have dignity even as a stateless man or a violated woman”.

1.2 The Destructive Role of Religions

But religions (the believers and representatives respectively) in their ambiguity play not only a constructive, but sometimes also a destructive role in society.

1. Identity and dignity are recomposed by religions (for example, to be first a Buddhist or Christian and only second a Thai

3 See Obiora Ike, “Values for Life – in SDGs2030 and in Globethics.net”, in Christoph Stückelberger, Walter Fust, Obiora Ike (eds), *Global Leadership Ethics. Values and Virtues for Life*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2016, 43-56.

4 Wolfgang Vögele, „Menschenwürde und Gottebenbildlichkeit“, in Jörg Dierken/ Arnulf von Scheliha (eds.), *Freiheit und Menschenwürde. Studien zum Protestantismus*, Tübingen 2005, 265-276.

or a German) and sometimes destroyed by violent religious individuals or institutions. Deconstruction, transformation and recomposition of identities is a key part of religious faith (in Christian term, ‘metanoia’, the new direction to go). It necessarily leads to transformation and innovation of values and cultures. It turns from a positive to a negative development, if it is based on violence, lack of understanding and oppression of existing cultures and intolerance. The history of mission in all world religions, but especially in Christianity and Islam, show both the constructive and destructive relations between faith and culture. Fundamentalism, which exists in all religions as well in political systems, is an ideology which puts one’s own conviction as absolute, claims to have the true interpretation of the holy scriptures, puts one’s own culture as the absolute reference point and herewith demonizes other faiths.⁵

2. Religions are instrumentalized by powers of politics, economics, ethnic groups, nationalism, gender, race, and so on. If political, economic and social leaders do not agree with a religion, they either try to oppress it or – more often – to instrumentalize it for their goals. Forms of instrumentalization include conditionality (“As political leader I allow you to build your religious building if you guarantee loyalty to me.”), material advantages (such as tax exemptions, donations of land), fame and reputation of religious leaders (public recognition). On their part, religious leaders, representing religious organisations, often tolerate and accept instrumentalization because of fear of sanctions by those in power, benefits and gains, gifts and security.

2. Care and Compassion

2.1 Common Values Across Religions

Are there common global values across cultures, religions and worldviews?⁶ This is a key question in an interdependent globalized

5 See Heidi Hadsell and Christoph Stückelberger, *Overcoming Fundamentalism. Ethical Responses from Five Con-tinents*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2009.

6 Ariane Hentsch Cisneros and Shanta Premawardhana (eds.), *Sharing Values. A Hermeneutics for Global Values*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2011.

world. My research and ethical reflections on this question leads me to a clear “yes”, at least on some values and virtues which are based on basic human needs for individual life and life in community. Two such values are *care* and *compassion*.⁷ From the experience as new-born babies, human beings know that they cannot survive without the care of other human beings, starting with the care of the baby by the parents up to the caring of old people by younger people. Compassion is the pre-condition for care. Only if one human being sees in the other human being also a human being (and not a “thing” or a “monster” or the “living evil”) and is able to feel com-*passion* (cum=with, passio=suffering, compassion=suffer with the other), only then, is caring possible and happiness is happening.⁸

2.1.1 For Dharmic Religions: From Ego to Self

Religions are key for global values across religions. Let us look at the two main groups of world religions, the ‘Dharmic religions’ and the ‘Abrahamic religions’.

The Dharmic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, Sikhism), have in common the *dharma* as ultimate goal of life and as norm/law, virtue, ultimate truth and unity with the cosmos. The Dharmic religions all have their origin in Asia including West Asia. Nevertheless, the new term ‘Dharmic religions’ is more appropriate than the long-time used term ‘Asian religions’ because it describes the inner common foundation and not the geographical origin and outreach. In today’s globalised world, they are global religions present on all continents and not only in Asia.

For the Dharmic religions, caring and compassion are rooted in the inner way from the Ego to the SELF as practised for example in Yoga (such as Patanjali: Yoga Sutras). The yoga way of transformation means liberation from the Ego (the selfish person only interested in benefits for him/herself) in order to find and to be united with the SELF, the true and everlasting identity beyond the individual identity with which one is born, the eternal, perfect life and fullness of “meaning”. The way from

7 Prince Nnagozie (Nigeria), “Compassion – the Mother of all Virtues”, in Christoph Stückelberger, Walter Fust and Obiora Ike (eds), op. cit., 275-284;157-162.

8 Cui Wantian, “Sharing and Happiness”, in Christoph Stückelberger, Walter Fust and Obiora Ike (eds), op cit., 157-162.

the Ego to the SELF means liberation through life-long exercises in order to overcome material and bodily desirousness, greed and dependency. Caring for and compassion with the other is then a sign of overcoming ego-centred egoism and coming closer to SELF-centred universal love.

2.1.2 For Abrahamic Religions: Triple Love

The Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) believe in one God. Faith means to trust in this God and follow his wisdom/norms/order in order to be liberated from sin and finally to be united with God, the everlasting, eternal reality and cosmic power (the Cosmic Christ, Phil 2:5-11) through salvation. The three Abrahamic religions all refer to Abraham as patriarch of faith and common foundation. They are often also called Monotheist religions as they believe in one God⁹ and not in polytheist goddesses.

For the Abrahamic religions, care and compassion are rooted in the love of God as ultimate goal of life: “Not mine, but your (God’s) will shall be done” (Jesus’ words at the cross) and “your will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer. Double commandment is the core for care and compassion in Abrahamic religions: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

This second commandment is close to the so called Golden Rule of mutual respect which exists in all world religions and philosophies. Do to others what you want them to do to you. But in Judaism and Christianity, the first of the double commandment is the basis to be able to live the Golden Rule.

9 I prefer here the term Abrahamic religions since I concentrate on Judaism, Christianity and Islam whereas Mono-theist religions also include many African traditional religions according to newer understanding. See, for example, John Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, London: SPCK, 1970.

1 Common Good	West	Christianity
2 Ubuntu	Africa	Traditional
3 Kyosei	Japan	Shintoism
4 Da Tong	China	Confucianism
5 Jew + Yi	China	Taoism
6 Lokasangraha	India	Hinduism
7 Cidania	Latin America	Political

2.2 Differences between Abrahamic and Dharmic Religions

We have seen that there is a broad common ground of values such as care and compassion, solidarity, charity, dignity, community, freedom and so on. But it is also obvious that there are differences which should not be denied. Mutual respect has to be combined with a friendly challenge of each other which helps to deepen and clarify one's own religion. The following graph shows 13 levels of community from the individual to the universe. The role of these levels differ substantially between the world religions.

White:

- 1 Myself
- 2 Inner Family: partner, children

Yellow:

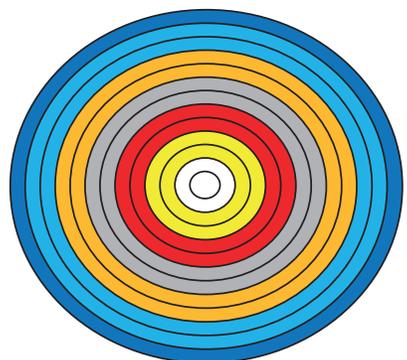
- 3 Broader Family: Clan
- 4 Professional Community: team

Red:

- 5 Neighbourhood: village, quarter
- 6 Religious Community: parish/ temple

Grey:

- 7 Peers: sports, ethnic, interest groups
- 8 Professional Community: company



Brown:

- 9 Nation: state, peoples,
- 10 Regions: EU, Asean

Blue:

- 11 All Religions: world spirituality
- 12 Humankind: all human beings

Dark Blue:

- 13 Biosphere: all living beings

Notwithstanding all differences, the common ground between religions related to care and compassion is large. Care and compassion for the needy is a clear obligation of believers. That is why faith-based persons and institutions belong to the strongest givers of donations in the form of charity, philanthropy and advocacy for the weak. Respective studies in USA, Europe, Africa and Asia confirm this with figures. Also in China, Buddhists and Christians are the two largest groups in China who regularly give donations.¹⁰

3. Three Types of State-Religions Relations: Instrumentalization, Exclusion, Partnership

Faith is not only a private issue of individuals. Religions are almost always also organised communities with leadership, large and small communities, specialised institutions in education, research, social and environmental engagement. Therefore, for the question of the role of religions for development, not only are the faith and doctrinal basis very important, but also the institutional setting. In the institutional setting, freedom and dependency is visible in the relations between religious organisations and the state.

There are three main types of relationship between the State and religious organizations, mirrored in two perspectives, the perspective of the state and the perspective of the religious institution:

10 Liu Baocheng and Zhang Mengsha, *Philanthropy in China. Report of Concepts, History, Drivers, Institutions*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2017; Li Jing and Christoph Stückelberger: *Philanthropy and Foundation Management. A Guide to Philanthropy in Europe and China*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2017.

3.1 Perspectives of States or Governmental Institutions

1. Option 1: Instrumentalization *by subordination*: “Let us use and streamline religions for our political goals.”
2. Option 2: Exclusion *by oppression*: “We need to oppress and destroy religions since they do harm to and oppose our political goals.”
3. Option 3: Partnership *by respect*: “Politics and Religions have their respective functions in society. We serve best our people and the world if we respect each other and support each other in our respective roles and tasks.”

3.2 Perspectives of Religious Organisations

1. Option 1 Instrumentalization *by subordination*: “Let us use and streamline politics for our religious goals.”
2. Option 2: Exclusion *by separation*: “We have nothing to do with the state and keep our distance. Or we oppose and try to destroy it as it is evil.”
3. Option 3: Partnership *by respect*: “Politics and Religions have their respective functions in society. We serve best our people and the world if we respect each other and support each other in our respective roles and tasks.”

Option 3 as partnership is the most mature, sustainable solution, based on mutual respect, trust and the experience of mutual benefit in the respective roles and limitations of these roles. The “International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development” (PaRD), launched in February 2016 by a number of governments with the German Development Cooperation BMZ as the driving force, is a very encouraging example of this model of partnership between state actors and religious actors. It is not by chance that the German government, with its impressive partnerships at least after the Second World War, takes the lead in it.¹¹ Also, Switzerland has a long-standing experience in partnership between state and religious organisations.

11 See website <http://www.partner-religion-development.org/>. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung BMZ (Hg.), *Partner für den Wandel. Religionen und Nachhaltige Entwicklung*, Berlin: BMZ 2016. Also in English and Chinese; Religion and Development: <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/themes/religion-and-development>

4. Ethical Criteria for Transformative, Life-enhancing Religious Values for Sustainable Development

4.1 Ethical Criteria

This vision of a fruitful partnership between governments and religious organizations – or even more general as multi-stakeholder partnership between state, private sector, non-governmental organisations and religious organisations – is the way towards peaceful transformation towards a sustainable world.

1. Transformative Dignity and Identity is based on a) spiritual roots in faith/dharma-orientation and in b) caring community and global citizenship, c) not dignity which is based on historical, nationalist, ethnic or racist ideologies.
2. Transformative Care and Compassion is based on a) true love for the other, b) love for everybody in need, independent of faith and political background and c) not based on conversion and proselytism, not selective only for own faith group, not for one's own salvation/kharma.

4.2 Recommendations for Partnerships

1. Strengthen partnerships between governmental actors and faith-based organisations/religions at international, national, provincial and local levels.
2. Develop new cooperation with faith-based entrepreneurs (Protestant Entrepreneurs in China, Orthodox in Russia, Christian in Africa and Latin America, Buddhist, Daoist, Muslim, Hindu and Confucian entrepreneurs in Asia, and so on)
3. Strengthen theological work of religious institutions on fundamentalist, nationalist, racist abuse of religions and religious values (see above: destructive role of religions) and non-violent alternatives, based on a careful hermeneutical (interpretative) process of deep understanding and interpretation of the holy scriptures.
4. Support theological scientific work by governments for the same goal of overcoming the abuse of power by religions. Governments must have an interest in supporting theological education, for example, by supporting theological faculties at

state universities or in seminaries for future pastors, Imams and so on.

4.3 Ten Examples of Partnerships based on Religious Values

1. DRC: Programme «Trainings for a Culture of Integrity and Responsible Elections». Prayer of the author as pastor with the President of the High Court.
2. China: Church-related: A Christian entrepreneur who committed her seafood factory to ‘holy, healthy food’, who donated an Elder Care Home near the seafood factory, who is a trained pastor and who also has a mandate in the peoples’ congress, the Chinese parliament!
3. Indonesia: *Construction of moral Nationality* a book in Indonesian¹² was downloaded 110,000 times which shows the great interest in public ethics.
4. Russia: The Association of Russian Orthodox Entrepreneurs makes many social donations.
5. Global and South Africa: Globethics.net published at the Global Ethics Forum 2014 in India and in South Africa “Principles of Equality” as a contribution to the value of mutual respect and equality.¹³
6. Mexico: Training of High Court Judges on their Code of Ethics by the author.
7. Globethics.net online provides free access to five million articles and books as its contribution to equal access to information resources.
8. UN: Interreligious Statements on Climate Justice¹⁴
9. India: Jain Anuvrat Conference in 2015 on Circular Economy (sustainable economy) based on values of Jainism.
10. ACAMS: Association of Certified Anti Money Laundering Specialists as a secular, but values-driven association to increase transparency and decrease money-laundering.

12 Siti Syamsiyatun and Nihayatul Wafiroh (Eds.), *Filsafat, Etika, dan Kearifan Lokal untuk Konstruksi Moral Kebangsaan*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2013.

13 Globethics.net: *Principles on Equality and Inequality for a Sustainable Economy*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2014.

14 *Religions for Climate Justice: International Interfaith Statements 2008-2014*, Geneva: Globethics.net Publications, 2014.

4.4 Values-orientation across Religions

What is common in these examples?

- A new strong search for value-orientation and integrity, especially in professional life;
- A new emphasis on the religious foundation of business ethics/ economic ethics among Jain, Hindu, Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic entrepreneurs;
- A pragmatic cooperation across religions in social and ethical issues (such as climate change, food, mining, codes of professional ethics, anti-corruption etc.);
- A thirst for strengthening moderate positions to counter fundamentalism and extremism.

All these examples and conceptual reflections show that the partnership and cooperation between state and religions organisations is of benefit for the whole society and the global sustainable development goals.

Why Finland's Education is the Best in the World: The Impact of Lutheranism on Values

*Paulos Huang*¹

China is a country, where education and Confucianism are especially respected, but there are also many challenges. Thus, I am hereby trying to explore Finnish education as an example so as to benefit the reflection in China.

Finland, a country with the best education and welfare system in the world

As the 21st-century information age strides towards the era of artificial intelligence, criticisms and challenges in education are triggering global discussions. Just as much as those in Europe and the United States, Chinese education is faced with criticisms, challenges and pressures for reform. However, Finland, a small Nordic country, has an education system that has been ranked one of the best in the world. The performance and outcome of Finnish education reflect the ecological wisdom of the Finns.

Finland has enjoyed much praise for its education system because, first and foremost, it is a fruit of the welfare society. Finland has cultivated world-class talents in information technology, mobile games, paper manufacturing, shipbuilding and forestry science, who are dedicated to

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environmental protection, human welfare and care for society. Moreover, Finnish education has enabled the country to have the best natural environment, happiness index, social equity, human rights and a clean and efficient society. Finland has become a paradise for children and senior citizens where they can receive cradle-to-grave, whole-person care. For many years, Finland has been ranked the top in the world based on indices of national competitiveness, cleanliness, environment, habitability and happiness. Education in Finland has been highly praised because of its top performance in relation to policy, philosophy and methodology. The 2001 PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) results showed that Finnish children have consistently attained or nearly attained the highest scores in science, reading and mathematics over the years.

Children in Finland do not begin school until they are 7 years old and they seldom take exams or do homework before the age of 12. The first 6 years of education are never measured by standardized tests. Finnish children only need to take a mandatory standardized exam at the age of 16. All children are placed in the same class regardless of varying levels of intelligence. Finland spends approximately 30% less than the United States on each student. Thirty percent of Finnish children receive extra help in the first nine years of their education. Sixty-six percent of students are able to attend college, the highest ratio in Europe. The gap between the strongest and weakest students is the smallest in the world. The size of a science class is 16 students so they can do experiments in every class. Ninety-three percent of Finnish students graduate from high school, a ratio that is 17.5% higher than that of the United States. Forty-three percent of secondary school students are in vocational schools. Finnish primary school students have 75 minutes of break time per day while their American counterparts only have 27 minutes.

Teachers spend 4 hours per day in class and 2 hours per week on “career advancement.” The number of teachers in Finland is the same as that in New York City; however, the number of students is far fewer than in the latter. Finnish schools are entirely funded by the government. All teachers in Finland must have a Master’s degree and they receive a full grant from the state. The national education curriculum is only a broad guideline; schools and teachers have great autonomy and flexibility. Teachers are recruited from the top 10% of the most outstanding graduates. In 2010 there were 6,600 candidates competing for 660 primary school positions. The average starting salary of Finnish teachers

in 2008 was US\$ 29,000 per year, which is not very high. However, school teachers with 15 years' experience make 102% of what other college graduates make.” Teachers do not receive merit pay. They enjoy the same social status and high esteem as lawyers and doctors. Finnish education has been successful not because of its small population: it outperforms other countries with the same population size. For example, Norway, a neighboring country with the same size and a homogenous culture, has adopted the same strategy as the US and achieved a similar ranking as the US in international education assessments, yet its ranking is below that of Finland which is the world leader in PISA. Kindergartens, primary schools, junior highs, vocational schools, senior highs, universities and polytechnics all correspond to students' interests and choices, whose pressures and responsibilities are on a gradual rise. It is not surprising that countries all over the world now want to learn from Finland, including the UK, US, France, Germany, and Sweden, which is also a Nordic country.

Pasi Sahlberg, a Finnish education expert and visiting professor at the Harvard School of Education said: “Unlike countries like Britain and the United States, Finland has never had a distinction between major and minor subjects. All subjects are equally important, and the aim is to give young people a broad basic education, not a single and specialized one.”²

So, why has education in Finland been so successful? How have people, nurtured in this educational system, built Finland into such an exceptional country?

Education in Finland and its relevance to the welfare society

Although science and reason since the Enlightenment have developed into scientism and rationalism, and the influence of evolutionism has been paramount in many countries, mainstream thinking in Finland is still influenced by Christian creationism. Most Finns believe that man is a part of the created world and the keeper of nature. Creationism and evolutionism are both taught at school and there is a balance between the two.

2 Pasi Sahlberg, Finnish Lessons: *What can the world learn from education change in Finland?* (Translated by Lin Xiaoqin.) Nanjing: Jiangsu Phoenix Science Press 2015.

The so-called holistic education in Finland is primarily concerned with the fact that man has both great and limited power in overseeing the created world. He has to manage well the relationship between the divine (heavenly or supernatural power), the mortal (family, social and others in the world), the material (the world of matter) and the individual (oneself), for which one has to receive the knowledge of God (GQ: God Quotient), of man (IQ: Intelligence Quotient), of the physical world (KQ: Knowledge Quotient) and of oneself (EQ: Emotional Quotient). This idea has been advocated at Chung Yuan Christian University (Taiwan) for more than 30 years,³ but in Finland, for nearly a hundred years.

Finland is a country deeply influenced by Christianity. Eighty percent of its citizens are Lutherans, who believe that man is the unity of “body, soul and spirit”. In other words, man is composed of three parts: body, mind and spirit.

The academia has long debated over the dimensions of human constitution in Christian anthropology. Monism holds that human beings do not have a soul and people die like a vanishing lamp. There is nothing after death and what only matters is this life. Dichotomism maintains that human beings have flesh and soul. The body dies and the soul lives on. Such a belief is the doctrine of most religions.

Trichotomism refers to the tripartite classifications of Spirit, Soul and Body/Flesh; or the sensual, the rational and the spiritual; or spirit, mind, and will/reason. But the most common distinction is spirit, soul and body. According to the Bible, the components of human beings are spirit, soul, and body. They are separate entities, vehicles or *sooma*, in Greek.⁴

The “body” in the usual sense is the corporal entity but *sooma* is different from person, body or flesh. The oriental church attaches great importance to *sooma* and early Church Fathers stressed the importance of the wholeness of a person. We cannot simply decide whether *sooma* is good or evil because it carries the soul and is the temple of the (holy) spirit. Therefore, spirit, soul and body or flesh, heart and spirit are three independent types of *sooma*.

3 Lin Zhiping, *The Lamp in Daylight*. Dunhuang Art Publishing House, 2007. Lin Zhiping, *A Life of QQQQ; Holistic Person and modernization*. Cosmic Light Media Center, 1998.

4 According to the British School of Psychotherapy, human beings are endowed with four dimensions: Physical, Social, Psychological and Spiritual.

They are: *Sarkinoi sooma*: flesh.⁵ Martin Luther called the “body” of man “the outer court and the way of life that can be seen and opened to all”. *Sooma psuchikos*⁶: the equivalent of a candelabra of seven lamps. First of all, “soul” is the visible heart, psychologically and scientifically characterized by and equivalent to the soul, which is *psuchikos* or *psychikos* in Greek. “Psyche” means to give the body life. In Latin, soul is called “anima,” which means the spiritual breath that animates living organisms. Soul is a special substance to rule the body. It is the vehicle of spirit, the physical body of spirit, and the existing form of spirit which has come into the human body.

Secondly, “soul” is invisible, equivalent to the subject of study in cognitive psychology and social psychology. It can refer to emotions or feelings, such as happiness, sorrow, and so on; it is reason, that is: science, taxonomy, knowledge, understanding, vision, dream, resolution, etc; it is will, volition, hope, ethics, etc.; it is also mind and idea that can be released from darkness and placed in love and light. For example, the Bible mentions “the soul of the beast” (Ecclesiastes 3:21), “his heart died” (1 Sam 25:37), “fell into a trance” (Acts 10:10; 11: 5; 22:17). It is not an illusion, or a dream, but a spiritual state, level, and vision of communicating with God.

The Greek for “spirit” is *pneuma*.⁷ Spirit, which is invisible, is directly connected to God. Luther called it the “holy sanctuary” and the “secret of faith”.⁸

Education in Finland emphasizes the three-in-one nature of human beings, and these three themes constitute holistic education in spirit, soul and body. The eighteen modules of a whole-person education can be summarized as follows:

Education of the physical being of man emphasizes that “the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19), which includes: §1 Physiology and Medicine; §2 Diet and Nutrition; §3 Sports and Health; §4 Life and Natural environment (air, water, materials and money, etc.); and §5 living and social environment (traffic, fire prevention, anti-theft

5 1 Corinthians 3: 1, Annotation of the Holy Study Bible.

6 1 Corinthians 2: 14, Annotation of the Holy Study Bible, p1627.

7 1 Corinthians 15: 44, annotation of the Holy Study Bible; also refer to Luke 21: 26; 24: 16-39; 1 Thessalonians 5: 23.

8 For the tripartite constitution of spirit, soul, and body, see Martin Luther’s interpretation of Hebrews, 4: 12 (LW 29: 163-166), 9: 2 (LW 29: 199-201).

measures, fraud prevention, government, law, insurance, safety and regulation).

Soul education emphasizes that “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23). The educational content includes: §6 Knowledge and Intelligence; §7 Skills and Techniques; §8 Emotion and EQ; §9 Communication and Expression; §10 Character and Personality; §11 Habits and Character (Vices and Virtues); §12 Morals and Ethics, §13 Psychology and Happiness; §14 Art and Spirit; §15 Lifelong Learning and Innovation.

Spiritual education emphasizes that: “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offsprings a reward from him” (Psalm 127: 3). Human beings, in essence, belong to God. The content of education thus includes: §16 Knowledge and Belief; §17 Faith and Conviction; and §18 Value and Meaning.

Education in Finland pays equal attention to the body, soul, and spirit of a person, promotes his/her ability to properly deal with the relationship between “heaven, humans, earth and oneself” and focuses on moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic strengths as well as knowledge, emotion, and will. Students are educated as human beings, not merely as “talents/materials”. A broad education is the prerequisite for socialized training. Holistic education of such dimensions, as well as the welfare society, are prominent features that distinguish Nordic countries, especially Finland, from the rest of the world.

The Relationship between Finnish Education, the Welfare System and Lutheranism

The welfare society as represented by Finland and other Nordic countries, is facing challenges posed by post-modernism. Pluralism and globalization have plunged European and American countries into a situation where God has been considered dead or absent, and an authority has been missing. Theories of reality have been challenged by pluralism of the Second Axial Age (Achszeit): reason has been considered as supreme, Luther’s distinction between the pre-faith and post-faith rationalities has been overlooked, emotional indulgence results in the prevalence of popularism, and pragmatism unfortunately leads to utilitarianism.

Despite all these challenges, Finnish education has had a significant impact on the formation and development of its welfare system, as Martin Luther's theological thinking is the underlying rationale behind such education and social institutions.

Social democracy that emphasizes welfare systems has earned Finland an unrivaled reputation in the world, even though in recent years, more and more people are concerned with the sustainability of a welfare society and conflicting national debts. Many maintain that refugees come to Europe to take advantage of welfare systems by exploiting loopholes. Some even think that Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton is the victory of rightist elitism over leftist supporters of the welfare society. It seems that a society that emphasizes self-reliance is preferable to a welfare state with equality.⁹

Finland is one of the world's most inhabitable, clean, competitive countries with the least corruption and disparity between the rich and poor. The Finnish education system that supports, maintains and develops social democracy and welfare systems places particular emphasis on the following core concepts: common responsibilities, equity, education, hard work and a free conscience, all of which are rooted in Lutheranism.

It needs to be pointed out that differences exist between the Lutheran concept and the actual welfare system in Finland. The latter is the secularization of the former: for those who uphold social democracy and welfare, economic development is the substitute for God – the social welfare system based on economic development can meet people's needs in the same way that God has.

How does Jesus Christ think of money as a symbol of economic gain? Jesus says, man's life cannot be built upon his property; no one can serve two masters: you cannot serve both God and mammon; it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.

However, in the history of Christianity, there have appeared "Prosperity Theology", in which wealth is seen as a sign of God's blessings given to those who believe in Him, and "Liberation Theology", which emphasizes freedom from oppression in this life.

9 See the section below in Paulos Huang (2016) , "The Martin Luther Philosophy behind the Finnish Education and Welfare System," *The Golden Week Bulletin*, WeChat Public Account.

The renowned Protestant ethic and the Capitalist spirit advocated by Max Weber are primarily based on the theological ideas of the French Reformer, John Calvin, who maintained that believers should be dedicated to daily work, in essence, the service and worship offered to God. It is a response to God's call and therefore the mission of this life.

Even though Calvin and Luther shared a similar understanding of the above-mentioned ethic and spirit, they had different opinions about the purpose of work.

Calvin believed that the destiny of human beings is pre-ordained. Some perish; some will be saved. Material wealth is also evidence of salvation. This idea greatly influenced Anglo-Americans, especially Wall Street elites and those in pursuit of prosperity.

In contrast, Luther condemned selfishness and utilitarianism. The purpose of work is to demonstrate the principle of "love thy neighbor as thyself". The primary goal is to promote the common good of a community. Therefore, most Finns, deeply influenced by Lutheranism, work hard as nurses and teachers, instead of trying to make a fortune like investors on Wall Street. Although their salaries are not as high, the social values and significance in their work are tremendous.

The Lutheran influence is not merely reflected in ideology and theology. In fact, prior to the birth of Finland as an independent country, the Lutheran Church had assumed the responsibilities of education, social management and service. By the early 19th century, the church had taken charge of national education and care for the impoverished. Lutheranism also emphasized the role of the government.

Conclusion

The Lutheran idea in Finland differs drastically from the idea of Republicans in the United States. The latter emphasizes Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of the market economy. Free market economy has thus become the God of modernity. However, it must continue to develop to prevent itself from eventually perishing. The value of the market economy should not be overemphasized. Although it is a rational economy, human rapacity constantly puts the sustainability of humankind under grueling tests.

Rather than simply argue the pros and cons of Lutheranism and Calvinism, one should analyze the philosophy behind Finnish education and social institutions. The vital difference between Lutheran economic ideas (on work and priesthood) and the Calvinist “manifestation of calling” lies in the former’s emphasis on one’s contentedness with the sufficient supply of food and clothing and engagement with ordinary work, and the latter’s tendency to lead to a gospel of prosperity.

At the core of the Lutheran attitude towards economy is “moderation and the common good”. Private ownership of property is necessary for the operation of social systems, and a modest income gap between classes is also acceptable. Lutheranism appreciates commerce and trade based on honest labor and disapproves of financial banking which is in nature profit-oriented at the expense of others. In Lutheranism, although man can possess material wealth, all belongs to God eventually. People need to be good at managing their property and the surplus should be given to the poor. The purpose of work is to answer the calling of God. Neither laziness nor overwork is good because being lazy means living off the toil of others whereas being over-occupied with work means losing the sense of direction or true meaning of life. As for the possession of wealth, Lutheranism also stresses the principle of moderation. Warning is given that greed and indulgence can cause exploitation and the vain accumulation of more than what we need. Money is not evil as long as it does not become Mammon, which is an idolatry that steals God’s position and undermines the peace, joy and life God has given to humankind. Then, what is “moderation”? The answer is left to the judgment of everyone’s conscience.¹⁰

In Finnish education, the encouragement of students’ efforts and toleration of mistakes originated from the Lutheran emphasis on God’s grace, which contributed directly to an outcome of innovation.

Lutheran thought has profoundly influenced the nation of Finland. Its corresponding educational practice has enabled Finland to take the lead in world education rankings and be an exemplary welfare state. Without a proper understanding of the Lutheran idea, it would be difficult

10 The above discussion is mainly based on Mikko Heikka: *Kapitalismi, Kristinuskon musta joutsen* (Capitalism, Christian black swan) Kirjapaja, 2016. Tuija Pyhäntä: “Pyhä paha raha” (Holy evil money). *Esse*, 20/10.11.2016, pp.12-14.

to understand why in Finland, material development does not engender greed; generous welfare coverage does not breed idleness; teachers are motivated at work even without a bonus; the emphasis on teamwork ultimately produces the most competitive students. All these issues are closely related to Finland's educational philosophy.

The Impact of Christian Charity or Diaconia on the Development of the Welfare State: Eliminating Poverty in Finland

Miikka Ruokanen

The responsibility of the family in medieval times

Since pre-Christian times, in Finland, like everywhere in Europe, families were responsible for taking care of their own poor, disabled, and elderly members. This principle of subsidiarity was common in all Europe, and it prevails even up to the present, especially in Catholic lands. Each family had its own way and style of providing for the needy and the weak, and no common rules existed. For the poor who had no relatives supporting them, begging was a generally accepted way of life, and it was every person's duty to give something to beggars.

Christianity gradually entered Finland from the beginning of the second millennium, from around AD 1000 onwards. The essentially new idea which Christianity brought along was the obligation of the Christian to help not only the members of one's own family but also any other needy and poor neighbors who lived in the same village or town. In the medieval times, help was most often given in the form of commodities, such as foodstuff, clothing, or accommodation, money was not yet very widely used.

The public responsibility of the church: charity or diaconia in the Catholic period

When the network of local church parishes was gradually built up all

around the country from AD 1200 onward, Christian charity gained new structural forms and functions. From the very beginning of the existence of the Christian church, *diaconia* (the Greek word *diakonia* means “service”) was seen as an essential element of the life and calling of Christian believers and congregations. Diaconia was understood as a necessary function of Christian love.

Finland, the eastern territory of the Kingdom of Sweden, was a Catholic land for five hundred years, until the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Catholic spirituality emphasized the ideal of poverty: In order to help the needy, a true follower of Jesus Christ is willing to give up his/her earthly possessions and keep only what is necessary for daily life. Helping the poor was seen as a good deed vindicating one’s own salvation.

Some of the monastic orders fostered both the idea of poverty and established and maintained hospitals, special houses for the poor, sick, and homeless. The hospitals sent special envoys to villages and towns to collect funds from well-to-do households and alms from ordinary Christians.

The needy were seen as “the poor of Christ” who are under God’s special attention and protection (see the famous speech of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46: the way of treating the needy neighbor is a crucial factor determining one’s eternal destiny). Indifference towards the poor was seen as indifference towards God himself.

Diaconia during the time of Protestantism

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Finland and Sweden were gradually and peacefully transformed from Catholicism to Protestantism. The leading German reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) taught that the gospel of Christ motivates the believers freely and spontaneously to help their needy human brothers and sisters. Acts of mercy are a sign of an authentic faith.

Luther started to emphasize the responsibility of the towns, communities, and parishes to take care of their own poor; consequently, there should be no beggars in the streets. In this way, compared with the medieval Catholic practice, Protestant diaconia became more centrally organized and efficient. Moreover, helping the needy was not any more

related with one's own salvation, but it was seen as the benefit of the whole human community to work for the abolition of poverty and misery.

In Protestant or Lutheran Finland, the local parishes began to take public responsibility for those poor who had no close relatives. Under the control of the leading pastor of each parish, the poor were entrusted to become additional members of wealthier households in the region. Most often a poor person lived a limited period of time in one family and then moved to another household. The well-off families had the legal obligation to receive the poor under their roof, at least for a few days in a year. On the basis of state law, this rotation of the poor was run and controlled by the pastor of the local parish.

The living expenses of the poor were partly covered by their own work in the household where they resided, partly by subsidies paid by the local church parish. In the period of early capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization, the necessity of every person to do his/her best to participate in productive work was emphasized. The weak should do their little part of what they could and thus make it more acceptable for them to receive subsidies. Begging was limited to those who were completely unable to work. In villages and towns, the beggar needed a specific sign on his/her clothing to prove his/her legal right for begging.

Parishes were also responsible for organizing elementary education and running a local government – secular rule was entrusted to ecclesial rule. Parishes had to take care of the local poor, disabled, handicapped, mentally ill, lonely old people, widows, and orphans. This was the beginning of some sort of comprehensive social security for the lowest social classes in Finland.

The funding of these many activities and responsibilities was based on the legal obligation of the farmers to pay 10% of their income (the biblical idea of tithing) to the church, either in commodities or in currency. The tithes covered the salary of the pastors, the maintenance of church property, and the funding of diaconia. In addition, every church had in their entrance hall a fixed box for a continuing collection of alms for the poor.

People became accustomed to think that paying to the church means also paying to the poor. This attitude prevails even among modern Finnish church members, and this is an important reason why many passive and nominal members do not wish to quit the church but are ready to pay their church taxes (in modern times, only 1% of income).

The beginning of the responsibility of the state

Since medieval times up to the 19th century, the secular state was unwilling and unable to create a comprehensive system which could take care of the poor, sick, orphans, widows, and other needy people. Basically, for economic reasons, it was expedient for the rulers to let the church use her funds for this kind of activities. Furthermore, the pastors of the local parishes knew their flock thoroughly and in detail, and could, therefore, allocate the scanty resources of charity in the most efficient way.

Since the late 19th century, public opinion in Finland and other Nordic countries began to see that, in the industrializing society, care for the poor could not be entrusted only to the church and private families; the state must bear some responsibility for the weakest members of society. Through the new legislation of the 1870's, local secular rule in each town and community was established and most of the social responsibilities thus far run by the church parishes were now entrusted to it. Previously, social care was funded by tithes and charity donations to the church, now it was based on regular taxation.

The consummation of the idea of the welfare state by 1972

Since the end of the Second World War, social sciences have become a popular field of academic research and teaching in Finnish universities. Intellectuals have actively participated in public discussions on the concept and reality of the welfare state. Empirical sociological research on the life conditions of the various segments of society became very popular and research drew attention to the special situation and needs of various social groups. All this had a great influence on daily politics.

Moreover, since its national independence in 1917, Finland has always had a very powerful and well organized labor movement. On the level of state politics and legislation, the demands and policies of the labor unions were pushed forward by the large and influential leftist parties. Social welfare for all and the special responsibility of the state for the weakest members of society were an essential part of the agenda of this political movement. Later, the concept of the welfare state was accepted by all political parties in Finland.

It is inevitable that the Christian practice of charity or diaconia for many centuries in the country had its strong influence on the national welfare ethos. The church has always been an influential moral educator of the European peoples.

In Finland the development of the welfare state was steady and relatively quick. This development reached its climax in 1972 as a new law granted comprehensive and equal care for all members of Finnish society: free health care, free education at all levels, pensions for all, unemployment grants, allowances to the sick and to those with no income, and so on. Such welfare benefits are also available to those foreign citizens who live more or less permanently in Finland.

The new, limited role of Christian diaconia: Reaching the most marginalized

Along with the development of the secular welfare state, the status of church diaconia was established in local parishes more firmly than ever. Since 1943, every local parish has the duty of practicing diaconia through its professional diaconal workers and volunteers. Alongside the deacons, tens of thousands of volunteers take part in various outreach services.

As the idea of the welfare state has now become a reality in Finland, the role of church charity or diaconia has gradually diminished. With the changing situation, the main focus of church diaconia has been on medical care as well as social and spiritual support for the elderly. In recent decades, church diaconia has focused on the needs of the physically disabled, handicapped, mentally retarded and ill, those unable to work, war invalids, and the lonely.

In recent years, diaconia has found new importance in support for the unemployed, those heavily indebted, the homeless, and foreign immigrants. Also, the tasks of preventing domestic violence, alcoholism, and drug addiction, offering family therapy, supporting single-parents, organizing street kitchens, supporting those who have completed their prison sentences, and re-integrating marginalized young people into society, have lately been the special interests of church diaconia.

Diaconia concentrates on those who are the most neglected and marginalized, the weakest and neediest members of the community. In so doing, diaconia has gained new respect among citizens.

The prophetic voice of diaconia

In reaching the new types of needy groups in society, church diaconia shows a “prophetic” capacity by paying attention to those whose needs are not yet adequately met by state social welfare. Furthermore, the church has raised a critical voice in reminding secular society not to allow citizens to be divided into the well-to-dos and the socially marginalized. The church has been defending the concept of the welfare state in a situation where the economic pressure to cut back on benefits has been increasing.

We could say that diaconia has grown from Christian charity shown to the poor and weak into a social conscience critically pointing out to secular society where it still needs to develop its welfare and make social and economic structures and practices more just and equal for all. For instance, in the early 2000’s the activists of church diaconia brought the topic of new types of poverty and social marginalization into public discourse; as a result, the Finnish government included the fight against new forms of poverty into its strategy. Christian charity or diaconia has been the forerunner of social welfare in Finland, and the church has been - and still is - a powerful moral educator among the Finnish people. It has not only been showing charity to the poor but also pointing out the roots of structural social and economic inequality and injustice

The Church of Finland (Lutheran), which presently consists of 75% of the population, calls herself the “people’s church” (German *Volkskirche*) of Finland; she sees her mission as serving the people in every possible way. She welcomes the concept of *universal diaconia*: All of God’s creation is the object of charity; service is offered without limits to all, irrespective of social status, age, race, sex, religion, or political conviction.

The impact of international diaconia on state developmental aid

In addition, since the early 1950’s, *international diaconia* became an essential part of church charity in Finland. International diaconia educated the Finns to bear responsibility for the poor of other nations. The church promotes health-care, schooling systems, better food-production, local administration, peace education, equality of men and women, environmental protection, and HIV/AIDS prevention in her

bilateral contacts with African and Asian churches, and in multilateral projects through global ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation.

International aid for catastrophes is an essential part of modern church diaconia. Much like the Red Cross, various church-related aid organizations have become immediately active whenever a natural catastrophe happens somewhere in the world.

International diaconia put some pressure on the state to invest more funds for developmental aid and since 1961, developmental aid is part of the Finnish state budget. Presently, part of state developmental aid is being channeled into the field through the organizations of international church diaconia. The state and church are both constantly involved with the issues of peace, racial equality, ethnic minorities, human rights, a just society, environmental protection, poverty elimination, the economic disparity between the rich North and the poor South and so on. As such, the international diaconia of the church and the developmental aid of the state are in harmonious and efficient cooperation in Finland.

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Part IV

Faith, Values and Ethics: The Experience and Practice of Christian Philanthropy in China

Entrepreneurs' Faith and Philanthropy: Sustainable Development and Emerging Christian Philanthropy in China

Cao Nanlai

Following relief efforts around the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, a large number of privately initiated philanthropic organizations have sprung up in China. The Chinese government has offered policy support to these organizations through the enactment of official regulations on religious charity. In 2012, the “Notice on Encouraging and Guiding Religious Groups to Perform Charitable Work” was jointly issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) of China and five other departments to encourage religious communities to participate in charitable activities so as to guide them towards better adaptation to a socialist society. Christianity is still viewed with some skepticism or even hostility by the political and cultural elites for its explicit or implicit connections to Western imperialism and colonialism in modern and contemporary China. For the Chinese government, a Christianity that is actively engaged in social services will be more gladly received and positively viewed than one that concentrates solely on evangelism. Given the historical and political contexts, Christian faith in China is regarded more as a private spiritual practice, with faith conversions often based on the practical needs of followers.¹ However, this case

1 This is very true in Wenzhou. Some studies think this Christian outlook among acquaintance networks reflects the logic of “fortune god” ethics. Xiao Yunze & Li Xiangping. Protestant Ethics or Ethics of the God of Wealth - with additional studies on the outlook of fortune among Christians in Wenzhou. *Zhejiang Academic Journal*. 2015(3):5-14.

study of the Zhejiang Huafu Charitable Foundation (or simply, Huafu), a philanthropic organization created by Christian merchants in Wenzhou, seeks to illustrate that Christians are capable of playing positive roles in local public affairs. Its aim is to present the basic features and future trends of these philanthropic efforts of Christian entrepreneurs in coastal and economically developed regions of Jiangsu and Zhejiang in the era after the Reform and Opening-up of China. In addition, it will briefly elaborate on their nature and attributes, the reasons behind their rise, the current challenges and their influence on local society and the church by comparing them with conventional church-run charities. The field data for this study was collected between 2004 and 2006 when the author worked as a researcher, recording the implementation of projects, meetings and interviews of Huafu members. In the first years after Huafu's creation, several follow-up surveys were conducted in Wenzhou on its operation, growth and connection to local churches. As the field data reveals, there is still a long way to go before the notion of a universal "public welfare" becomes part of the self-awareness and acceptance by conventional Christian congregations that are more conservative and emphatic about "lifting high the cross" whenever philanthropy is mentioned. However, a number of local Christian leaders with vision and a strong sense of social responsibility have made attempts to step up the engagement of local churches in philanthropy. In one case, Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou who encountered cultural barriers and institutional dilemmas on their way to promoting philanthropy, accomplished the transformation from entrepreneurship to religious philanthropy. To some extent, the philanthropy launched by Christian entrepreneurs have inevitably ushered the Christian community into public life, catalyzed the public expression of Christian faith, and constructively connected Christians to mainstream society and relevant government authorities.

Model of a business-based Christian charity: the organic link between philanthropy and business

In Zhejiang, the traditional ties between the local business community and philanthropy enjoy a long history that can be traced to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties. With the expansion of clan organizations and the emergence of a commodity economy, merchants in Zhejiang allocated land and properties throughout the

province for clansmen in need of support. They established and ran charity associations and halls for their fellow countrymen as a means of alleviating poverty and educating them in traditional Confucian values.² It should be noted that most beneficiaries of these charitable acts were the kinsmen or people from the same places of origin as the patriarchal merchants whose acts of goodwill, influenced by their simple folk beliefs, were restricted mostly to privately owned properties. Charitable deeds targeting strangers were never widespread. But this has changed in more recent times and Zhejiang's merchant philanthropy has gradually transcended the limitations of kinship or geographical ties to become a part of social philanthropy.³ This broadening could be the result of the strong historical influence of the charitable efforts of Western missionaries in Zhejiang in the fields of medicine and education. Through them, the idea of social philanthropy was gradually introduced and spread to many areas in China.

The Christian Church in Wenzhou adopted a strategy of publicizing and following the charitable acts of Western missionaries in China on the one hand, and of identifying endeavors that were highly consistent with the coordinated development policy of today's China on the other. One of the milestones in its contributions was the Huafu Charitable Foundation, initiated by twenty or more Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou after the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake.⁴ Every board member donated CNY100,000 as startup funds. This organization, certified by the Provincial Civil Affairs Department of Zhejiang, focused its mission on five priority areas: education, disability support, healthcare, senior service and disaster mitigation. In October 2008, Huafu launched a campaign to collect 100,000 pieces of warm clothing before winter for residents affected by the earthquake, in coordination with the Sichuan Civil Affairs Department and Sichuan Poverty Alleviation Fund. Later, Huafu started the "Bright

2 Liang Qizi. *Alms-giving and Cultivation: Philanthropic Organizations in Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press, 2001.

3 Wang Chunxia & Liu Huixin. *A Research on Zhejiang Merchants in Modern China and Their Philanthropy*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2009.

4 See Shi Po. *Views on Fortune among Merchants in Wenzhou*. *South Reviews* Feb. 22, 2010. It is noteworthy that entrepreneurs in Wenzhou have long had the idea of creating a charitable foundation. The sudden "5.12" Earthquake in Sichuan became a turning point, facilitating the official registration of similar foundations.

Eyes Project”⁵, bringing medical services to children with visual impairment and those suffering from cataracts in Yunnan and Guizhou Provinces, in southwest China. Shimenkan, the village and project area located between the two provinces had been the mission area and the final resting place of Samuel Pollard, an English Missionary. According to Board members of the Foundation, the project targeted local villagers and was designed to commemorate Pollard and his contributions.

To conceal the fact that the donations were from a foundation related to a “foreign religion” (Christianity), the project was publicized simply as a commemoration of Samuel Pollard. When he served as the head of the Provincial government of Guizhou, Hu Jintao, the former Chinese president, commented on Pollard’s achievements as follows:

*In 1905, an English missionary named Pollard came to the Village of Shimenkan in Weining County, Bijie Prefecture in Guizhou Province. At that time, Shimenkan was a poverty-stricken, remote and barren place. Pollard used the funds he collected and brought there on the construction of schools, football field, and separate swimming pools for males and females. He created a writing system for the Miao nationality and compiled a textbook entitled “I am a Chinese and I love China”. The school he ran was free for students with financial difficulties. Later, a plague broke out there. The whole village fled except Pollard, who chose to stay behind to continue his medical services to his dear students. Unfortunately, he lost his life to the pandemic.*⁶

As a tribute to Western missionaries who had devoted their lives to the development of remote and poverty-stricken regions, Huafu sponsored, in 2010, a roving contemporary art exhibition with the theme “Spiritual Love for China”, in commemoration of Samuel Pollard and James Outram Fraser.

The reinforcement of both the philanthropic functions and social impact of the Christian Church in Wenzhou has benefited from the compassion and self-awareness of the local business community, and fundamentally, from local government encouragement of private economy. Church involvement in national development had existed even

5 Pollard, a Methodist missionary arrived at Shimenkan, a collection of Miao villages, almost a century ago. He was dedicated to setting up and running schools and disseminating scientific knowledge there. He died of typhoid in 1915 as he offered medical service to local residents affected by the epidemic.

6 Author’s interview with board members of the Foundation.

before the Reform and Opening-up of China in the late 1970s. During the Republican era (1912-1949), the social involvement of the Fuzhou Christian Church had already been acknowledged by the authorities and business community, setting in motion the transformation of Christianity from a foreign religion to a patriotic force.⁷ In today's China, the Christian Church in Wenzhou has been active in the economic expansion of Chinese businesses and the construction of civil societies around the world. Being rather unusual across the globalizing business world, reforms in Chinese Christianity have taken place at approximately the same pace as the building of China's market economy. This parallelism deserves some theoretical explorations. But one thing for sure is the necessity of taking into account the framework of relations between local politics and the church whenever the relationship between Christianity and market economy, between Christianity and civil society are considered. It would be problematic to ignore the local framework of state-church relations. To legitimize their actions, Christian businessmen in Wenzhou often use common biblical terms such as "being salt and light" and common TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) expressions such as "love country, love Church, glorify God and benefit the people". Their actions did garner recognition from the general public and the mass media but failed to secure majority support and participation from the local church. On the contrary, in some regions, their devotion to organizational capacity-building has competed for space and resources with traditional church development. Generally speaking, the theological inclination in Chinese churches is relatively conservative and fundamentalist.

Although the TSPM, has called for the reconstruction of theological thinking to draw church, society and government closer to one another through highlighting an ethics-based Christianity, Christians find it hard to break away from the "victim role" because of the maltreatment they had received from extreme left religious policy during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Despite the fact that there is now an easing of religious control and monitoring, feelings of resistance and protest, in greater or lesser degree, continue to linger on among followers. Under such circumstances, many churches (in rural areas in particular) are very

7 Ryan Dunch. *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China (1857-1927)*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

prudent and show anxiety towards social interventions. Hence, church-based social philanthropic projects have been rare. Driven both by business logic and Christian compassion, Huaifu in Wenzhou represents the philanthropic force that is rising out of the context of rejuvenation in the traditional Christian church.

These Christian philanthropists have to manoeuvre in areas where religion, society and state meet. This has determined both the potentials and limits for Christian philanthropy.

Their efforts are closely linked to experiences gathered from managing their businesses. This requires having a pragmatic understanding of the local economic and social status quo, and motivating employees for higher productivity so as to realize growth. Obviously, to reach these goals, “saving the souls” of their employees is far from adequate. My previous studies have shown that Christian entrepreneurs are quite keen on running their businesses with biblical teachings, mostly to impose discipline, ensure employee fidelity and devotion.⁸ Some new entrepreneur converts in Wenzhou, as the study finds, provide Bibles for all of their employees to read and study. By means of the high-profile publicity of their commitment to Christian philanthropy, their connections to local authorities and officials are kept constructive and friendly. Of course, to gain the favor of local authorities is not their only intention. If that were the case, commitment to philanthropic deeds in the name of their businesses would have been more effective and less demanding. Philanthropic endeavors in the name of Christian entrepreneurs primarily aim at showing the moral integrity of Christians and their willingness to contribute to social development. Being new converts, all Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou have more or less practiced charitable deeds. Quite a few of them had been committed even before their conversion. They not only actively respond to official calls, but create internal funds, within their businesses, to support employees in need of assistance. Now, more and more of them are devoted to philanthropy both as business owners and members in their local churches, which inevitably imposes on them dual economic obligations. A good reason for these self-imposed responsibilities is their increasing awareness of the importance of “Glorifying God and benefitting the people”, moral perfection and

8 Cao Nanlai. *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christianity and Cosmopolitan Modernity Changes*. Hong Kong University Press, 2013.

spiritual wealth in the city of Wenzhou, their highly commercialized home notorious for its cultural and spiritual infertility. One of the co-founders and leaders of Huafu once said:

Middle class entrepreneurs like us should enrich ourselves with knowledge. Wenzhou people who only run after massages, karaokes and feasts won't bring big achievements. Many businessmen want to learn Chinese traditions and classics, to pursue MBA degrees and cultivate a global outlook. As Christians, we need to ponder the meaning of our faith. An enterprise may live for a century, or at most several. But religions have been around for thousands of years, and are still growing now after some countless setbacks. What is the force behind this lasting growth? We want to apply the power and wisdom of faith to our business management. ... It may be true that businesses took Wenzhou people to places around the world in the past. Now we shall let philanthropy from Wenzhou spread prosperity. To realize it, everyone has a part to play. When every person shows compassion and care, a balanced social development can be maintained.⁹

Those charitable deeds provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to give their morality an uplift and redefine their self-identities from hedonists to philanthropists as they weave new social networks and accumulate cultural capital. Huafu has won the attention of local, provincial and national media. Its core members have appeared in interviews and news reports – an unusual phenomenon given the flood of negative comments on Wenzhou businessmen's notorious speculation in the Chinese housing market.¹⁰ Would they have plunged into charitable work if they were not Christians? The answer is obvious: those teachings which had attracted them to Christianity in the first place, with their universal power, would also drive them towards philanthropy. Charity, not necessarily related to the traditions of indigenous Chinese Christianity, might have been embedded in their Christian faith.

Apparently, the rise of social philanthropy in a region is directly and immediately correlated to its political and economic development. The strong civic force in Wenzhou is an outcome of the inadequacy of local public services. For instance, in devolving central authority to local levels, in the process of fiscal reforms, government officials in rural regions have had to resort to private or bank loans to fill the financial gaps

9 Shi Po. Views on Fortune among Merchants in Wenzhou. *South Reviews*. Feb.22, 2010.

10 See Tan Xilin, Follower Philanthropy of Wealthy Christians in Wenzhou. *Nanfang Metropolis Daily*. June 11, 2012.

in infrastructure construction spending.¹¹ For more than three decades, private capital has been playing a critical role in financing Wenzhou's infrastructure construction including Wenzhou Airport and the Beijing-Wenzhou Railway. Sources of private capital have been so highly active in search of investment potentials that private loans have penetrated every possible corner in Wenzhou.¹² At present, many loans are shrouded in legal auctioning and mortgage consignment. This surplus of private capital, coupled with limited investment opportunities, the soaring costs of labor and raw materials, and the appreciation of the Chinese currency, has led to the withdrawal of funds from outward bound opportunities to investing in religious sectors, such as in the construction of churches or in other charitable activities. Entrepreneurs "invest" in charity, aiming at obtaining more favorable investment policies (from the government) and a platform for growth. For example, one "boss Christian" keen on philanthropy intends to introduce advanced low-carbon technologies from the U.S. and Korea in the production of energy saving lights (ESL) after he recognized the bottleneck in technology upgrading. In his words, "doing charitable work is just like doing business." He is planning trips to South Korea and the U.S. and attracts investment and technologies through the coordination of Church organizations in these countries. Philanthropy, in his eyes, is indispensable to creating desirable investment opportunities. He also admits that without business output, entrepreneurs would not be able to continue their charitable work since the input to charity is continuous and takes up much of their energy. Philanthropy needs to be integrated into business. This is a prevalent understanding among Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou.

Religions do provide new platforms and channels for capital. In early 2010, all Huafu board members were fully occupied with the preparations for a fund-raising New Year Charity Concert in the Center of Performing Arts in Wenzhou. The event provided examples of the challenges and barriers confronting Christian philanthropy. Open to

11 Kellee S. Tsai, Debating Decentralized Development: A Reconsideration of the Wenzhou and Kerala Models. *Indian Journal of Economics and Business*. Special Issue on China and India: 1-21, 2006.

12 Loans are part of daily lives for people in Wenzhou. As indicated in a survey, 89% of families (individuals) and 60% of enterprises in Wenzhou are involved in private loans. See Xie Liang, Private Loans in Wenzhou: What features the mini-world of Rentiers? *Morning Express*. June 28, 2011.

the general public, the concert was exclusively sponsored by a local enterprise and patronized by the Central Committee of the Democratic League and Soong Ching-ling Foundation. Since Huaifu is a non-public foundation and cannot openly raise funds, working with the Soong Ching-ling Foundation helped solve the problem of making the concert a legitimate fund-raising event. Obviously, Huaifu could not place its operation in the hands of the twenty or so Christian entrepreneurs. For that event, Huaifu shouldered all the expenditures and planned to use all income derived from ticket sales and advertisements for the “Bright Eyes Project”, targeting children with cataracts in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces. The concert was to be performed by the Shanghai Orchestra and two overseas Chinese Christian musicians, and was developed to propagate Christianity in an unconventional way, outside of churches. However, the pressures from local church and government agencies had confined it within the framework of entrepreneur philanthropy,¹³ which heightened public perceptions of the event as a “self-promotion” by the entrepreneurs.

In an interview with *Tian Feng*, magazine of the Protestant Church in China, the chairman of Huaifu Board, Zheng Shengtao talked about the intentions behind his charitable deeds:

After the Wenchuan earthquake, Zheng donated CNY4 million to the rescue and relief efforts and then initiated the Huaifu Charitable Foundation. His efforts contributed to the recovery and rehabilitation of the earthquake affected population. Brother Zheng holds his own simple understanding of philanthropy: “We shall, if we can, offer a helping hand to our neighbors if they come across hardships”. According to him, an enterprise shoulders two missions: to create and distribute wealth. The second mission is nothing but to help more people.¹⁴

Corresponding to the notion of “serving God through running businesses” held by Christian entrepreneurs, philanthropy has been

13 This embarrassing situation is related to the fact that some Christian entrepreneurs are recent converts. For example, the chief executive of Huaifu did not become a Christian until 2006. He took over Huaifu in 2008. As a new Christian, he poured out the great challenges encountered given his inadequate “church”. Correspondingly, the criticism from the local Church on spiritual shallowness and fragility of the Foundation, and its inability to speak on behalf of Christianity seem to prove this.

14 Yuan Sheng: God is My Strength – Stories of Brother Zheng Shengtao, President of Shenli Group. *Tianfeng*, 2009(7):15.

regarded as a core mission of their business. This shows that the philanthropic motive of the donor might not be directly faith-based, and this indirectness is confirmed by another vice-chairman of the Huafu Board in an interview when he cited Psalms 112:9.

Though Huafu was not founded in the name of Christians or the religious community, our offerings, care and love have been given without intentionally revealing our Christian identity. We believe that “He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor.”¹⁵

Huafu’s high-profile publicity with regard to its philanthropy and low-profile treatment of its own religious background offers a sharp contrast to the stagnant philanthropic drive of the Christian church in Wenzhou. For the latter, charity is just another way of evangelizing. For one, they are entwined in practice. For another, charity sounds more acceptable to local communities and authorities, hence a preparation for or a cover for evangelism. For instance, local church donations are usually distributed with Christian publications attached. Preaching is accompanied by some gifts (such as simple daily necessities). Christian entrepreneurs stationed outside of Wenzhou fund the building of schools or orphanages as a channel for evangelism. Government agencies in those regions greatly welcome schools or orphanages and see them as representing a type of philanthropy. Besides, when the gospel is spread through charitable deeds, target groups, be it farmers, workers or members of other vulnerable groups, choose to accept non-governmental support¹⁶ even if it is only the material support that is kept, rather than the faith.

The limited practice of church-based philanthropy is also subject to the historical relations among churches or between churches and local governments. Encouragement is given by governments to philanthropic engagements, but not when these are coupled with evangelizing. For followers, however, the two are inseparable. Moreover, the historical rifts between TSPM churches and house churches do pose difficulties for

15 Ji Wen. Love Knows No Winter — Huafu in the Eyes of Our Co-worker Zhou Aiping. *Tianfeng*. 2009(6):15.

16 Please see Jonathan Schwartz and Shawn Shieh, eds, *State and Society Responses to Social Welfare Needs in China: Serving the People*. New York: Routledge, 2009, for studies on philanthropy of NGOs in China and their connections with the Chinese government.

evangelism. Generally speaking, once informed, house churches will not launch any activities in areas where TSPM churches have worked even if those areas witnessed the success of their previous efforts. This reflects the constraints on philanthropy from the complex relationship between church and politics. The development of churches and other religious organizations are subject to official policies and regulations, especially with regard to registration. These regulations may exert an influence on the motivation of churches in carrying out charitable deeds. To “give”, within the framework of religion and the gospel, is a testimony of faith for followers. This is even more so for Christian entrepreneurs. That is why the present status of Christian philanthropy in civil society does reveal the overall inadequacy of Chinese Christian churches’ contributions in this regard and the lack of visions. Of course, these so-called “natural” deficiencies have to be given fair judgement in the context of the complicated interaction between politics and religion in modern China. Whether in mainstream registers or in public memory, the description of religion has changed from “spiritual opium” to “moral and ethical resources” only in recent decades in China.¹⁷ Thus, the Chinese Christian church is still undergoing the shift from being marginalized victims to being “light and salt” – contributors to social development. Churches in coastal areas have pioneered in related institutional constructions, mindset and identity transformation. What Wenzhou has witnessed has been the emergence of elite Christians who regard philanthropy as their moral obligation. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when public philanthropy takes root there first. The foundation of Huafu has been the outcome of a church system with relatively complete and mature organizational practices. Basically churches are the origins out of which Christian entrepreneurs grow. As they come together, they need to discuss their philanthropic efforts within the framework of churches. In reviewing the process of preparing for Huafu’s establishment, the hardest nut to crack was not the approval from local government and the formal registration, but the understanding of the Christian church in Wenzhou.

For a church, the recruitment or invitation of its members to meetings by other churches or para-church organizations are considered acts of “sheep” stealing. If these acts were undertaken by Christian foundations,

17 See Li Xiangping. From “Spiritual Opium” to “Social Capitals” - Fundamental Changes in Chinese Religions in the last 30 years since the Reform and Opening-up. *China Religion*. 2008(11):29-32.

business societies or other faith-based organizations, traditional churches would be even more likely to think of them as snatching away its high-end followers and potentially, large amounts of cash contributions as well. This would undermine the church's influence and capacity for self-support. To avoid putting such pressure on the traditional churches, board members of Huafu racked their brains for solutions. One of the key issues was to make the local church understand that their offerings would not be reduced after they participate in foundation activities, and that the purpose of the foundation was to provide a platform for the church to increase its social influence. In many Chinese regions, faith-based philanthropy has not been met with official approval whereas charitable foundations with religious backgrounds can launch activities in mainstream society, sometimes even becoming part of official activities and quite easily joining inter-organizational partnerships, as in the case of the concert mentioned above. In this regard, the Amity Foundation has been a source of inspiration to Huafu.¹⁸ In fact, Christian charitable organizations like Huafu are themselves societies of elite Christians in Wenzhou, and represent their attempts for having a greater say in the local church. Only time will tell if these efforts have helped other church members or other groups to engage in philanthropy. Therefore, the first step for those Christian entrepreneurs was to put on a legal coat over their charitable deeds.

Autonomy and independent development of public Christian philanthropy

Charitable deeds do bring both secular and religious glories to Chinese Christianity, which still carries the label of “a foreign religion”. However, as new practices on Chinese soil, they do remind people of the “modernity model” of Christianity as introduced by Western missionaries that is, funding educational and medical institutions and orphanages as well as delivering support to economically challenged populations, all being Western missionaries' evangelizing tactics and their by-products. When analyzing the influence of Christianity on their own individual efforts at charity, those entrepreneurs are inclined to put it within the western frame

18 For studies on the Amity Foundation, please see Philip L. Wickery, “Development Service and China's Modernization – the Amity Foundation in Theological Perspective”.1989. *The Ecumenical Review* 41(1):78-87.

of reference by viewing themselves as stewards of God's wealth, with wealth creation and giving as their "bounden duties".¹⁹ Just as Brother Z, the vice chairman of Huaifu, widely known as "the gentry businessman of Wenzhou" has said,

"To give makes one happier than to receive. To understand the reasons why Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, have given away most of their wealth, you must know something about Western civilization and faith, which holds that all your wealth, your talents, your gifts are endowed by God. You accept them without any cost and pain and lose them without knowing when. The compassion you show to the poor will be rewarded by God."

There is a popular saying among Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou: there are two roads to practicing philanthropy. One is to put yourself on the cross and sacrifice yourself like Mother Theresa. The other is to get rich first, and then to give money away like Bill Gates. Definitely, most businessmen in Wenzhou would take the second road.

In the absence of a legal, operational model, elite Christian organizations in Wenzhou put the emphasis on developing an internationally recognized model – like the one represented by world class philanthropists Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. At the same time, Huaifu also finds in the charitable practices of Western missionaries in the mid-19th and early 20th century, the rationale and spiritual significance of their philanthropy. Shortly after its establishment, Huaifu found itself trapped in a dilemma mainly arising from the stereotype of "religious purity" among congregations. It is true that Christian churches generally disapprove of the business model in entrepreneur philanthropy. But it would be unfair to put the blame entirely on Christian churches for their strong reluctance to engage in charitable work. We cannot ignore the fact that except for the nationwide rescue and relief calls from government in the wake of several major natural disasters, churches do lack an officially approved and routinely institutionalized channel for philanthropy. In Wenzhou, one of the occasions for church charity is the annual "one-day giving" event. Organized by the local administration for religious

19 Comparatively speaking, they mention very little about the "benevolence and passion" in Confucianism when they speak of the driving force behind their philanthropic efforts. This is different from most non-Christian private foundations. The latter focus on reviving the philanthropic traditions inherent in ancient Chinese heritage, a process that has accompanied the renaissance of traditional Chinese culture.

affairs, donations are made on the designated day to public social welfare institutions by religious organizations or church members as requested by the CCC-TSPM. Donations from every church would be recorded in great detail on inventories. This one-day event covers only TSPM churches and related religious organizations, and do not reach the large number of house churches. From this, we can surmise that the intention of local government is to mobilize church resources for public welfare so as to divert some of the pressures on government. However, it lacks experience in working with independent social organizations and is hesitant to promote the efforts of faith-based non-governmental organizations in the realm of public affairs.

Given this policy ambivalence, Huafu represents an innovative and institutional breakthrough in religious philanthropy. It is now in search of more sustainable fund-raising and development models, including investments in the manufacturing industry. A key member of the Huafu Board labels the foundation as a “professional charitable” agency specializing in cornea transplantation. In his opinion, cataract treatment only covers the senior population and is common as a philanthropic project. It is therefore not innovative enough. He noted that “It suffices to publicize Huafu as a Christian organization. After all, Huafu is not a channel for promulgating Christianity. What it needs more is to be known as a cornea-related foundation.” One of its advocacy was a self-funded promotional movie shown on the local TV channel calling on all Wenzhou people (Christians included) to donate their corneas when appropriate (at the end of their lives). Subsequently, a corresponding project was launched with initial funds of CNY 1 million. Brother Zhou, the assistant Secretary General of Huafu, travelled all the way to the U.S.A. on a visit to a renowned eye bank to explore the introduction of cornea donors (from China). The trip ended successfully with an agreement signed with the partner bank. At the end of January 2011, Huafu set up partnerships with the Optometry Hospital affiliated with Wenzhou Medical University (WMU) and other local hospitals, and funded more than 300 cornea operations. By the middle of 2011, Huafu had created the Cornea Vision Regain Fund in collaboration with WMU, and planned to donate CNY 1 million per year, over a 5-year period, for cornea donor rewards, volunteer recruitment and cornea transplantation training so as to encourage cornea donation and build WMU into the largest cornea donation center in China.

On all occasions involving Huafu projects, no open and explicit expressions of religious belief and identity has been detected. All operations are similar to commercial projects. The working model has been accompanied with professional, transparent and efficient fund use and project management. However, all administrative and secretarial work backstage has been performed on a largely religious track. Meetings start and end with prayers and hymn singing as a sign of the strength and unifying force of the Christian faith. Moreover, core administrative staff members are voluntary workers from the local church, and they hold the positions without receiving any remuneration or salaries. This combination of social organization and local church has built up the trust and confidence of the local society and raised Huafu's philanthropic value. At this stage, mutual trust and confidence have proven to be more significant than the social impact of specific philanthropic deeds and has risen above the hypocritical "virtue-seeking practice" in our society.

The innovative efforts of Huafu at positively raising citizenship awareness is significant. Different from churches in rural and land-locked regions, Christian charities initiated by business and industry owners embody the conscious rational efforts of this group in practicing their faith, reflecting their anxiety as the new-rich class, and their transition from passive practice to positive action.²⁰ In this way, local Christian charity gradually gains independence through interacting with officials and with peer groups. Philanthropists in Wenzhou have to cope with the ever-changing business society and uncertain state-church relations, a process filled with challenges and uncertainties, and demanding motivation and initiatives if one is to find ways of expressing and practicing his/her faith.²¹ They set their faith free from the confines of religious services, and the tangible observation of the cross. Whether it is for or against it, the traditional church has to respond to this foundation and the emergence of related discourses. For the Christian church to exercise philanthropy with the current social credit crisis in the

20 See Robert R. Weller, Global Religious Changes and Civil Life in Two Chinese Societies: A Comparison of Jiangsu and Taiwan. *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. 2015 (13): 13-24.

21 As admitted by executive officers of Huafu, the challenges before them include: unstable volunteer loyalty, misgivings about competing with local churches, and cuts in donations resulting from the considerable asset shrinkage caused by financial crises. All these difficulties hamper the sustainability of the Foundation. When incomes cannot catch up with spending, he has to fill the gap with his personal funds.

background is an issue to meditate on. Beyond that, religious charitable organizations face the challenge of building an outlook that is morally independent from the market and the government through integrating faith observances and religious perspectives. This outlook will facilitate its own attainment of legitimacy.

Brother Z, the deputy secretary general of Huaifu and its executive officer, shared his endeavors to keep the organization “pure” from the penetration of mainstream commercial values. He admits that on the one hand, he has to raise funds from entrepreneurs, and on the other, to fight against the exploitation of commercial interests. He once rejected a donation of CNY500,000 for fear that it would incur interest-seeking through taking advantage of the national “free cataract treatment drive”. The Foundation cannot afford any scandals caused by misconduct in such cataract operations. There was once an offer of wine worth tens of thousands of yuan from a local liquor wholesaler for charity sales. He rejected the offer outright because in his eyes, the offering was too commercial and would cost the foundation even more in future because it might mislead philanthropists into seeing Huaifu as a profiteer using the name of charity. For a business person, it is never a good bargain if future donations worth millions or even more were to be sacrificed for tens of thousands at present. Another core member of the Huaifu Board mentioned that, “Christians hold non-commercial and simple attitudes towards philanthropy, and all our partners work in fields unrelated to their own businesses.” He stressed the role of faith as a gatekeeper for Christian charity, and mentioned how many conventional, large foundations have been involved in scandals and become exposed because they had become stakeholders of commercial interests.²² Here we can feel the tension between business interests and non-market moralities. In this case, Christian charity represents critical engagement with rather than complete rejection of secular business spheres.

A promising future awaits Huaifu. As it grows, it is “calling upon people from every walk of life to continue the propagation of love and care”.²³ In addition, it is also attempting to move Chinese churches from a narrow family-centred focus towards playing a broader role in civil

22 See Tan Xilin. Follower Philanthropy of Wealthy Christians in Wenzhou. *Nanfang Metropolis Daily*. June 1, 2012.

23 Ji Wen. Love knows no winter — Huaifu in the eyes of our co-worker Zhou Aiping. *Tianfeng*. 2009(6):15.

society. Cloudy and uncertain as the prospect may seem, It has been working amid disputes and disagreement. What has been clear is that it is introducing to Chinese society a notion that is of non-Chinese origin – Christian philanthropy – prompting Christian churches to examine their ideas and attitudes towards human suffering. This indicates that the roles of religion in public life are closely associated with the political and economic structures as well as local history and culture. Specifically, it is relevant to people’s views and understanding of religious “purity”. It may be possible that the potentials of religion in charity can best be brought out only when religious organizations do not need religious charity as their legitimate cover for public religious activities in order to demonstrate the moral integrity of their faith. As more mainstream social economic powers join in and a stronger sense of responsibility is built among social elites, religious groups in China will demonstrate a higher consciousness in charitable engagements and higher competence in constructing bridges between religion, society and the state.

At present, Christian charity in China reflects the joint effort of three sides: government, church and Christian entrepreneurs. The role of government is to make appropriate policies and encourage Christian involvement in social service so that they can contribute to social wellbeing. At the same time, the government explores better ways of invigorating Christians’ enthusiasm in charitable work and increasing their self-awareness of philanthropy. Compared with other followers, Christian entrepreneurs emphasize the input into philanthropy, which is tightly linked to their financial strength, practical rationality and elite responsibility. In this age of excessive consumerism, over-commercialization, corruption and credit crisis, they rise to embrace this precious opportunity to openly exemplify the religious identities and moral pursuits of Chinese Christians. To some degree, for emerging philanthropic organizations, which are different from those nationally known organizations directly or indirectly supported by local governments and related authorities, such as the Amity Foundation, mutual trust and communication are necessary between them and corresponding government agencies. It is necessary to find approaches that retain its organizational characteristics while blazing a trail to achieve legitimacy in the realms of faith, morality and culture. Coastal, affluent Zhejiang has seen religious elites and activists devise a modern philanthropic system highlighting pragmatism and consensus, transcending different religious

and cultural boundaries, promoting exchanges with the state and other social groups while strengthening intra-organizational communication.

The altruism and commitment to social charity in China identified with the Huafu board and its members, as its name (“Blessings on China”) implies, is rarely found in the spiritual tradition of house churches. Under the circumstances of easing regulatory policies, Huafu is creating a ripple effect in Christian charity. At the beginning of 2014, under the coordination of Huafu leaders, more than 20 Christian charitable institutions joined hands to form the Wenzhou Agape Public Interest Association, a charity alliance upholding Christian teachings, to better mobilize funds and resources, and promote the collaboration of voluntary service providers. In the long run, it aims at building Wenzhou into a city of philanthropy. Taking one further step, Agape Association prioritizes the cooperation with other social forces and the construction of fund-raising platforms while maintaining its distinct image as a Christian-based grassroots NGO. As the largest one of its kind in Wenzhou, the newly founded Agape plunged into donating relief supplies immediately after the Zhaotong earthquake in Yunnan in August 2014. In less than two years after its foundation, Agape had raised funds and supplies worth almost CNY 20 million. With well-trained volunteers, cross-regional church networks, and the internal trust among followers, Christian philanthropic organizations have demonstrated a significant advantage in terms of efficiency and responsiveness over their official or semi-official counterparts (such as the China Charity Federation). Though not constituting a majority, they became providers of crucial resources.

Conclusion

This article has observed Christian philanthropic organizations through an interactive scenario involving government, church and business. Upholding a model of business-supported philanthropy, merchant Christians have blazed a sustainable trail of “serving God through business” and “glorifying God while benefitting the people”. They have grown into a key patriotic force among Chinese Christian communities. While drawing together the influence of enterprises, churches and local governments, they try to reserve space for models of independent development. Despite relying on business resources and platforms, they avoid a totally business approach by “shaking hands with the secular

world while pursuing God's glory". Having more public and social compatibility, their stance has pointed them in a direction different from the focus on "atonement and compassion" of the more conventional churches. Christianity needs to work within the framework of more harmonious state-church relations. The present economic growth and policy relaxation do promote the autonomy of local religious philanthropy, and herald new public space for its development, enabling more active and creative participation in social, public affairs and various national drives.

Pollard and his fellow Western missionaries must have been, in part, the inspiration for present day Christian civic and charitable organizations whose practices can be traced to missionary models. However, a closer look shows that they are fundamentally different in terms of the giving and receiving parties, and the nature, scope, purpose and social impact of their endeavors. These civic, philanthropic acts are neither replicas of foreign practices, nor revised editions of local traditions. As an emerging trend after five decades of discontinuity, they are outcomes of Chinese Christians' innovation in adapting to the new development of Christianity in the era of globalization. They will serve as the wind vane pointing at Chinese Christianity's social integration, and the degree to which it will modulate state-church

Faith, Values and Entrepreneurship in Contemporary China

Cui Wantian

There has been a consensus that faith, ethics and moral values have gradually lost their grip on the human conscience. Unlike the efforts we have made to restore the ecology, not enough attention has been given to the spiritual and moral problems that plague the world. The disparity between unprecedented material abundance and the relative lack of spiritual soundness has become a fundamental issue that contemporary society has to resolve. Faith and moral crises, ultimately, are the root causes of social decadence.

Enterprises and entrepreneurs are the mainstay and leading forces of contemporary economy and society. It is therefore vital to push entrepreneurs to uphold proper values, maintain ethical boundaries, shoulder responsibilities towards the country and people, and behave honestly in society. Only in this way can problems be solved, crises defused, and ethos rectified. Entrepreneurs of varied backgrounds are automatically subject to the influence of diverse religions, values and ethics. Max Weber's thesis on Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism sought to show how faith-based values and ethics influenced entrepreneurship, providing an important perspective on this issue.

This paper explores the relationship between "faith and entrepreneurship" in China and points out that without proper guidance in their faith, entrepreneurs may fail to maintain their business integrity and cause more social problems. In general, religious organizations of diverse types have yet to provide entrepreneurs with faith support that is "appropriate and substantial". Therefore, education that instills

the right values has become the key for this. To resolve the faith crisis and ethical dilemmas, it is necessary for religious circles to launch a “supply-side” reform and provide effective guidance to entrepreneurs and business circles by setting guidelines that interpret and lay out principles for business, economic development and corporate operations, thereby closing the chasm between faith and work, and faith and life. Research into the relationship between religion, economics and corporate development is much needed; so is the application of such findings.

Faith, when well integrated with entrepreneurship and business practices, can promote proper business ethics and boost integrity. The case of Shengshang College (also known as Kingdom Business College) in China is used in this paper to illustrate the theory and practice of integrating faith education and entrepreneurship.

Research questions

There is consensus that establishing a society of integrity is of vital importance to contemporary China, whose overarching problem has been the lack of faith. The key solution then is to promote faith among entrepreneurs, to strengthen their moral, ethical and values education in order to enhance corporate and social integrity.

Entrepreneurs do not necessarily have the right values. Even for those with a faith, their values are easily set aside or distorted by secular economic activities. Most religions, having originated in agrarian or even primeval slave societies, have adopted a critical or negative attitude towards business activities, entrepreneurship and economic development. Consequently, religions have a tendency to be alienated from social and economic development. Scientism, utilitarianism and materialism have replaced the abiding principle that God is supreme, morality comes first, and integrity is the priority. Entrepreneurs and business people of faith have not received pertinent training in managing the relationship between business and faith. Therefore, there exists the paradox of believers committing sins on weekdays and repenting on Sundays.

Statistical studies show that entrepreneurs with religious backgrounds may have a slightly better record in corporate integrity, but are not morally distinct from their secular counterparts. Contrary to what is commonly expected, entrepreneurs who are religious followers

do not necessarily stick to higher moral standards. So, what is the cause of this problem? On the one hand, religious circles have very limited or even no influence on business operations and economic development. On the other hand, entrepreneurs cannot derive operational business methodologies from their faith when they turn to religious organizations to seek answers to questions about values, philosophy of life and spiritual belonging. In other words, faith and business practice are not effectively combined. In some extreme cases, religious organizations only seek donations from enterprises but not the spiritual “sanctification” of their sponsors, resulting in the paradox and conflict between the sacred and the secular, holiness and business, religious beliefs and ethics. Religious circles should be the guardians of social conscience and moral standards, and be the crucial advocates of social justice and corporate integrity. In reality, most entrepreneurs merely have superficial beliefs, which cannot be translated into enterprise merit. Faith and actions are not essentially integrated.

Why religions have not enhanced entrepreneurs’ integrity

1. Conservatism of religious organizations with one-sided interpretations of doctrines

Conservative religious organizations have failed to keep up with the times and live up to the challenges posed by commercialization and secularization. Different religious organizations are still teaching precepts applicable mainly in an agricultural society. What seems to be lacking is an effective system of religious interpretation that can help provide answers to new issues in contemporary society. Major world religions were formed at a time when economic patterns were less complex, commercial societies less prosperous and modern enterprises non-existent. Religious believers can generally obtain answers concerning the meaning of life or individual behaviour. However, a theology of business seems to be lacking. The inability to find religious “guidelines” for specialized business activities and social work has, in fact, led to a theological void that has allowed the “laws of the jungle” to take over.

The Christian Bible came into being between 1500 BC and first century AD, and contained history, poetry, philosophy, personal letters

and sermons. Its content has deep historical roots, influenced by the economic and social developments of the time. It is worth exploring whether many of the lessons in the Bible, which reflect the productivity level and social relations of earlier times, are applicable in today's complex environment.

The Qur'an, the central text of Islam, is believed to be the teachings and oracles sporadically revealed to Muhammad by Allah between 610 and 632 AD. It also lacks explanatory power in providing an understanding of the drastic changes in modern society and the ever-increasing new ideas and novel things. This does a disservice to the believers who, when at a loss, may resort to extreme behavior or actions.

The Tripitaka, a collection of Buddhist scriptures, was codified after Sakyamuni attained Nirvana in 486 BC. In order to preserve the Buddha's preachings and to unify believers' opinions and understanding, his disciples formed a universally accepted version of the sutra, law and theory. Slavery was then prevalent at the time, which inevitably influenced how the Canon was written and compiled. Thus, it requires further discussion whether the Canon written in a "primitive society" can provide guidance to a more advanced society.

In addition, some religious organizations have failed to resist the intrusion of secularization and be a "purifier" that can induce sublimation and sanctification. Instead, religion has become a utilitarian tool and a source of corruption that aggravates social problems that could otherwise have been capped or overcome. Religious organizations thus need to have a prompt "supply-side reform" for their own sake and innovate to keep up with the times.

2. *Religious circles lack innovation and lag behind the times*

Religions often lack the capacity to innovate and cope with new challenges and problems in the world. What seems to have been equally lacking has been inter-disciplinary research in fields such as social economy, business ethics and corporate development. In a quick survey of religious publications in China, for instance, five religious journals were examined to see how much of their content reflected key words related to social economy, business ethics and corporate development. By the end of 2016, out of a total of 12,122 articles published in the *Tian Feng* magazine by the China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic

Movement Committee (CCC/TSPM), only 12 (0.09%) had keywords related to the economy. The *China Muslim* published by the Islamic Association of China had a total of 41 out of 6,718 articles (0.6%); the *Voice of Dharma* published by the Buddhist Association of China had 17 out of 9,772 articles (0.17%); *China Taoism* published by the Chinese Taoist Association had 6 out of 5,259 papers (0.11%) and the *Catholic Church in China* published by the China Catholic Patriotic Association and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of China had a total of 11 out of 7,467 published papers (0.15%) with keywords related to the economy. When “business” and “enterprise” were used as keywords in the search, only a handful of papers were found.

In contrast, diverse fields of studies exist on the relationship between religion and the economy in the West. From Adam Smith, Max Weber to Laurence Iannaccone, such terms as “religious economy”, “economics of religion”, “Christian economics”, “Confucian economics”, “Islamic economics” and “Buddhist economics” are used when the “rational choice theory” or “supply and demand” analysis are applied in the study of religions. These terms reflect the value placed on the relationship between religion and economics by an increasing number of scholars.

In a modern society where economics is the center, business the carrier and entrepreneurs the main players, it is urgent for religious theorists to establish convincing and influential “conceptual frameworks and methodological systems” to provide support to religious practitioners. So far, these have not been put in place. That explains why the behavior of those entrepreneurs who proclaim to have a faith can often deviate from the values promoted by these religions. Religious precepts do not “readily” provide behavioral guidelines in the business and economic world.

3. *Without “godliness”, entrepreneurs cannot effectively practice the basic creeds in their faith*

Without firm faith and “godliness”, entrepreneurs may not be able to resist the market influence of secularization and unfair competition and may knowingly make mistakes by doing exactly what they are not supposed to do. For Christian entrepreneurs, the following aspects affect their spiritual life: the renewal of faith, reading and understanding the Bible, intensive study of Christian teachings, the quantity and

quality of participation in gatherings, the influence from pastors and fellow Christians, and the general opinion of religions in a given social environment. It is not easy for “outsiders” to judge the quality of a believer’s spiritual life. What can be observed, particularly in a Christian entrepreneur, is how eager s/he is to participate in church activities, how strictly s/he follows Biblical teachings and how much integrity s/he has in her social conduct. Generally speaking, if an entrepreneur has strong faith and, accordingly, godliness, s/he will participate not only in church activities, but also in extensive social activities in order to exert influence and generate more positive outcomes. Faith is manifested in a believer’s higher moral standards and integrity.

Entrepreneurs with religious beliefs often encounter the following predicament in their business activities: due to the restraint of faith, they often have to give up competitive strategies or profit-making methods that are contrary to religious doctrines, moral conscience and business ethics. Non-conformity to secular practices might mean the potential loss of many business opportunities. This type of struggle or compromise is a constant challenge to one’s spiritual life and moral integrity. On the other hand, many entrepreneurs who profess a faith may have a skewed understanding of religious doctrines, believing that “once you put down your butcher’s knife, you will attain Buddhahood,” or “if you believe in Jesus Christ, your sins will be pardoned.” These can be turned into a vulgar philosophy that is used to justify despicable behavior in business and social conduct. Freedom, brought about by faith, thus becomes an excuse for senseless presumptuousness or even public violations of basic market rules. Entrepreneurs of this type are unable to align sound beliefs with business integrity. It is even harder for them to reach the heights of serving a loving God and benefiting others.

4. Secularism, values and the marginalization of religions

Religion has a relatively disadvantageous and marginalized status in contemporary society where it is constantly experiencing the assimilative impact of commercialization, secularization and industrialization, a general trend in social development that further influences the spiritual outlook of the entire entrepreneurial class.

The main trend in social development today, modernization is manifested in science and technology that drives the development of the entire society, the democratization and universal participation in politics, and the transformation of values and lifestyles. The relative secularization of religion is also an important symbol of social modernization.

It is generally believed that the secularization of religion means desacralization—the self-adjustment of religions to adapt to social change. At the same time, social sectors are breaking away from religious constraints. Such change is gradual and invisible, but palpable. Western society can be used as an example. Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century and governed every aspect of society in the following centuries. Although there was competition between church and state, in general, the church held sway. However, with the advent of modern society, booming technology and industrialization, there was a rise in self-awareness of individualism. The church's traditional sphere of influence has been shrinking day by day, and its sacred veil has become increasingly diaphanous. According to Max Weber, the asceticism advocated by Protestant ethics is perfectly in line with the rationality of modern capitalism.

Particularly in modern-day China, secularized pluralism, the supremacy of materialism and the ever-expanding influence of the internet and social media have led to the fragmentation of information channels for everyone, including entrepreneurs, in the acquisition of ideas and values. Thus the common challenge confronting society is how to awaken eternal, moral principles in people's minds.

The separation of church and state in modern societies has led to the isolation of religions and the consequent decline in their positive influence. However, it does ensure a country's stability and sovereign independence from religious interference. This is not only the trend and direction of modern democracies, but also a guarantee of the free development and balance among different kinds of religions, with safeguards against any interference or segregation imposed by the state. On the other hand, the separation of church and state also weakens positive religious influence and leads to the disintegration of spiritual support in many areas.

In addition, modern education generally values the study of science and technology, business and finance, and disciplines that ensure a higher rate of employment and market returns. Areas of study such as literature,

religious studies, and theology, may provide training in spiritual growth and values, but are less preferred since they are not related to the market, economy or business. Such an imbalanced knowledge structure will have an increasingly profound impact on the mentality of human beings, especially that of the entrepreneurial class.

5. Churches have yet to provide effective spiritual support

Traditionally, churches have had a value orientation that despised merchants or business activities. Against this backdrop, it was not easy for many business people and entrepreneurs to find a sense of identity in religious organizations. Chinese society has long had a tradition which reveres agriculture and suppresses commerce. This is inextricably linked to China's socio-economic development, productivity levels and government demands. Religions have also upheld negative attitudes toward business and discouraged commercial activities. Of all the complex social and economic reasons for this, two stand out: social environment and religious teachings. Firstly, in traditional Chinese society, merchants, though rich, were regarded as mercenaries capable of undermining social stability and ethical standards. Traditional society valued status and class rather than wealth. Secondly, merchants were not portrayed favorably in many religious teachings.

Today, for instance, in Christianity, it is believed that money is something secular and the desire to preserve one's property will prevent a person from becoming closer to God. Mammon will lead to greed, which is a grave sin. Serving God comes first and all other pursuits are insignificant. Business people find this troubling when they seek pride and identity in religious organizations. Many of them become lost and even give up their faith.

What is equally troubling is that religious organizations are only interested in getting donations from business people whose social influence has not been fully recognized. These organizations treat entrepreneurs as their major clients, peddling spiritual consolation in exchange for financial benefits. Entrepreneurs, mixed in the crowd of believers and not given specialized guidance, tend to struggle in their pursuit of true faith.

The relationship between religious beliefs and entrepreneurship

China is currently in a transitional period, during which formal institutions are being established and when some key aspects are still lacking. It is thus equally meaningful to make full use of an informal institution to explore the moral and ethical basis of the market economy.

With regard to religious beliefs and entrepreneurship, Max Weber¹ believed that the spiritual impetus provided by the Protestant ethic centered on the concept of “vocation” which played an important role in the emergence and development of capitalism. The covenant spirit, diligence, thrift, and the unswerving work for God in the Christian faith served as the foundation of modern capitalism. Religion, an important part of culture, plays a very important role in the informal institutions of society.² At the same time, religion, as a form of cultural faith, has long been given attention for its interaction with society, economy and politics.³ Weaver and Agle have argued that there are good reasons to believe that religion does affect moral behavior in organizations and that in many parts of the world, major religions are undergoing a recovery.⁴ In the United States, for example, both the number of religious groups and believers and religious influences are increasing.⁵

In China, what has been the impact of traditional Chinese religions on entrepreneurship? Max Weber said that in Confucianism and Taoism, trust is built upon kinship communities, on the basis of consanguinity or affinity. Such a kind of trust is neither easy to extend to outsiders nor conducive to the emergence of capitalism. Weber continued to point out that: “Trust, the foundation of all business relationships, is always based

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- 1 Weber, Max. *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*. Trans. Wang Rongfen. Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008. 250-272.
 - 2 Williamson, Oliver E., 2000 “The New Institutional Economics: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead”, *Journal of Economic Literature Vol. XXXVIII (September 2000) pp. 595–613*.
 - 3 See, for instance, Huntington, S. P., 1993, “The Clash of Civilization”, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer: 22-49.
 - 4 Weaver, R. Gary & Agle, Bradley. 2002. Religiosity and Ethical Behavior in Organizations: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 27(1): 77-97.
 - 5 Iannaccone, L., 1994, “Process in the Economics of Religion”, *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 150(4): 734-744.

on pure (family or family-like) personal relationships in China”.⁶ It can be said that Weber’s aim was to demonstrate how special trust, based on kinship communities, impeded the development of Chinese capitalism.

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, with the rise of a Chinese business class, regional business groups all had the common feature of worshipping the god of their industry or guild. For example, merchants in Shanxi and Anhui, following specific practices, built shrines for the guild gods and local gods in their business mansions so as to boost solidarity in the regional business groups. With the emergence of capitalism in China, some Chinese compradores were converted to Christianity while the majority of merchants remained followers of traditional religions. Chinese businessmen from Fujian Province, such as Tan Kah Kee and Hu Wenhu, who expanded their business overseas, also followed traditional Chinese religions. They donated generously to their hometowns while doing business overseas. People interpreted such generosity as an act of patriotism or nostalgia. However, it can also be interpreted as being the result of Confucian influence and kinship values.

In Taiwan, believers of traditional religions account for approximately 80% of the total population, most of whom are Buddhists, Taoists and followers of folk beliefs. In the 1960s and 1970s, Christianity developed rapidly in Taiwan. However, after the economic take-off, the influence of traditional religions, especially that of Buddhism, was consolidated and expanded. Li Yiyuan, a Taiwanese scholar, believes that the utilitarianism of Taiwan’s folk religions can be utilized in the secular world to produce a positive and enterprising spirit.⁷ Business people following traditional religions rarely regard their faith as a personal brand, nor do they have a strong sense of moral self-discipline stemming from their beliefs. Rather, they follow a routine of “making a wish and redeeming the vow by making offerings for the wish fulfilled.” In essence, folk religions are simple and natural votive ones based on mutual reciprocity.

In contemporary mainland China, Chinese “bosses” (or entrepreneurs) usually believe in some religion. However, it is usually a type of personal faith that only focuses on individual gains and losses,

6 Weber, Max. *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*. Trans. Wang Rongfen. Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008. 250-272.

7 Li, Yiyuan. Modern Trend of Folk Religions in Taiwan - Response to Professor Peter Berger’s Theory of Cultural Factors in East Asian Development. *Selected Writings of Li Yiyuan*. Shanghai Educational Publishing House, 2002.

personal safety and security. They often proclaim themselves as the believers of Buddhism or Taoism. For those Christian bosses, Christianity is a faith that adds a public dimension, emphasizing the need to share with others, on top of the individual's spiritual soundness and value orientation.⁸

Contemporary studies on the relationship between religion and economy recognize that religious beliefs can be considered a form of "spiritual capital," an origin of social resources that benefit economic development. "Spirituality" is the "relationship between an individual and God, or any ultimate power that brings a life-giving sense of meaning, purpose, and mission. Such a relationship will have a visible impact on this individual who will demonstrate altruism, agape, or forgiveness in life." Spiritual capital, if defined, refers to "the effect of spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, networks and institutions that have a measurable impact on individuals, groups and societies". Li Xiangping and Yang Fenggang believe that Christianity, a religion closely associated with integrity and trust, can promote honest interactions among its members in their daily interactions, social life and economic endeavors, thereby consolidating the success of its members in this faith community and economic organization.⁹

Stulz & Williamson¹⁰ pointed out that cultural practices and religious traditions, passed down through precept and example from one generation to the next, are an important factor influencing human economic behavior. That's why mechanisms to protect investors vary from culture to culture. Barro and McCleary¹¹ used the data of an international religious survey to analyze the relationship between church attendance, religious beliefs and economic growth, and found that under certain conditions, the number of times of church attendance was negatively correlated with economic growth because religious sectors consumed economic resources. However, with a given number of church

8 Li, Xiangping. Faith and Religious Practice of 'Bosses' in Contemporary China. 2008. *Chinese Folk Religions*. Available at <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/Home/report/28216-1.htm>

9 Li, Xiangping, and Yang Fenggang. Protestant Ethic and China's Construction of Social Trust - Centered on 'Christian Enterprises' in *Contemporary China*. 27 Nov. 2008. Pu Shi Institute for Social Science. Available at <http://pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=1615>

10 Stulz, R. M. and R. Williamson, 2003, Culture, Openness and Finance, *Journal of Financial Economics*, 70(3): 313-349.

11 Barro, Robert J. and McCleary, Rachel, M., 2003, Religion and economic growth, in *American Sociological Review*, Vol.68, No.5.

attendance, religiosity will promote economic growth because the former affects an individual's behavior and character.

Hilary & Hui first used publicly available data of US public companies to examine how a company's investment behavior is affected by its religious environment.¹² Dyreng¹³ and McGuire¹⁴ used the same method and studied the relationship between religious norms and the aggressiveness of corporate financial reporting, religious beliefs and corporate misconduct, religious environments and the violation of the rules of corporate finance reports. Hilary & Hui studied the impact of the religious environment on the corporate behavior of different companies in one country.¹⁵ They first used the ratio of the number of believers to the local population as a measure for the religiosity level in the region where a company's headquarter is located and found that religion has a significant impact on the company's decision making. The level of religiosity is negatively correlated with the standard deviation of return on equity and return on assets, investment and R & D expenditure, and is positively correlated with the rate of return on assets. Meanwhile, investors are able to recognize companies with higher level of religiosity and risk aversion and therefore willing to pay higher prices for the investment in these companies. Some researchers further examined the relationship between the religious environment and corporate governance by studying financial reporting. Dyreng found that companies, in their home locations where religiosity is strong, are less likely to meet or exceed analysts' forecasts of earnings; similarly, the higher the accruals quality, the lower the likelihood of financial fraud and restatement.¹⁶ Based on 610,000 questionnaires, McGuire examined the impact of religion on respondents from three aspects: cognition, influence and behavior.¹⁷ The result showed that there is a significant negative correlation between religious influence and violation of financial reporting rules.

12 Hilary, G. and K. W. Hui, 2009, Does Religion Matter in Corporate Decision Making in America? *Journal of Financial Economics*, 93(3): 455-473.

13 Dyreng, S. D., W. J. Mayew and C. D. Williams, Religious Social Norms and Corporate Financial Reporting. *Journal of Business Finance & Accounting*, 2012, 39(7-8):845-875

14 McGuire, S. T., T. C. Omer and N. Y. Sharp, 2012, The Impact of Religion on Financial Reporting Irregularities. *Accounting Review*, 87(2): 645-673.

15 Hilary and Hui, op. cit.

16 Dyreng, et al., op. cit.

17 McGuire, S. T., T. C. Omer and N. Y. Sharp, 2012, The Impact of Religion on Financial Reporting Irregularities. *Accounting Review*, 87(2): 645-673.

In companies with weaker external regulation, the above-mentioned influence is stronger.

In contrast to numerous studies in the West linking faith with entrepreneurs' behaviour, there are only a couple of studies on religious entrepreneurs in mainland China. According to a survey conducted by Gao Shining, a researcher at the Institute of Religious Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, employer-employee relationships are more harmonious in businesses run by Catholic entrepreneurs. Employee turnover is lower and a higher degree of trust exists between employees and employers. Catholic business owners have a good social reputation and they conduct social welfare activities on a long-term basis to contribute to society. Chen Donghua et al. studied the impact of religion on listed companies, using such proxy variables of corporate governance as company violations, earnings management and audit opinion types and measuring the distance between relatively large temples and the locations where the companies are registered as well as the proportion of these temples in each province.¹⁸

The Shengshang School: A Case Study

Integrating religious practice and values in entrepreneurship has great significance especially in a country like China which is now the second largest economy in the world and has the largest number of religious believers. In recent years, the demographic and institutional dividends in China's development have been replaced by the cultural dividend. The biggest dividend in 2017 was the reconstruction of a culture of trust in Chinese society.

Religious education helps boost a culture of honesty and integrity, one of the key values of socialism and of many religions. To give these values full play, the Shengshang School has gained some experience and made some achievements in efforts at religious education. It adopts an innovative approach in its pedagogy by studying the principles and values universally supported by different kinds of religions. The mission of Shengshang is to enable entrepreneurs to apply the right beliefs,

18 Chen, Donghua, Hu, Xiaoli, Liang, Shankun and Xin, Fu. Religious Traditions and Corporate Governance. *Economic Research Journal*, Sep. 2013.

values and ethics in business operations, to promote corporate integrity and sustainable development and to ultimately contribute to the moral upliftment of the entire community.

More than 70% of the students at Shengshang are owners of private enterprises while the rest are management personnel. Over 80% are Protestants while the rest identify with general faith-based values. Students sign up for the study and look forward to learning and discussing how to live up to their beliefs and values in their business. Through practical education, Shengshang has gained insights regarding the positive impact of religion on entrepreneurship and business communities by looking at the business conduct and ethics of broad-based Christian groups.

1. *Predicament and confusion faced by Christian entrepreneurs: profit or religious integrity?*

The predicament faced by Christian entrepreneurs can be interpreted as the contradiction between the fading of the high-profit era in China (due to the cyclical nature of economic development) and the rise of corporate operating costs as a result of efforts to comply with religious values. On the one hand, most Christian enterprises in China are SMEs in rather competitive industries, which means they receive limited, residual profit. On the other hand, these Christian entrepreneurs would like to improve employee welfare, product quality, financial transparency and social responsibility in their daily operations and hence the added costs as high. Although improvements in these aspects benefit the long-term development of the enterprises, in the short term, declining profit and rising costs will put tremendous pressure on these entrepreneurs, who are torn between following the market in reducing costs and upholding their beliefs and values in business operations.

2. *Educational achievements of the Shengshang School*

The mission of Shengshang is to provide education on the right business ethics based on universally recognized values shared by different religions so as to promote religious practice in business operations and enhance social integrity. Just as a person's integrity can be reflected in all aspects of his behavior, the integrity of a business will also be reflected in

corporate behavior. In accordance with core religious values, Shengshang has gained progress and success in the following: business performance, talent training, social responsibility and environmental responsibility.

1. Investment and performance

In the first place, how a company invests is the result of a corporate strategy determined by the values and goals of a company. It can truly reflect the priorities of an enterprise. Shengshang advocates the concept of moral and ethical investment that is value-based. It is considered acceptable for trainees to invest in such areas as organic agriculture, health and medicine, education, environment protection and renewable energy. Investment is not supposed to go to areas with socially destructive or detrimental consequences, including arms manufacturing and trade, narcotics, tobacco and pornography. During the process of investment, more attention needs to be given to social returns and environmental impact than to performance and profit. Abiding with such principles, a fund management company established by one of the teachers at Shengshang decided to reject an investment project in the arms manufacturing industry despite its highly lucrative nature. To cite another example, an entrepreneur who used to work in construction turned his business into an educational enterprise, for corporate transformation, because he believed that capital and funds need to be directed to areas that would have a positive social impact. In China, where government policy does not allow the education sector to make profits, such a transformation no doubt caused some financial strain for the entrepreneur.

Secondly, high quality products will have a long-term viability in the market and earn goodwill and credibility for the manufacturers. They may not generate instant profit in the short term, but in the long run, these products will perform better profit-wise, as compared to those with ethical issues. Manufacturers of products that endanger human health or environmental safety will have to bear higher moral and reputational hazards. In contrast, trainees at Shengshang that are in the food production industry have all increased their inputs into production procedures, standardized process inspection and assessment and treated their products as “sacrificial offerings”. The manufacturing process is completed with such a “godly heart” that food safety is fully ensured.

In the captive breeding of sea cucumbers, the use of contraceptives, to reduce the activity of sea cucumbers while increasing their appetite, is prevalent. Sea cucumbers can grow faster in a relatively shorter time. Of course, the Shengshang-trained entrepreneurs in seafood farming have refused to follow the industry practice. Instead, all the products have to be safe and green.

2. Talent development

Unlike the labor market that generally views people as human resources or capital, the values advocated by Shengshang highlight the importance of employee development. Christian business owners do their best to support employee development and adopt a servant-style leadership. Only in this way can they lead as Jesus did. The qualities of a servant-leader is to show to the world what has been taught in the Bible: to be honest and reliable; not to indulge in gossip; not to hurt others or blame them for our mistakes; to respect those who uphold the truth; to keep one's promises no matter the cost; not to malign others; to refuse bribes; and to always treat employees in an honest and proper way. The behavioral changes of the entrepreneurs ranged from providing their employees a clean and comfortable work environment, to respecting gender equality, and valuing staff retraining. The most remarkable change was in how business owners viewed their relationship with their employees. Many Christian entrepreneurs followed the example of Jesus in washing their employees' feet. This servant-style leadership allows them to work with, to trust and listen to their employees and to inspire and motivate them.

3. Environmental protection

Shengshang teaches an environmental philosophy based on Christian ethics, in which the world is viewed as God's creation that is to be preserved and protected by human beings. Enterprises need to alleviate environment degradation and pollution through improved management of company operations, supply chains, products, and services so that their environmental impact can be reduced to a level possible for natural recovery and waste absorption. This is an important moral obligation and responsibility to be undertaken by enterprises. Entrepreneur trainees at Shengshang have visited Europe on environmental tours. In particular,

they attended environmental talks given by Swiss experts and visited sewage treatment facilities. Greatly inspired, participants have, on their return, modified their company management as well as their personal lifestyles for better environmental protection. One of those who ran a coal-mining firm decided to shut it down because of the harm it had done to his hometown and resolved to turn to clean energy. Another entrepreneur launched a public welfare project by setting up a trading platform for people to sell secondhand commodities at a very low price or to give them away for free to those in need. Thus, commodities can be reused and recycled, reducing the consumption of resources. Currently, the number of platform users has exceeded 50,000.

4. Social responsibility

Caring and sharing are the main values in Christianity related to social responsibility. Care needs to be provided to vulnerable groups, people who have lost their spouses, the disabled, children, isolated individuals and those who are socially marginalized. Shengshang stresses the importance of corporate social responsibility. In cooperation with the Amity Foundation, a renowned Christian charity organization, the Shengshang School has set up the Shengshang Fund to promote corporate social responsibility. There are also independently registered foundations or nongovernmental organizations dedicated to public welfare. For instance, Shengshang mentors initiated the Aimengchengzhen (“Dreams come true”) Youth Development Foundation to sponsor the education of disadvantaged adolescents. Some companies integrate their business with the care of vulnerable groups. For instance, an equestrian club introduced equine therapy for the healing of children with cerebral palsy or autism. Some enterprises or entrepreneurs sponsor infrastructure building or scholarships for universities or seminaries and support their research and educational development. Many more make donations to existing social welfare projects, such as building village libraries, visiting leprosy patients and caring for homeless people. It is estimated that the total amount of donations made by Shengshang mentors and students since the establishment of the School has reached CNY 50 million. The charitable activities emerging out of the sense of social responsibility have truly fulfilled the core values of Christian love and sharing.

Conclusion

All social outcomes can be traced to their spiritual or ideological roots. Much attention has been given to people's behavior but their belief or faith has been quite overlooked. While we are tired of religious preachings and trying to make technological breakthroughs, we are also constantly upsetting moral limits. We are overemphasizing the "can-do" but forgetting our identity as human beings. In order to foster responsible entrepreneurship, it is crucial to have proper religious norms and values. In fact, what we are talking about here includes not only the major religions but also the common folk beliefs and universal moral principles. In particular, conscience has long acted as the shield and anchor for entrepreneurship, as well as the preservative and leaven of positive business values. Only when we understand how to properly use the cultural building materials prepared by God and accumulated by humankind, can the skyscraper of entrepreneurship be constructed, layer by layer. Only when the trend in moral decline is reversed, will the root cause of social problems be removed and corporate integrity, food safety and clean environment be restored.

This is a war against spiritual smog to be participated in by the whole society. We must and have every reason to believe that God, the source of positive energy, will surely overcome the demons in our hearts and lead humankind out of the swamp towards the path of hope! Human beings may not have realized that there will be disastrous consequences if scientific revolutions bring about the collapse of faith. If entrepreneurs blindly pursue technological developments and constantly breach the standards of moral integrity, human beings will be brought to a very precarious situation. Without sufficient spiritual construction that centers on religion, faith, values and ethics, it is unlikely that entrepreneurs will be shaken up from their over indulgence in money and technology.

An Exploration of Christian Work Ethics and Its Practical Values

Feng Hao

This article introduces Christian work ethic and Max Weber's theory of how Protestant work ethic influenced the development of capitalism. Now that China is joining the international economic order, and deepening its economic reforms, it is possible and theoretically necessary to absorb and draw lessons from Christian work ethic so as to strengthen socialist culture and promote the sustained development of the socialist market economy.

Economic reforms have enabled China to move into the fast lane of modernization. While material wealth is widely accessible to the general public, the relentless pursuit of personal gain has penetrated every aspect of social life. The sense of responsibility for public welfare has been constantly weakened. Many view financial gain as the only deciding factor when choosing careers. Corruption, malfeasance, counterfeiting and fraud are prevalent. Violations of work ethic are not rare. Therefore, it is imperative to raise public awareness of work ethic so as to align personal values with the proper social order.

The Protestant work ethic is a sociological concept proposed by Max Weber to explore the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. This article discusses the possibility of learning from the Protestant work ethic in the context of China's economic and cultural development.

Origin and connotation of the Protestant work ethic

The biblical term for Protestant work ethic can be best summarized as "calling." In the Bible, "calling" refers to God's divine salvation of

humankind. Individuals are selected, tested, and dispatched to accomplish missions as their fulfillment of responsibilities and obligations in man's covenant with God.

Abraham was called by God to leave his father's house, homeland, and kindred to settle in Canaan, the land God promised him. God made a covenant with Abraham and promised him posterity and prosperity. Circumcision was the sign of this covenant. Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been enslaved, to go and settle in Canaan, the land of milk and honey. The Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites as the sign of the covenant. God warned them that keeping the commandments would lead them to peace and prosperity whereas disobedience would engender disaster and demise. Throughout the history of Israel, many prophets were called by God to save the Israelites from idolatry, depravation and misery. Messages of admonition were sent to Israel's kings and people to restore observance of the commandments and laws. In the period covered by the New Testament, Jesus was sent by God to atone for the sins of humankind. The crucifixion was the sign of the new covenant, by which all who believed in Christ would be pardoned for their sins, justified by faith and brought to eternity. All these "callings" and "covenants" constitute the main theme of the Bible and the foundation of Christian faith and teachings.

For Christians, "God's calling" is fundamental to the establishment of one's identity and the fulfillment of the sacred mission entrusted by God as the actualization of one's true value.

Martin Luther and John Calvin, the 16th-century reformers, developed a Puritan work ethic in which the biblical "calling" was re-conceptualized. The newly formed concept became the most powerful theological weapon in the Reformation and underpinned the core teachings of Protestantism: What pleases God is not abstinence or penance; rather, it is faithful diligence and the fulfillment of worldly duties that honor God and show the signs of God's grace.

Prior to the Reformation, the Christian Bible was written only in Latin. Luther's major advocacy then was to restore the authority of the Bible (*sola scriptura* or "by Scripture alone") as the source of faith. When translating the Bible from Latin to German, Luther used the German word "Beruf" (meaning "secular occupation") as the equivalent for "Calling" and thus gave the worldly duty, which had been much despised by the monastic class, a sense of sacredness. Luther argued that every

proper occupation is God's "calling" and that the professional conduct that complies with God's specific plan for man is the "vocation" that man must pursue in his life. Believers should not wait idly for Judgment Day; instead, they should work hard and seek professional success as a way to please God and bear witness to His glory. Some believe that Martin Luther's concept of vocation sanctifies the secular life and secularizes the sacred life and ergo, Christians gain a brand-new understanding of their career and life's goal.

Calvin expanded Luther's concept of vocation and advocated that the worldly duty of a believer is a calling from God. Those who have been redeemed by God must testify to God's redemption with their work and diligence. Calvin further used biblical examples to show that material wealth is a visible sign of God's blessing. Economic success is God's will and work is the only right way to create wealth. As for the relationship between material wealth and spiritual growth, Calvin maintains that abstinence and temperance are necessary for a controlled life. Distribution of property needs to be in accordance with the principle of justice and free from the sins of the world. People need to be connected to God so that greed can be removed and a holy life can thus be possible. Calvin later established a theocracy in Switzerland, and institutionalized and imposed Puritanism.

Luther's and Calvin's ideas on work ethic can be summarized as follows:

Vocation is God's will: all proper occupations are God's calling.

"Calling" is reinterpreted in Protestantism in which performing our worldly duty gains primacy as a way to attain moral perfection and is a way to honor God. Daily work thus becomes holy.

Vocational performance demonstrates personal salvation pre-destined by God.

In Christian theology, man's destiny is ordained by God and cannot be changed. The purpose of man's life and work is to obey and honor God. Whether a person can be saved is predestinated by God. One's work and achievements reflect God's predestination. Calvin equates personal salvation with work performance—hard work proves that one can be saved. This idea highlights the supreme value of an individual's life and his worldly activities.

Temperance and holiness are signs of unity with God

Calvin wrote:

This is that self-denial which Christ so strongly enforces on his disciples from the very outset, which, as soon as it takes hold of the mind, leaves no place either, first, for pride, show, and ostentation; or, secondly, for avarice, lust, luxury, effeminacy, or other vices which are engendered by self love. On the contrary, wherever it reigns not, the foulest vices are indulged in without shame; or, if there is some appearance of virtue, it is vitiated by a depraved longing for applause. Show me, if you can, an individual who, unless he has renounced himself in obedience to the Lord's command, is disposed to do good for its own sake.¹

Self-denial allows people to create wealth, not to satisfy their own desires, but to accumulate capital to regenerate wealth. A profession seen as a vocation can inspire people to work in a diligent and orderly way and promote the rational division of labor in society.

According to Martin Luther, there is no distinction between secular or holy work, religious duties are no more sacred than the secular ones, and the essence of all work is to serve God by serving fellow human beings.

Christian work ethic and the modernization of capitalism

What was the role played by Christian work ethic in the development of capitalism? German sociologist Max Weber gave his original answer in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. After thoroughly studying Martin Luther's "Calling" and John Calvin's "Predestination," Weber put forward the thesis that the Protestant ethic motivated the development of capitalism and became the basis of the modern, rational, capitalistic system.²

Max Weber studied the difference between oriental and occidental religions and cultures and their impact on socio-economic models. He noted that even though in China there had appeared some capitalistic models, China did not eventually adopt capitalism. He questioned why

1 John Calvin wrote *De Vita Hominis Christiani* [On the Life of the Christian Man] in 1550.

2 Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Yu Xiao and Chen Weigang. Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007.

capitalism did not develop in China. Weber looked into the influence of the Protestant ethic on the spirit of capitalism and how it could promote the formation and development of the capitalist system. This direction in his research laid the groundwork for his social theory.

Weber used a wealth of statistics to study the affinity between Protestant faith and economic behavior. He emphatically demonstrated that, dominated by Calvin's idea of "predestination", Christians were motivated to work hard and saw economic success as a sign of salvation. All the work in this world is to augment God's glory. Christians work hard and avoid hedonism. Temperance and abstinence are indispensable for the pursuit of a holy life and union with God. Protestantism thus promoted the scrupulous planning of one's life and career; at the same time, the exercise of frugality led to the accumulation of wealth which put the person in a favorable economic position. According to Weber, such work ethic based on Protestant belief constitutes the unique temperament of the middle class and gradually becomes the ethos known by later generations as the "spirit of capitalism." Christians work selflessly and lead a thrifty life that can substantiate their religious identity and social values. They see the fruits of their labor as blessings from God's providence and urge themselves to work industriously to serve the community and make offerings back to God. Accordingly, Weber believed that it is the Christian spirit that nurtures modern western capitalism and that Christianity was the driving force behind the long-term development of capitalism.

Marxism indicates that the economic base of society decides such superstructure as politics, law, and technology. Ideology and values are all deeply influenced by the development of productive forces, which in turn influences productivity and socio-economic development. Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation attested to the need for productivity development when European society transitioned from feudalism to capitalism and offered ideological justifications for the industrial revolution and the rise of nation-states.

Max Weber did not think that the spirit of capitalism relied solely on religious ethics. In fact, the purpose of religious reform was not to establish a capitalist economic system. Before the Reformation, commercial organizations with capitalist characteristics already existed throughout Europe. Weber's study sought to clarify how and to what extent the Christian faith as a social consciousness affected the formation and diffusion of the spirit of capitalism worldwide.

His sociological vision differs from that of Marx in understanding capitalism. Weber views capitalism, as inherent and essential to Western civilization – not just as an economic institution – encompassing every aspect of society and its interactions, including politics, economy, science, industry, technology, art and religion.

Weber’s “religious sociology” points out the fact that religious teachings and corresponding ethical ideas can promote the development and progress of secular societies. A society would be like a tree without roots if its faith-based morals and ethics are neglected.

The importance and feasibility of learning from Christian work ethic

After the implementation of economic reform and opening up, China adopted Western style “marketization”. For the majority of the general public, there is little interest in macro topics such as how the market economy can stimulate productivity and change social institutions. For them, business activities or any other type of work is nothing more than a means to prosperity and happiness. It is not inherent in Chinese culture that a transcendent meaning is given to work ethic. In essence, Chinese social consciousness is “humanistic” secularism, never trumped by religious ideology. Particularly after the May Fourth Movement, the Humanism of the Enlightenment and Historical Materialism as a political ideology were introduced to China. Religions, considered retrograde and absurd, were forced to be discarded.

The market economy has generated tremendous vitality in wealth creation. However, with multiple social problems arising, a closer look at the relationship between social and moral systems is needed to reflect upon the positive influence of religions. Although people – driven by “realism” and “the supremacy of interests” – tend to look at the social value of religions from the perspective of functionalism and focus on their economic contributions, actions to restore the positive image of religions are still merited.

The distinctive feature of socialist work ethic is its emphasis on collectivism and serving people. Equally important are self-denial, seeking the common good, honesty, integrity, and becoming well-off through hard work. However, it is precisely because of its lack of spiritual power, in a religious sense, that results in anomie and professional

misconduct. It is thus worthwhile to revisit some commonsensical ideas as follows:

First, a vocation is not only a means of making a living, but also an important support for finding the meaning of life. Religious explorations and experiences play an irreplaceable role in the search for self-knowledge and in identifying the purpose of life. Work ethic is the most important way to practice faith-based values. A believer of true faith will undoubtedly demonstrate his values in his professional life.

Second, work ethic does not consist of abstract principles or empty talk; rather, it is shown in daily duties. Moral codes without faith can easily be manipulated by those with vested interests and power and reduced to a self-beautification label for profiteers.

Third, the pursuit of monetary gains is equivalent to a game of good and evil in human nature. In the ancient Chinese maxim “a gentleman makes money in the right way”, what does “way” refer to? A heavenly way or a code of conduct? In traditional Chinese culture, the Way is not a concept with religious connotation. The Way, in the Chinese sense, is seen as the projection and reflection of self-awareness (of sages, monarchs, heroes and noble men). It is impossible to derive, from the Way, ethics with binding force and deterrence. This is exactly why outside the purview of law, human beings do not keep their desires in check. Without the fear of God, people are capable of doing all kinds of hideous things.

Any work ethic has its own development trajectory. To overhaul a system, it is necessary to trace its historical origin. Religion, the longest existing element of human civilization, is the basis of social ethics. Without faith-based work ethic that is transcendent, there will not be deterrence to utilitarianism and the prevalence of dereliction even if there are strict laws and enforcement measures.

China is a country of religious freedom. Even though no single religion is playing a dominant role in society, social awareness and the public code of conduct are indisputably subject to the subtle influence of religions. Weber’s thesis provides a strong reference to China’s economic and social development. Reasons for the necessity and feasibility of advocating and practicing Christian work ethic are as follows:

First, Christian work ethic is essentially universally applicable and conducive to the long term development of the Chinese economy, linking it to the international economic order.

The fast-growing market economy in China is promoting social transition. Max Weber demonstrated that the Protestant ethic boosted “the spirit of capitalism”: self-restraint, hard work for wealth, abidance in deeds, fulfillment of duties and the willingness to sacrifice are the ethical foundations of modern capitalism. Such qualities are not necessarily inherent in the Chinese social ethic. Scholars have pointed out that mainstream Confucian ideology over-values fame and fortune and lacks altruistic self-denial that is evident in Christian ethic. The Confucian moral code advocates that human desire needs to be removed so as to adhere to the Way. Seek righteousness instead of profit. These ideas, distant from rationalism, restrict the development of the market economy in China.

Second, Christian work ethic emphasizes individual freedom which is conducive to innovation, creativity and a vigorous market economy.

Chinese society has long been severely affected by feudal authoritarianism that repressed individual freedom. The planned economy, implemented after 1949 and based on collective ownership, emphasized the supremacy of the state and the precedence of a group over individuals in economic distribution. Therefore, individual values were much downplayed, resulting in a low level of creativity and innovation. The Protestant work ethic, in contrast, emphasizes working for God and honoring God with professional achievements, which manifest predestinated salvation and the grace of being chosen by God. Individual autonomy and creativity at work are valued and this type of rationalization is the profound reason for the blooming of the market economy. In recent years, with the emergence of a large number of private businesses in China, individual values are robustly promoted.

Third, practicing Christian work ethic enhances the impact of faith, substantiates the sociological significance of religion as the superstructure of society, showcases the inclusiveness of Chinese civilization and strengthens the soft power of culture. A worthy effort would be to publicly recognize and commend Christians who have made outstanding social contributions.

There are tens of millions of Christians in China. Many among this huge group of believers make outstanding contributions to society. They deserve public recognition without having to veil their Christian identity and downplay the indisputable link between their social contribution and the Christian faith of “being patriotic, loving God and benefiting

others.” It helps to recognize the spiritual alternative that Christianity offers in meeting social needs, the efforts that Christian believers make to actualize personal and social value, and the positive and identifiable role Christianity plays in social education and harmony. Such recognition would help promote the acceptability of Christianity and showcase the broad-mindedness of Chinese culture.

Conclusion

Christian work ethic is the quintessence of human social activities. Western capitalistic countries have built a set of well-developed social operating mechanisms with a strong capacity for self-correction and high efficiency. These mechanisms are good examples of advanced civilizations. We hope, in the foreseeable future, our country can build a new-type of socialistic society on the foundation of a powerful economy, rigorous legal infrastructure, and fully-developed ethics. How would Christian ethics play a dynamic role in the social cause of building a bright future? Let us wait with anticipation and make concerted efforts to bring it about.

Church-based Philanthropy in China: Observations from the field

Duan Qi

In surveys conducted in different regions of China over the last few years, I have noticed that churches are working on a variety of charitable causes. Local churches (including the house churches) make financial donations and believers even take the initiative to donate blood. Many churches work with local neighborhood committees to provide material and financial support to impoverished families in the community. In addition to financial help, some go the extra mile by providing psychological support to children in families with a member suffering from prolonged illnesses. In some areas, churches or youth associations help communities to enrich the cultural lives of their residents. There are also activities for migrant workers and their children to help them integrate into the city. I have also been to church-run elder care homes, nurseries for disabled children, and leprosy villages to see how nuns serve these people. I am deeply touched by all these charitable activities. Here I would like to share some examples.

Leprosariums

Firstly, Catholic sisters give attentive care to lepers. I have visited two leprosy villages, one in Moxi, Sichuan Province and the other in Huizhou, Guangdong Province. In Moxi, there used to be a leprosarium run by missionaries reputed to have been very successful before 1949. The missionaries were later expelled and the leprosarium ceased to operate. Left at the bottom of the mountain was a so-called hospital for skin diseases. Occasionally, doctors from this hospital went up the mountain

and brought medicine to lepers who had remained in the leprosarium. Limited help was given by older church members in the neighborhood but essentially, these patients had to rely on themselves. In 2010, the diocese invited five sisters from Xi'an to this village, and since then, the lives of the lepers have greatly improved. The nuns, not intimidated by the patients' rotting fingers, toes, and noses, cleansed them everyday and cooked for them. To avoid cross-contamination, the nuns washed their clothes separately. Yet, to respect the patients' self-esteem, the nuns wore no gloves when in contact with their patients, despite the risk of being infected. What was particularly commendable is that many of the patients were Tibetans and even Lamas. The sisters respected them all, including the statues they hung on the walls, to cite the nuns' words, "as long as the patients are happy." During our visit, we asked the patients whether the nuns were good, and all of them said yes sincerely and earnestly. Likewise, we were deeply moved by the great love demonstrated by these sisters. A female colleague of mine was so touched by the good deed that she was completely in tears from the outset of our visit and eventually, when we left the village, she had swollen eyes.

It was the same situation in Huizhou. The head nun was from Spain and had been staying in the village for nearly a decade. There was great harmony in the village and all the patients cared for one other. While some were still healing, many of them had already been cured. Some patients' faces had turned blue and looked horrendous due to medication. The village was said to have been built in the late 1950s by the government to separate lepers from healthy people. Patients from different villages were brought here. Occasionally, doctors came to dispense medicine but they would leave immediately, for fear of being infected. The patients were left to themselves and many of them gave up hope. They fought for trifles and the environment was chaotic. Ten years ago, a Spanish nun, called Sister Luo, came here together with another nun. Later, a group of Chinese nuns arrived here to serve. Through the nuns' efforts not only have the patients been well treated but the whole village has taken on an entirely different look. Guided by a priest, I visited Sister Luo and saw the current conditions of the patients. Many patients are now Catholics and they have regular gatherings. A couple of priests sometimes come to the village to celebrate Mass with the villagers. Now patients feel very happy to live here. All these changes

are the result of the nuns' loving efforts. A sister even lost her life, swept away by the mountain flood, when she was accompanying her patient to the hospital.

Church-run orphanages for disabled babies

Secondly, the church-run orphanages for disabled babies provide care to children with cerebral palsy. I visited two orphanages for disabled children. One is run by the nuns of the Consulata Missionary of Henan Jingang Catholic Church and the other by consecrated virgins in Xianxian County, Renqiu City, Hebei Province. Initially, the church had no intentions of establishing orphanages. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, parents began to abandon their infants suffering from cerebral palsy by secretly placing them in front of the church gates. The church, of course, could not bear to see these children die. At first, the abandoned babies were adopted by church members. However, as the number of abandoned children increased, the church could not overburden its members and had to set up homes for them. The establishment of orphanages was far from easy. Some local governments did not permit the operation of an orphanage without official and legal approval. Some even sued the home, though the court was not always willing to enforce the ruling on the orphanage. The Jingang Home for Disabled Babies was temporarily closed in 2012 in the wake of a fire that had burned down a private orphanage in Kaifeng and killed several people. The Nanyang government felt very nervous and decided to shut down the home for disabled babies for fear that it would not be able to comply with fire safety standards. More than 50 babies were then sent to another home. However, a dozen of these babies were returned to the church because they had cerebral palsy and were the most difficult to care for. The nuns then took over and continued to raise the children. Over the years, people in the neighborhood have kept sending such children to the church because it is highly trusted. Now, at the home for disabled babies, the number of children with cerebral palsy has grown to more than thirty. A priest from Jingang told me that the nuns work very hard, feeding the children three times a day, giving them baths, and tending to those stricken by illnesses. In Renqiu, when I saw how the sisters fed children with cerebral palsy, I began to realize that such a simple thing, considered so ordinary for most people, could be so overwhelming for these children.

Children with cerebral palsy usually have problems with swallowing, so the nuns and consecrated virgins need to feed them with extra care and patience. These children may eat and throw up at the same time, so feeding them is a daunting task. The sisters were always encouraging, praising, and patiently waiting on them so that they could eat slowly and well. Without the strong power of faith or love, it would be unendurable for someone to work even for a day. No wonder the Nanyang Welfare Home returned these most-difficult-to-feed children to the Jingang Church.

Church-run elder care homes

Thirdly, the church-run elder care homes provide care to widowed or impoverished senior citizens. I have visited several church-run elder care homes in the past few years. Some of them are run with great vitality whereas others are “dead in the water”. The Xian County Elderly Home impressed me most because it is committed to taking care of seniors who are widowed or childless.

This elder care home can be seen as a parallel unit to the Renqiu Home for Disabled Babies because it is run by the same group of consecrated virgins, whose number total only nine. Since there are more and more lonely old people in an aging society, under the leadership of Dean Hao, the virgins initiated the idea of setting up a home for the aged to help alleviate the problem. They mainly want to help male old people who are childless and hence easily rendered lonely, impoverished and pathetic. In particular, elderly men with mental illness living alone in rural areas have the most miserable lives. At the same time, some of the boys with disability have outgrown the residence at the home for disabled children. It would be more convenient for them to live in the new residence at the elder care home to receive continued care.

The initiative for setting up an elder care home was much supported by the Xian County government and the home was soon put in place. The nine consecrated virgins were split into two teams, one to serve at the home for disabled children and the other the elder care home.

Of the 110 male and 7 female senior citizens living in this elder care home, 90% are from rural areas. Many of them never married because

of poverty or mental problems. Among the residents, 65% have mental problems: some are mentally impaired, some suffer from dementia and over ten people suffer from hemiplegia. In addition, several of the dozen boys transferred here from the home for disabled children need round-the-clock care. Thus, the consecrated virgins have additionally hired six families to help at the elder care home because of the large number of care-receivers. The care-giving families live at the home. Husbands take care of male old people and wives cook. Five of the six families are church members. The family that is not a church member willingly works here because they themselves have a child with cerebral palsy. Thus, they can take care of their own child and other children at the same time. Since these families all stay at the home, they can provide relatively stable care to the residents. The elder care home has become so famous that even people from Xi'an city are sent to this home.

I have a very good impression of this elder care home. Firstly, the rooms are clean and tidy. Two people share a room, which is relatively spacious. This home provides better care compared to other elder care homes in general. For instance, the food is better. Old people are reluctant to leave once they live here. Secondly, the elderly here are very active and full of energy. The dean said that her principle is to encourage senior citizens to do whatever they like as long as they are willing and able. For instance, some want to raise pigs, chickens, sheep or grow vegetables and flowers. She would try her best to meet their needs. When there is actual output, the home will purchase the produce and give some remuneration. In this way, the seniors here are physically sound, feel alive and enjoy a sense of meaningfulness; better food can also be provided at the home. It is a win-win situation. Ardent church members in this home voluntarily organize prayers three times a day and also attract non-believers to participate. In addition, there are diverse leisure activities for the elderly; they can watch TV, play chess or mahjong. An atmosphere of reciprocity permeates this home. According to the dean, those who are still agile would happily push those who are in wheelchairs to the canteen when meals are ready. In short, this home is dramatically different from other elder care homes in general. The biggest difference might be that people here live a fulfilling and enjoyable life, unlike those in other homes that are dull and silent.

These touching examples triggered deeper reflections

First, attitudes toward an individual life. The clients of the above-mentioned charitable work are the lowest in social class and the most marginalized in society. They are lepers, disabled children and the elderly who are childless, poor and sick. These people have no social status and it is impossible for them to give any financial returns to society or people who serve them. On the contrary, the community must give them extra care and attention; otherwise, their lives can easily end. Many in society feel disgusted at these people. Even their parents or relatives want to push them out of their families. In fact, many disabled children are abandoned by their parents; lepers are rejected by their own families; and old people who are childless, ill and poor are despised by their relatives. For example, an old man from the Xi'an County Elderly Home returned to his own village several times to visit his nephew because he missed his family. However, each time he went home, his nephew and his wife would drive him away, hitting him with a stick. In contrast, sisters and consecrated virgins treat these rejected and abandoned people lovingly and old people can enjoy human dignity.

I asked the nuns and virgins what propelled them to do this every day? They told me that they rely on the power of faith. Christians believe that everyone is equal before God, and there is no life that is superior or inferior. God has a reason for allowing those people to come into this world, and their lives should be respected. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." The nuns and virgins did exactly what Jesus taught them. The purpose of life is to serve and help other people live better, especially those disadvantaged people, children with cerebral palsy, lepers, poor and sick old people, whose lives do not make much sense in others' eyes. In the process of serving others and contributing love, the sisters obtain a true life and hence their spiritual growth. That is why they can live in joy every day even though they are often tired and facing the risk of being infected.

Second, what is real evangelism? This is another question that keeps me thinking.

I have encountered all kinds of Christians in my research. Some Christians, upon knowing that I am not baptized, change their attitude

instantly and become so distant and indifferent that I cannot continue my interview with them, though these cases are rare. What is more common is that when some Christians know that I am not a Christian, they would start preaching to me eloquently and interrupting my interview. Some pray silently for me during the interview, asking the Lord to make me a Christian. Once a church minister even carried a basin to baptize me without asking for my consent. I did not know whether to laugh or cry; I could only tell him that I did not want to be baptized at that moment. Some Christian friends were up front and told me to be baptized as early as possible because they did not want a good person like me to go to hell.

A considerable number of these Christians have mentioned that their purpose of charity is to evangelize and draw more people into Christianity. This utilitarian purpose led me to doubt whether their actions could be truly viewed as charity or philanthropy.

To put it bluntly, these methods of recruiting people may fail the original goals and even play the contrary role. One of my students has adverse feelings towards Christianity because of these attempts at “forced” recruitment. In addition, some Christians consider themselves superior in their spirituality and treat both Buddhism and folk beliefs as idolatries. I also find this repelling because I do not sense any love but only bigotry.

There is no way that I can be moved by the above-mentioned preaching and recruitment, nor the attacks on other religions. I can only be touched by true Christian acts inspired by the love for Christ. I was deeply moved when I saw the nuns, without any utilitarian purpose, serve the lepers and children with cerebral palsy. I saw the love of Jesus. When I saw that the nuns were serving Buddhist believers without discrimination and respecting the statues of Buddhas without proclaiming Buddhism as an idolatry, I felt the tolerant and accommodating spirit of Christians.

That is why I think about what is true evangelism. Is it the former or the latter? Many Protestants nowadays believe that the grand mission is to attract as many as possible to Christianity, including converting Muslims. Few are truly using the Word of the Lord and His love to change the world into a more harmonious and beautiful place. I think this is a misinterpretation of the Way of Jesus. True evangelism is to live like Jesus and to bear witness to His Word, so that people can be truly convinced to dedicate themselves to make life better for others. Those nuns serve others out of love. I think this is how God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Third, the key to church-run charities is persistence. Love can resolve conflicts, induce the understanding of all parties and promote the cause to the next level.

Before 1949, Christian charity work enjoyed much vigor. I have summarized six fields of church-run charities mentioned in the book “The Christian Occupation of China” (published in 1922): education, healthcare, disaster relief, agro-industry, provision to those in need (including literacy programs for adults and children, accommodation for women workers, promotion of women’s sports and prohibition of gambling), service provided to special groups of people (creating the written system for ethnic minorities in Southwest China, training boatmen, rickshaw drivers, etc.) Schools and hospitals were the fastest developing sector. According to the figures published in *The Christian Occupation of China*, there were 962 church-run primary schools, 291 middle schools¹ and 14 universities² in 1919. Nearly 200,000 students were enrolled in Christian schools. In 1919, there were 326 Christian hospitals, 244 pharmacies in China and the number of inpatients each year reached 144,500³. In addition, as early as 1915, the church opened its first Chinese tuberculosis hospital in Kuling. In 1919, a total of 30 leprosariums, shelters, relief houses, leprosy villages and residential areas for leprosy patients were set up nationwide. Only 2 of them were established by non-Christians; the rest were all run by the church. A 1921 survey showed that one-third of the country’s medical education programs were administered by the church. There were 27 medical schools in China at the time, of which nine were run by the church. Among them, Peking Union Medical College Hospital was the highlight of Chinese medical colleges and universities, and also a “model of Chinese medical education”.

These figures show that nowadays church investment of money and manpower in charitable causes has been considerably scaled down compared to the period before 1949. This is because religions were negatively viewed in China after 1949 and the church was not allowed to set up hospitals and educational institutes, and other charitable programs. However, after the reform and opening up, the situation has greatly improved. This is partly related to policy change and partly related

1 The Investigation Council of China Continuation Committee, *The Christian Occupation of China*, China Social Sciences Press, 1987. P 892.

2 Ibid., p 937.

3 Ibid., p 713.

to the social recognition won by the church with its silent dedication and the spirit of genuine love in helping those in need. The stories of Jingang Home for Disabled Children and Renqiu Home are the best proof. The Jingang government once shut down the home for disabled children; however they were taught a lesson when they discovered that other welfare homes refused to take in children with cerebral palsy and church-run charity organizations were more reliable than their secular counterparts. The same thing happened in Renqiu, where the consecrated virgins changed the way the local government felt about the home for disabled children and transformed opposition into support. All these changes prove that love can gradually resolve social misunderstandings and gain the church social recognition and trust.

In fact, it is because of the good practices of the church that local governments are increasingly willing to encourage church-run charity projects. In some areas, education projects for groups with special needs are particularly given to the church to run, such as those for children with cerebral palsy, autism or mental retardation; churches in some other areas are allowed to open schools for children of migrant workers, and deaf, mute and blind children.

It is the same case with hospitals. Private hospitals are allowed and so are church-run hospitals. In some dioceses, nuns have opened ophthalmic hospitals. Many churches have mobilized doctors among believers to form mobile medical teams to work in areas that lack medical service and medicine, bringing tremendous help to the local people. Some church-based foundations are specialized in helping special needs groups. For example, Jinde Charities in Hebei Province funded cataract surgeries for ten thousand poor patients.

As Chinese society is increasingly aging, the government fully supports church-run homes for the elderly and senior care services in homes. The charitable cause of the church has been steadily progressing in the past three decades since China's reform and opening up. The church has seen even faster growth in this regard specially since the six ministries of the central government issued a guideline in 2012 to support philanthropy by religious communities.

“Retrospect and Prospect of Christian Philanthropy in China” published in early 2013 in *Chinese Religions* summed up social charity activities undertaken by today's Chinese Christian communities, as follows:

At present, the Chinese Christian Church is mainly engaged in the following areas of social welfare activities: healthcare, care of senior citizens and children, poverty alleviation, school aid, disaster relief, public facilities construction and environmental protection.

I. Health care. The church initiates medical and healthcare services by setting up hospitals, clinics, and all kinds of rehab centers. Christian doctors are organized to offer medical advice on consultation tours. Church clinics provide free physical examinations and medical consultations, arrange healthcare talks from time to time and publicize AIDS prevention and drug ban. So far, the church has established 37 hospitals, 10 rehabilitation institutions and 4 drug rehab centers. It is roughly estimated that the total investment reached RMB 8 million yuan and 650,000 people were benefited.

II. Elder care and child care. Churches are engaged in elder care and child care services such as running elderly homes and orphanages. The Chinese Christian Church has opened 180 elderly homes in 21 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in China with a total of 12,546 beds, benefiting 32,838 senior citizens.

III. Public facilities and environmental protection. According to a preliminary estimate, there are altogether 129 schools of various types and 167 water conservancy facilities built in 13 provinces and 1 autonomous region, with a total investment of 94,600,800 yuan. Churches all over China have a total input in the promotion of environmental protection amounting to 218,500 yuan. The church has been actively involved in a gamut of public welfare activities that promote local development, including road and bridge construction, water conservancy, well drilling, methane projects and precise poverty aid.

IV. Donation and fund-raising. These can be divided into emergency assistance and regular assistance. Emergency assistance is mainly for disaster relief. For example, in 2008, the Christian community donated more than 150 million yuan to the quake-hit Wenchuan; In 2009, more than 10 million yuan was raised to help the quake-stricken Yushu in Qinghai Province. Regular donations are mainly to help disabled people, poverty alleviation, and school aid. According to an incomplete estimate, over the past five years, more than 200 million yuan has been raised by the churches throughout the country and the number of beneficiaries has reached 680,000.⁴

A few years have passed since 2013 and church philanthropy has become increasingly well-funded, which indicates that church-

4 “Retrospect and Prospect of Christian Philanthropy in China” published in *Chinese Religions*, 2013.

run charitable causes are gaining more and more support from both government and society and the road ahead is opening wider and wider.

Fourth, local governments need to have a more open attitude toward religious charities and avoid leaving a lingering fear in the heart of good Samaritans. Only when everyone is exerting positive energy can this country have a future.

Although the government on the whole is becoming more and more supportive of church-run charities, I have also heard that in some regions, churches have encountered government obstruction in charity undertakings, especially in Hebei and Henan. Local governments do not allow churches to run kindergartens so they have had to stop the operations of kindergartens that had been started. In other regions, conflicts have arisen because of philanthropic undertakings and churches are becoming extra-discreet with their projects. I have tried to interview one religious order on their charity work but my request for an interview was rejected because they worried it might bring publicity and draw government attention that could lead to the shutting down of their projects. A church member once said to me that “we do not want to make a name for what we do; we just hope the government won’t interfere with us”.

Charity for public welfare is meant to be great because it gives full play to the positive energy of the community and needs to be vigorously promoted by the government. However, some local governments that are influenced by the leftist tendency are afraid of the expanding social influence of the church. That is why instead of supporting church charities, they set numerous obstacles. One cannot but feel sad because people who want to do good have to do it in a secretive way due to the worries in their hearts. Therefore, I think it is imperative for local governments to study the guideline issued by the six ministries of the central government to remove bias against religions, encourage the charity work of religious organizations and benefit the country and people.

All in all, government support of church-run charities is much needed so that the religious community can have a bigger platform for social service. The Christian community should carry forward the spirit of Christ’s love, remove the utilitarian mentality, truly serve those in need, help resolve social problems and contribute to the building of a harmonious and beautiful society in China.

Catholic Church-run Orphanages in Late Ming and Qing Dynasties: Experiences, Characteristics and Inspiration for Contemporary Charity

Kang Zhijie

The term “foundling” refers to a child abandoned for a wide variety of reasons. Different from parentless orphans, foundlings were quite common in the late Qing Dynasty (c. 1851-1911) as reflected in a folk rhyme in Hebei at the beginning of the 20th century:

*Pa and ma, I do have,
Yet the church is where I live.*

Charitable institutions were set up by the Catholic Churches in the late Ming and Qing dynasties under different names, such as “nursery”, “home of benevolence”, or “orphanage”. In fact, children living in them were mostly abandoned infants (baby girls in particular) though a few of them were orphaned. This paper discusses experiences and characteristics of these Catholic Church-run institutions and the inspiration we can draw from them for contemporary church-run social services.

1. Overview

1.1 A presence from late Ming Dynasty (1573-1644) to late Qing Dynasty (1851-1911)

Adopting abandoned young children and housing them in institutions was a key charity effort of Catholic churches in these historical periods. With the approval of the provincial authorities, the very first Church-run

orphanage was initiated by a Jesuit missionary, Alfonso Vagnoni, in 1634 in Jiangzhou, Shanxi Province in northern China.¹

As the establishment of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) gradually took root, the stability restored in many regions provided favorable conditions for charitable work. As shown in the following excerpt from a letter written by Joseph de Prémare, a Jesuit Missionary, child adoption by Catholic churches was scaling up at that time.

*Those orphanages mainly take girls who are more likely to be deserted by their parents when they feel incapable of raising too many siblings. Parents hold less pity for girls for they are more difficult to deal with and to survive on their own. So we intend to look after them according to religious norms until a certain age and train them in skills suitable for their gender and personality. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, they are put at the service of Christian ladies who like ordering people about, but dislike idol-worshippers, or alternatively in convents to be nuns or sisters...*²

In the mid-Qing Dynasty (c. 1776-1839), after the ban on Catholic evangelization was imposed, churches shifted their focus to the countryside, particularly in Sichuan in Southwestern China, where consecrated virgins took on the duty of adopting abandoned infants and baptizing dying young children. But those charitable works could not be scaled up until the Opium Wars (1839 - 1842 and 1856 - 1860) had ended and restrictions on Catholicism were lifted.

As more Daughters of Charity reached inland regions in China, more and more charitable institutions sprang up all over the country under the protection of the Treaties. Due to limited space in this article, only a few are listed here as examples.

Xiwanzi (today's Zhangjiakou City), north of the Great Wall, was inhabited by a large number of Catholic followers at that time. A nursery set up there in 1836 grew to house 223 infants ten years later. It was the first one at the frontier.³

1 See Thomas F. Ryan. S.J., *Jesuits in China*. Trans. Tao Weiyi, Kuangchi Cultural Group (Taiwan) and Catholic Truth Society (Hong Kong), 1965:92.

2 Jean-Baptiste Du Halde. Letter of F. Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare to F. Charles Le Gobien on November 1, 1700 in Fuzhou, Jiangxi in Vol. 1, *Lettres Edifiantes Et Curieuses, Écrites Par Des Missionnaires De La Compagnie De Jesus*. (A Collection of Letters from Christian Missionaries on China: Recollections on China.) Trans. Into Chinese by Zheng Dedi et. al. Daxiang Press, January 2001:154.

3 Mgr. C. Van Melckebeke. *En Monglie: L'action sociale de l'Eglise Catholique*. Trans. Fu Mingyuan. Taiwan: Huaming Books, 1965:47.

Suiyuan, one of four Northern provinces in the Qing Dynasty, and located in central Inner Mongolia today, was another region that witnessed the rapid propagation of Catholicism. The adoption and rearing of foundlings was the key working area of churches there. Missionary literature shows the following:

Catholic Churches in the County of Salaqi of Suiyuan Province and others have managed orphanages, taking in many abandoned young children. We visited one of them today as recommended by Mr. Yu. It is quite a scene in the village of Balatuo. The three Belgian priests there extended much hospitality to us. We were shown to the classrooms and dormitories, eight and three respectively. Dormitories for boys and girls are separate. There are 110 boys and 90 girls, all supported by the Church. Besides, the Church also hosts about 200 day students from neighboring villages, the youngest being only four or five years old. The number of day students goes up to more than 400 in winter. All are educated by sisters from the Church on language and other subjects. Children with disabilities or health problems stay in another area.

The Church and its vicinity look very tidy and clean, the dormitories in particular. Girls cook, clean and sew on their own, the best and far-sighted arrangement we think. Villagers living outside of the Great Wall are affected by grave poverty and ruthless tradition. Economic straits often force parents to leave their fourth child in the wild and to the mercy of his/her destiny. Catholic Churches used to collect those little beings around. Later, young children are sent here directly. From the year of 1900 to 1930, 2,671 children have been admitted in total.

In the two counties of Salaqi and Tuoketuo, there are 67 churches, two of which are large. Therefore the number of children in them is estimated to reach tens of thousands. Even though some changes have been taking place in child rearing among local villagers, infant abandonment is still present. This scene put all of us in deep meditation! Emperors in China all have long held that people in the region outside of the Great Wall, once inhabited by Tartars and Huns, do not think highly of education and industry. Idle and poor, they do not feel any pity in throwing their own children away. It is the foreign missionaries who adopt tens of thousands of those foundlings and offer them support until they marry. What respectable virtue and deed! At those frontier towns, they are fully committed to raising and nurturing those poor little souls. Putting the issue of religious propagation aside, the benefits brought to our people are huge indeed. We hope those in civilian education will launch field studies here, and those with strength and resources will follow suit. It will yield a far-reaching impact on the future of our nation.⁴

4 Commitment of Catholic Churches in Suiyuan to Charity: an inspection report along Peking-Baotou railway, *Tianjin Ta Kung Pao*, 23 December. Cited from Issue 1, Book 2, *Wo Cun Magazine* (My words will come to no end, Luke, 21:33). Retrieved from Microform Center, National Library of China, 2006:686.

A number of Catholic villages emerged outside of the Great Wall, most of which owned their own orphanages. Those in Sandaohe, Zaishenggong, Xiaoqiaopan and Ershisi Qindi have been quite influential.

Most adopted children had physical disabilities. Children adopted by *Sanshenggong* Church had names like Zaibanzi (one comes with the other), Sannuzi (the third girl), Zhang Qiaoqiao (a crafty girl), Er Banlian (a large face), Lancun (left by Lan), Zhantou (a big head), Sixiazi (the fourth blind), Erdatou (the second big head), Sandatou (the third big head). And those in Dukou Church had names like Zhanglongzi (a deaf child), Lenggedan (blockhead), Gao'er (the second child), Sudangzhu (straight like a pole), Zhan Meijie (good-looking girl), Yazi (a mute child), Wang Chouchou (not good-looking), Wulu Jiya (possibly meaning holy offering), and Maoxiazhi (a blind child).⁵ As indicated by these names, these disabilities must have been treated with utmost care and nurture from the adopting churches.

Charity was also one of the focal areas of work of the Divine Word Missions in the south of Shandong in Eastern China. Bishop Theodore Schu summarized the achievements of his predecessor, Bishop Augustin Henninghaus as follows, "Judging from Bishop Henninghaus' initiation of those charity organizations including a leprosy center, several homes for the elderly, a nursery for disabled children, orphanages, hospitals, and clinics, we can say that he must have been fully engaged in various charity works. No other Catholic churches in China can be mentioned in the same breath as that in Yanzhou in terms of scale."⁶

In Shanghai, the Xujiahui Orphanage, the model of Catholic Charities in the Qing Dynasty, was originally located inside the city and had to be moved to Xujiahui in the outskirts to adapt to the soaring admission of children.

The Nursery was moved to Xujiahui in the year 1864 (the third year of Emperor Tongzhi's Reign) by R. P. Joseph Gonnet, head of the Society of Jesus in Jiangnan (b. 1815 and joined the Society of Jesus in 1840, and stationed in Shanghai, south of Yangtze River in 1844, and appointed as vicar apostolic in Jiangnan Shanghai, and that of South-Eastern Chi-li after 1866). The rented pawn house inside the Small South Gate (Xiao Nan Men) turned out to be too small to host

5 Yi Ren, A Brief Review of Catholic Schools in Dengkou County in *Book 6, Collections of Cultural and Historical Literature of Dengkou County*, 78.

6 Fischer, Hermann. *Augustin Henninghaus - 53 Jahre Missionar und Missionsbischof*. Trans. Leopold Leeb. Missionary Sisters Oblates of the Holy Family (OHF-Taiwan). Taiwan, 2006:281.

*so many orphans. It had become a threat to children's health and brought many inconveniences. Hence the decision to move it to a two-storey building, 150 meters south of the St. Ignatius Cathedral in Xujiahui, about 10 miles from the western city gate. Each of the two floors has seven rooms.*⁷

The development of Xujiahui Orphanage represented the ideology and characteristics of Catholic charity. "R. P. Emil Chevreunil led the Xujiahui Cathedral as well as the Tushanwan Jesuit Orphanage. On his behalf, Brother Leopaldus Deleuze was stationed in Tushanwan as the acting manager. That was a time when most provinces in the Qing Dynasty were worn and torn by warfare. The abandonment of young children was common as most poor people were starving. More than 300 children collected by churches were housed in Tushanwan, half of whom were originally from Caijiawan."⁸

In Shanghai dialect, children in orphanages were colloquially called "tangnan" (kids from church orphanages), a scornful address reflecting the great misfortune those children had suffered. That is also the reason why the Catholic Church greatly emphasized education and social skill formation for them.

*"Tang'nan" as a derogatory address was even thought of so lightly by members of the local Catholic church that priests in Tushanwan received instructions to try every means to make the orphanage grow. That was why another priest was dispatched here... Soon the number of priests in charge of different sections reached five or six. Shortly afterwards, the Society of Annunciation was created by P. Laraphinus Speranza in 1885 (the eleventh year of Emperor Guangxu's Reign). Being a compassionate and venerated personage, P. Laraphinus Speranza applied his love for Virgin Mary to the children in the Orphanage. Whenever he noticed any promising character, he spared no efforts in educating him spiritually. His devotion made the Society a magnet drawing quite a few followers. After the decease of P. Laraphinus Speranza, P. Simon Kiong, the successor, was equally committed to its development. The orphanage took a brand new look a few years later. When the children grew up, they became very well-known when Emperor Guangxu's Reign reached the 20th year. Young men in Tushanwan received propositions from parents in need of good sons-in-law or foster sons. Whatever were the needs, once they were met, they were given the best wishes.*⁹

7 Nicolas Standaert and Ad Dudink. eds., *The Orphanage Managed by Jiangnan Society of Jesus in The Chinese Christian Texts from the Zikawei Library*. Vol 5, p 2490, Taipei: Ricci Institute, 1996.

8 Ibid., 2496.

9 Ibid., 2593-2595.

One of the nurseries with a long history and large numbers of adoptions was the Holy Child Home in Madao Street, Chengdu, Sichuan. Vicar apostolic Annet-Théophile Pinchon spent 1,000 *liang* (taels) of silver on a property at number 4-77 Madao Street in Chengdu and built a nursery there. Originally called a receiving center, it was later renamed the Holy Child Home. In 1903, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary was assigned by Bishop Jacques-Victor-Marius Rouchouse to manage the orphanage that was only for girls. Among the 510 girls, more than 200 were put under the foster care of sisters and brothers of the church. The number of adoptions increased to 1,528 by 1934. Baptized and converted to Catholicism, the children started to learn scripture-chanting at the age of three to four, and lace-making, laundry, cooking, water-carrying, baking, milking and feeding livestock at seven to eight. They generally married at the age of fourteen. Quite infrequently, there would be one or two girls being admitted to schools. This orphanage stood out in Sichuan as the one with the longest history and the largest number of adoptions. From 1888 to 1949, as many as 120,000 infants and young girls were adopted there.¹⁰

Though great achievements had been made in nurturing and cultivating foundlings by Catholic Church-run orphanages, the lack of knowledge about them in Chinese society led to many misunderstandings and conflicts. Subsequently quite a few violent incidents broke out as a result of baseless rumors, for instance, that infants adopted by Catholic-Church run orphanages were often “mutilated” so their eyes could be used as medicinal ingredients.¹¹

In ancient China, there used to be a ruthless practice of using limbs or internal organs of people as ingredients for “expensive” cures. Catholic Church-run charities were often blamed for these heinous crimes by those against the faith. To clarify the situation, the French Embassy issued a diplomatic note as follows:

10 See Book 2 of *Catholicism in Chengdu* (published September 1987) in Liu Jiexi et. al. (eds.) *Catholicism in Sichuan*. Sichuan Publishing Group and Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 2009:478.

11 *Ciyuan* (encyclopedic Chinese phrase dictionary) defines *caishengzhaige* (literally meaning “to hurt lives through cutting and mutilation”) as a witchcraft in ancient China using human body parts like ears, eyes, or internal organs as ingredients for medicinal cures. As a result of misunderstandings by some Chinese, sacraments like baptism, and anointing of the sick used to be closely associated with this vicious and cruel practice.

*Whenever young children were seen abandoned, the Catholic Church often takes them in as it could not tolerate leaving them at the disposition of wild dogs and hogs. As they grow older, they receive training in appropriate skills. They leave the orphanage after getting married. This has long been a tradition of Catholic charity and not a recent invention. What missionaries have been fully committed to is to use donations from the West to benefit China: acts of kindness and generosity, in fact. There is absolutely no reason for them to stage such vicious and cruel mutilating acts.*¹²

1.2 The Tianjin Church Incident: Impact on foundling adoption policy and regulations issued by the Zongli Yamen of Qing Dynasty.

In April and May of 1870 (the ninth year of Emperor Tongzhi's Reign), a series of child abductions broke out. Escalated by the deaths of adopted children in some Catholic orphanages, rumors circulated that those children had been kidnapped by Catholic nuns and were to be used in witchcraft. Enraged by this, thousands of angry Chinese stood outside the church, stormed and sacked it, killing 10 nuns, 2 priests, 2 officials from the French Consulate, 2 French compatriots, 3 Russian compatriots, and more than 30 Chinese Catholics. The Church was destroyed.

It is the rumors that directly led to the bloodshed. "In this fertile soil, every kind of mischievous tale takes root downward, and in due time, bears its bitter fruits, as many foreigners in China know to their cost."¹³

Conflicts between civilians and Catholics had their origins in different rumors about abduction, physical mutilation, sexual abuse and religious "curses" (prayers in Latin). Many rumors were closely related to Church-run orphanages. To prevent further chaos after the Tianjin Church Incident, the Zongli Yamen issued an 8-article regulation on the policy and management of church-run orphanages.

12 French diplomatic note issued on August 22, 1862. *Archived Documents of Zongli Yamen with the Imperial Order*, Book One, *Affairs and Incidents of Religions from the 10th year of Xianfeng to the 5th year of Tongzhi*, the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1981:8. Similar descriptions were also found in Reply from French Embassy. Book 6, Vol. 9 of Tongzhi Emperor's Reign, *The Whole Course of Making Preparations for Foreign Affairs of Qing Dynasty*. Compiled in the first year. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2007:16.

13 Smith, Arthur Henderson. *Village Life in China: a Study in Sociology 1845-1932*. Chinese translation by Wu Qing and Tang Jun in *Current Affairs Press*, 1998:307-308.

Child adoption by Church-run orphanages has long been secretive and therefore often gives rise to disputes. Attempts shall be made to transfer them to the hands of Chinese so as to avoid skepticism. For those orphanages that cannot be demolished nor call their adoption to a complete stop, adoption procedures and changes should be reported and recorded in details, such as basic information of the adopted child, time of adoption, discharge and foster family information. As to children of non-Catholics, they should be incorporated into the charity services of local administration. To draw a dividing line between the religious and secular orphanages will guarantee good practice and prevent further misgivings.¹⁴

The Tianjin Incident had aroused caution in the Scheut missionaries. Foreign diplomats had vetoed the Zongli Yamen's decrees of 1871 abolishing or strictly controlling all Catholic orphanages and barring all native women from foreign churches and female missionaries from the Chinese interior. So the Scheut Fathers preferred to leave local Catholic consecrated virgins in charge of these institutions in the interior rather than foreign nuns.¹⁵

The involvement of Catholic charities in the rising tide against foreign religion brought about the collapse of orphanages in some areas. For instance, the following rumor - "Infants' eyes, hearts and livers were gouged out and made into medicine" - circulated in Gucheng, Hubei Province. To check on the matter, the county magistrate Zhong Tongshan personally visited the Chayuangou orphanage. Then, with all facts investigated, Magistrate Zhong reported the outcome to his superior, Zhang Zhidong, the governor-general of Huguang (today's Hunan and Hubei). The following excerpt records the consequence of the above policy adjustment:

Governor Zhang Zhidong ordered his subordinates to create an official orphanage with funds collected through increased tax rates in the Town of Laohekou. Local women were recruited as wet nurses. Months after the admission notices were publicized, the Church-run orphanages were greatly affected and admission decreased sharply. However, it turned out that our nurses have been more hard-working than those hired in official orphanages, who work for the sake of an

14 Wen Qing et al., Notification of Regulations to Embassies of Foreign Countries, Book 8, Vol. 82 in *The Whole Course of Making Preparations for Foreign Affairs of the Qing Dynasty*, 1871. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2007:242.

15 Taveirne, Patrick. *Han-Mongol Encounters and Missionary Endeavors: A History of Scheut in Ordos (Hetao) 1874-1911*. Trans. Gu Weiying and Cai Yaowe. Kuangchi Cultural Group, 2012:382.

*income. This drastic difference put an end to the rumor and ultimately led to more conversions to Catholicism, a trend that has not been reversed since.*¹⁶

Out of his open-mindedness, Governor Zhang attempted to contrast a secular and official orphanage to a Catholic one. Nevertheless, the two types were run with different ideologies, and the secular orphanages gradually lost their vigor and were outlived by their Catholic counterparts.

2. Operations

2.1 Sources of funds

The adoption of abandoned young children was a conventional focus of Catholic charity and involved intensive work in areas like fund-raising, routine management and nursing staff training. Most funds available to Catholic orphanages were from the Holy Childhood Association (or Missionary Childhood Association) in France.

In 1822, Pauline Jaricot, a 23-year old Catholic, advised the foundation of the *Society of the Propagation of the Faith*. Much of the fund-raising efforts were coordinated by her.¹⁷ Twenty years later, in 1842, the Association of the Holy Childhood was established by Mgr. Forbin-Janson in Paris, France. The association's mission was to call on children in all countries to pray and share so as to save the souls of young non-Catholic foundlings.¹⁸ On March 19, 1846, Pope Gregory XVI approved of the association.¹⁹

Funds for the Association came from the 120-yuan-per-year offerings of Church members. After being pooled at the Division on the

16 Cheng Hede. *A Brief History of the Catholic Church in Xiangxun, Hubei*. Tushanwan Printing House, 1924:138. As suggested by Governor Zhang Zhidong, the orphanage in Laohekou was closed soon after its establishment as a result of poor operations while that in Mopanshan continued to exist till 1950.

17 Joseph Motte, S.J., *History of the Catholic Church*. Book 4. Trans. Joseph Tarc Hou, S.J., Kuangchi Cultural Group, 1966:181.

18 *Ibid.*, 182.

19 This association was also said to be established in 1843. Louis Tsing-sing Wei. *La Politique Missionnaire de la France en Chine*. Trans. Huang Qinghua. China Social Sciences Press, 1991:320. The approval was recorded on p.202, Vol. 12 of *Meeting Minutes of Propagation of the Faith*, stating that "this association was set up with the support of Mgr. Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Nancy, in 1843."

Propagation of the Faith, those donations were partly spent on orphanages in China. That was the very funding source of Catholic Church-run orphanages in China²⁰ such as the Puji Orphanage in Ningbo, Zhejiang. Founded in 1870, Puji expanded into a charitable institution taking in orphans, both boys and girls, and people with physical disabilities. Its budgets “in boy foundling adoption, nursing and foster care were fully allocated by the Association of the Holy Childhood in Europe.”²¹

Before 1907, all Catholic schools in the Ordos were an extension of the catechumenate of the Holy Childhood. Surprisingly, the number of females attending these classes almost equaled that of males. “The Society of the Holy Childhood in Paris subsidized one half of the school’s expenses, the Society of the Propagation of the Faith the other half. Heating during long winters (up to eight months), lighting, bedding and clothing, the upkeep of the buildings placed a heavy burden on the Catholic mission’s resources.”²²

However, as the number of orphanages grew, the funds from Europe could hardly meet the needs. To fill the gap, subsidies and donations of local Church members became new sources.

2.2 Management and operation

Nuns and consecrated virgins worked as the major caretakers in Catholic Charities in most cases. Adopted children were nursed in both centralized and scattered ways. It was because of the fragility and high death rate of those abandoned infants that many orphanages chose breast feeding through the hiring of wet nurses.

In the 1930s, the Sisters of Charity in Ningbo had been managing orphanages with more than 300 girls, and 200 infants under foster care, and a series of institutions like nurseries, schools, the Virgin Mary Society, handicraft and embroidery workshops. In those workshops, many women, though married, went on working for financial reasons. The Charity also managed some other services such as women’s hospitals,

20 Guo Mu. A brief history of Catholicism in Zhejiang. Unpublished, 2011:163.

21 Ibid., 163.

22 Taveirne, op. cit., 389. Note: indirect citation here.

care centers for elderly women and the disabled, the distribution of medicines, and itinerant medical services for villagers and prisoners.²³

To save as many lives as possible, Scheut missionaries paid people who sent abandoned children to their churches.

*To encourage the people to cede their infants, missionaries usually remunerated beggars or itinerant physicians. The names and addresses of parents were registered as well as the name of the beggar. His reward was 200 copper cash and one measure of spiked millet for each infant delivered. Itinerant physicians received free medicine, travelling money, and some bonus paid for by the work of the Society of the Holy Children. Following the Boxer Uprising, these practices were mostly discontinued or at least tempered. Msgr. Alfons Bermyn, for instance, reduced the remuneration for infants delivered by third parties. Not only did the great number of abandoned infants in the vicariate make the itinerant physicians redundant and an extra burden to an already strained budget, but also popular resentment might have cautioned the missionaries.*²⁴

As shown above, to preserve as many innocent lives as possible, churches in the north mobilized third party resources in the gathering of abandoned infants, a symbol of care and love for life within Catholic churches.

Before 1949, there had not been accurate statistics of abandoned children. In face of the mounting number of adopted children, Catholic charities used their own ways of identification to ensure that every child could be identified and errors and mistakes at work could be minimized. For example, the Maryknoll Sisters used tiny tattoos for identification.²⁵ Number plate labeling was also a common method with other orphanages.

3. Education and training

Generally speaking, the education and training of children in Catholic charities extended into spiritual cultivation and life skills development.

23 A brief review of the Creation of Sisters of Charity in China (First continuation). Cited from Book 6, originally Issue 10, Vol. 4 of *Wo Cun Magazine* (My words will come to no end, Luke, 21:33), 1936. Retrieved from Microform Center, National Library of China, 2006:2712.

24 Taveirne, op. cit., 385

25 Ibid., 387.

3.1 Spiritual cultivation

In Catholic church-run orphanages, spiritual cultivation is a unique aspect in foundling education .

Polizhuang Church, managed by the Divine Word Missionaries, was regarded as the cradle of Catholicism in the southern part of Shandong. Its charity system included an orphanage for boys led by sub-deacon Gottfried Riehm, a newly converted and kind church member, and an orphanage for girls managed by local consecrated virgins. Bishop Augustin Henninghaus offered weekly sermons for children. In addition, local consecrated virgins were also requested to attend Bishop Henninghaus' weekly or biweekly Christian teachings for a more thorough understanding of Christianity and the virtues to be upheld.²⁶ Sermons by bishops for children demonstrated the priority given by the Divine Word Society to children's spiritual cultivation.

Since the late Qing Dynasty, Catholic churches in different parts of China have all run nurseries or orphanages for foundlings (and in some cases, for children from poverty-stricken families). Once admitted, they were baptized, and faith education started immediately. School-aged children attended Church-run Schools as well. Thus, spiritual cultivation can be regarded as an effort to nurture morally-upright Catholic followers.

3.2 Life-skills training

Besides faith education, Catholic church-run orphanages were committed to developing a life skill for every child so as to build up his/her social independence. For example in Polizhuang, Father Weiss "taught them needlework. As Chinese Father Gao Ruoxi said 'we cannot possibly support them since we don't earn incomes. They must receive training in some skills.' These children learned shoe-making, carpentry, or cattle-raising. For those trained as carpenters, they can leave the orphanage once the skill has been mastered."²⁷

²⁶ Fischer, op. cit., 82.

²⁷ Leeb, Leo. *Chinese Catholics and Priests Perceiving the SVD and SSps Mission in China*. Steyler Mission Swiss Institute, 2001:12.

The hall of Renci (kindness and benevolence) in Ningbo was created by the Society of Ren'ai (kindness and love). Since its foundation in 1855 (the fifth year of Emperor Xianfeng's Reign) outside of the City's south gate, "it had trained orphans (8 years old and above) in sock-knitting, artificial silk flower-making and embroidery (12 years old and above). All children received faith education from an early age and married when they reached adulthood. After operating for more than 90 years, the total number of adoptions reached 31,751."²⁸

The Wadianzi orphanage of Tianyuan town, in Xindu County, Sichuan, also accumulated rich experiences in skills training. Children there were dispatched to different workshops as apprentices based on their ability in sock-knitting, embroidery-making, textile-weaving, wood-carving or doing the laundry. Some children picked up other skills like pig or cattle farming. Once apprenticeship ended, they either worked in local churches, or in related businesses or became self-employed in various workshops.²⁹

The year 1864 saw the creation of Tushanwan (T'ou-sé-wé) Jesuit Orphanage in Shanghai after a local river dredging launched by the Catholic Church. On a land of 80 mu (about 53,000 square meters) a nursing home, a primary school, a woodshop, and workshops on printmaking, photography, publishing and painting were built. This charity organization was best known for its trade skills training of orphans and foundlings. For instance, Mr. Yang Guozheng, a previous apprentice in the metal casting workshop, learned the trade so well that he landed a nice job and had a happy family. Mr. Xu Baoqing began his apprenticeship at the age of ten and spent the next six years in learning painting, copperware, and furniture design, and after three more years in sculpture he started the trade of boxwood sculpture in China. Mr. Wang Chaohai served as a friar auxiliary after he had finished his apprenticeship, and was later sent to Montréal, Canada to study car-making to prepare for his teaching position on mechanical and electrical drawing in the Orphanage.³⁰ In short, the training given did improve the

28 Guo, op. cit., 161.

29 See Book 2 of *Catholicism in Chengdu: A Text Collection*, published September 1987. Cited from *Catholicism in Sichuan*, Liu Jiexi et. al. (eds.), Sichuan Publishing Group and Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2009:480.

30 Wu Mengqing. The Whereabouts of the Tushanwan Orphans now, *Divine Land Page, Faith Weekly*, September 5, 2013. Originally published in *Xinmin Evening News*, August 18, 2013.

livelihood of children, and, at the same time, also developed quite a few professionals.

3.3 Recreational activities

To enrich the lives of children, given adequate conditions, every Catholic Charity strived for some recreational activities, which turned out to be very characteristic of its operations.

In the autumn of 1901, F. Joseph Domagio was transferred to Tushanwan. The Orphanage celebrated the first three days of the Chinese New Year with a performance on a newly built stage. That was a new play and without much substance, and therefore was just for fun. In the performance, there appeared a “flute” made of a bamboo pipe with two culm membranes attached on both ends and a hole in the middle.

In that winter, R. P. J. Ducoux arrived in Shanghai and became the director of the Orphanage shortly after. Greatly fond of the children in the Orphanage, he joined them in their ball games during his casual time. As the winter solstice drew near, the Orphanage began to stage the Talle viveit (short holy plays). The first was on the Nativity. Some characters were painted in color and full size and carved out of carton board including the holy family (Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph), animals such as donkeys and cows. Other characters like God and shepherds were played by children. All play settings and performances were like those in the campus of the St. Ignatius High School in Shanghai. Since then, performances became a routine in the canteen of the Orphanage. Moreover, on the first day of the Chinese New Year in 1910, a play was staged in honor of Jules Prosper Paris S.J.’s visit to Tushanwan for a Chinese New Year Gathering.³¹

The physical exercises and performances in those nurseries brought both joy and health to those young and homeless souls, a solid foundation for their social inclusion in the years to come.

3.4 Lives after reaching adulthood

Once grown up, children left their large “families” for their own lives as priests or started their own families with Catholics selected by the local churches.

31 Standaert, op. cit , 2606-2609.

Raised in religious surroundings, some children from Catholic Charities made decisions of becoming priests or nuns, making Catholic Church-run charities cradles of vocations. For instance, “Mr. Yang Chunrong, became the first orphan-turned-priest in Tushanwan. Originally named ‘Yang A’er’, Mr. Yang styled himself as ‘Leshan Xing’er’, and his baptismal name as Joseph. Born in 1853, the third year of Emperor Xianfeng’s reign, in Wuxi County, Changzhou, Mr. Yang was sent to serve in the hospital of Xujiahui Catholic Church by P. Emile Chevreuil. He fully executed his duties with commitment and great prudence ... and later was first admitted to Jesuit College in 1875, and he then joined the Society of Jesus after two years’ novitiate. He took the vows in 1886 (the 12th year of Emperor Guangxu’s reign).”³²

Foundlings adopted by orphanages were mostly girls. They joined the Society of Sisters or served in their dioceses as consecrated virgins or stayed in the same orphanages to devote their lives to Catholic charity.

Quite a few orphans married Catholics after they grew up. In a girl orphanage managed by Divine Word Missionaries, “Some girls were blind. Anyway, most of them were healthy and were ready for marriage at the age of 18.”³³ In those orphanages in Catholic villages in Henan where daily routines were in the charge of consecrated virgins, children often became church members once they grew up. Many of them later married orphan girls there.³⁴

“Besides being a corporal work of mercy, the nursery halls of the Holy Childhood Society played an important role within the missionary strategy of training future converts and exemplary mothers of Catholic families.³⁵ Therefore, girls received both religious and secular skill training, the former included prayers, doctrines, spiritual reading while the latter involved domestic chores such as housekeeping, needlework, cooking, and grooming etc. Calligraphy was reserved for the older girls.³⁶ Due to the comprehensive skills training the girls received from Catholic charities, they behaved better than those from regular families,

32 Ibid., 2543-2545.

33 Leeb, op cit., 11.

34 Luo Yu. *A History of Catholicism in Henan Province of China*. Fujen University Press, Taiwan, 2003:121.

35 A-OPSE, Rome. Dossier C-507. Mongolie Occiduo-Méridionale. Letter of Devos to the directors of the Holy Childhood Society, San-tao-ho, May 8, 1884. Cited in Taveirne, op. cit, 381.

36 Ibid., 388.

on average. They were gentle, educated and well-mannered, and were masters of needlework. Their open and generous character became obviously what young men were attracted to in those days. Hence a folk rhyme went as follows:

*Two buckets of rice I offered,
One Catholic I became.
A priest is whom I go to,
A good wife to me will come.*³⁷

This ballad vividly describes the match-making support from the local Catholic charity. The convention had it that a man could marry a Catholic woman only if he was a Catholic himself. That is the reason why the young man had to convert to Catholicism before he asked for “help”.

4. Conclusion

“The Holy Church is the very origin of charity”.³⁸ Charity has in turn become a heritage of the Catholic Church and an expression of faith. In medieval Europe, churches ran hospitals, leprosariums, homes for the elderly and orphanages, and used to be active in organizing nursing services for the ailing, and making slave redemption efforts with an aim of freeing people from all pain.³⁹ The entry of Catholicism into China was accompanied by its tradition of charity, which was represented later by the prevalent adoption and rearing of foundlings.

This article attempted to summarize their experiences and characteristics by analyzing the operational and educational efforts involved in both faith and skills development of Catholic charity institutions. Through their operations, Catholic Church-run orphanages demonstrated the core values of Catholic faith—the respect for, attention to and salvation of every human life, which is a gift from God. The care for abandoned young children, particularly those with disabilities, embodied the transmission of Christ’s love and generosity.

37 Yi, op. cit., 78.

38 On medical service of Catholic Church, Message of Apostolic Delegate Mario Zanin to ministers all over the country, *Collectanea Commissionis Synodalis Januarius*, 1937:94.

39 Ibid., 95.

After the foundation of the Republic of China in 1912, child adoption by Catholic charities “had a bumper harvest”. As adoption procedures became more standardized, Catholic charity gradually became socially influential for a time.

In conclusion, as stated by Fr. Xu Jingxian in his remarks on the significance of Catholic Charity in the 1930s:

*Charity has long been a Catholic tradition. Recent years have seen remarkable progress in such endeavors as medical service, orphanages, and homes for the disabled and elderly, signs of the benevolence and love upheld by Catholicism. Future efforts can be made in promoting its more reasonable distribution and more balanced development.*⁴⁰

40 Xu Jingxian. Celebrating the First National Congress of the Chinese Society of Catholic Action (middle volume). Book 4, Issue 8, Volume 3, *Wo Cun Magazine* (My words will come to no end. Luke, 21:33), 1935. Retrieved from Microform Center, National Library of China, 2006: 1809.

Love in Action: The Practice and Development of Diaconal Mission in China

Shen Zhanqing

Church-based social ministry have their origins in biblical teachings. In his rather brief life on earth, Jesus did not live for a single day in a resplendent palace nor did he receive the services of a servant. When His followers came to him and sought to be the first in the kingdom of heaven, His answer was, “The Son of man did not come to be served by men, but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28) God humbled himself to serve the world and gave an order to His followers: “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

Social service is therefore a part of the mission of sharing the gospel and a fine tradition of the Church. In contemporary China, though it has been taught in seminaries as an important aspect of practical theology, it has not yet been fully accepted and practiced among all Chinese churches. China’s reform and opening up began in 1978 but social ministry has only been given attention, consideration, and implementation over the last ten years. During my years of study at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the most renowned theological institution in China, I was not offered any courses or training in social ministry. However, since my graduation, I have been working at the Amity Foundation, a faith-based charity organization that was the first to be established in China after the reform. It was my decade of experience working at Amity that has helped me truly understand the meaning of social ministry for the church, its contributions to society and nation, and its significance for the spiritual nurture and character building of believers. I am therefore fully convinced that it is imperative for Chinese churches to promote church-run social services.

About Amity

The Amity Foundation was founded in April 1985 by the late Bishop K. H. Ting, a key Chinese Christian leader and former Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Commission (CPPCC). Amity is a non-governmental organization that encourages social participation and promotes social services in education, public welfare, health care, community development, environmental preservation and disaster relief in China. Currently, Amity's projects are implemented in 31 provinces in China, benefiting millions of impoverished people.

The first faith-based charity organization and one of the earliest NGOs to be established in mainland China after the reform and opening up, Amity has made a significant impact on China's social service sector. In the past three decades, Amity has established partnerships with over 300 international organizations in 20 countries and an operational network that connects all parts of China. With the support of international partner organizations, Amity has adopted concepts and methodologies that are aligned with the best international practices. It is among the first group of organizations in China that have introduced and built upon such innovative concepts as "participatory management" and "holistic care". Creative models in community development, environmental protection, care for the disabled and orphans, public health and AIDs prevention have enabled the Amity Foundation to substantially promote social welfare in the country.

Amity and church ministry

As mentioned in its decennial work report for 1990-2000, since its inception, many of Amity's activities have been directly related to local churches. For example, in 1991 Amity funded church-run clinics in Zhaotong, a remote and impoverished area of Yunnan.¹ In 1996 Amity worked in coordination with the Yunnan Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement (CC/TSPM) to aid the construction of churches in Wuding County, Yunnan.² Other historical documents show that Amity

1 *Amity Annual Report* (English), Amity Foundation, 1991, 9.

2 *Amity Newsletter*, Amity Foundation, Hong Kong, December 1996, Vol 9.

collaborated with churches to build the infrastructure of churches, nursing homes and hospitals, as well as to organize mutual exchange visits that boosted communication among churches.

Amity's participation in and growing emphasis on church social ministry can be traced to its second International Symposium on Social Service in 1992. The then Associate General Secretary, Mr. Gu Renfa, pinpointed one of the major goals of Amity: "The church serves society; society encounters the church." He also said, "The Amity Foundation is a social organization initiated by Chinese Christians. It unveils a new form of religious participation in social service and opens a prominent channel for the Chinese Church to contribute to social development. Amity, by actively supporting church-run social services, plays a vital role in connecting church and society."³

Just as the Amity Foundation receives immense support for its work from Chinese and international Christian ministries due to its close ties with churches, it also helps foster church social ministry by implementing projects and launching training and capacity building programs. In the past ten years, Chinese churches have become increasingly enthusiastic about social service in areas where Amity has launched projects and initiated capacity building. Many local churches have begun to request Amity to utilize its resources and experience of thirty years to help them cultivate and enrich their social ministry.

Social development and "new" social needs

China's rapid economic growth in the last three decades has enabled it to become the second largest economy in the world. Economic development, however, has also engendered certain pressing social problems such as an aging population, rapid rural-urban migration, and "left-behind" children, the elderly and women. All sectors of society, including the religious, have responded positively to the call of the Party and state to provide various aid and services to alleviate these problems.

As a multi-ethnic country, China has a civilization with a history of nearly 5,000 years and is a place where different religions have developed harmoniously. There are five major religions in China and more than

3 *Amity Newsletter*, Amity Foundation, Hong Kong, August 1994, Vol 2.

100 million followers, of whom Christians account for more than one quarter. Bearing this in mind, it is significant that in June 2012, in order to better encourage religious participation in social construction and welfare undertakings, and to provide policy support to religious circles in these activities, the State Administration of Religious Affairs, the United Front Work Department, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the State Administration of Taxation jointly issued “The Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Participation in Charity Activities and Philanthropy”.

This is thus a “golden age” for Chinese churches to participate in social development and services and in the construction of civil society. However, Chinese theological schools and seminaries, churches and church-based social organizations are under-prepared for such opportunities, especially when there is still inadequate understanding of social ministry and insufficient personnel.

Church unprepared for social service

After 1978, when the Chinese Church resumed gathering after the reforms and opening up, almost all churches focused their ministry on the restoration of worship and congregations. Consecutive efforts went into shepherding followers, preparing sermons, and training volunteers, as summarized by Lei Lihua, director of the Religious Research Center of the State Administration for Religious Affairs,

Churches in China are generally deficient in pastoral ministry, research, management, and the training of specialized personnel. On the one hand, the number of Chinese believers grows rapidly; on the other hand, there is the insufficiency of well-trained pastors. The Church places more emphasis on dispatching students to study theology in Europe and the United States and less emphasis on pursuing knowledge other than theology.⁴

Lei’s article brings home the urgent need for Chinese churches to have social welfare professionals, in addition to those engaged in church ministry, theological studies and church management. Isolated projects

4 Lei Lihua, “Thoughts on the Sinicization of Christianity”, *Religion and the World*. May 2015. Accessed at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/llyj/332789.htm>.

or short-term training programs are far from enough for the training of a task force for church-run social services. Policy-wise, up until 2003, Chinese churches had not been allowed to openly participate in social services. Although some local churches took the initiative and launched poverty alleviation projects with Amity's support, some projects were far behind schedule and eventually had to be aborted due to the lack of policy support, funding and adequate staff.

However, with the ever-increasing social demand from society and increasing support from the state in recent years, there is a clear need for the improvement and professionalization of church-run social services. Social ministry has to be developed in a way that will equip church leaders and followers with the appropriate mindsets and abilities. For churches to truly participate meaningfully in social service, they need to transition from making simple donations of money and clothes to running projects with real impact. Before setting up a project, it is important for a faith-based organization or team to analyze the root causes of social problems with an effective methodology that involves preliminary research, observation, and analysis before submitting proposals. When the project is underway, the team needs to monitor and adjust the project in real time and when it is completed, the team should provide a full-scale evaluation of the project's sustainability. All these efforts require faithful Christians, both leaders and followers, to be well-trained in their field of work. It is important to "let the professionals do the professional things."

Several years ago, I attended a three-month diaconia project management course at the Diakonal School in Aarhus, Denmark. In addition to the social service required by the course, I also joined the local church on weekends in their community service. From my observations, I believe the Chinese church has certain gaps to fill, not only in theological development as compared to that in Europe, but also in social ministry. The Chinese church has not effectively stimulated its followers' enthusiasm and vigor in social service. In contrast, church-run social ministry in Denmark is essentially community-based. Each project is well-tailored to a specific group of people and efforts are made to ensure their needs are best served. The local church is not only in charge of donations, but also the management and maintenance of the entire project.

Social Coffee, a free-meal project in Aarhus, Denmark, began the instant a local pastor encountered a starving person who had come to the

church asking for bread. The pastor then invited him to dinner. Naturally, it is easy to feed a couple of people but it is another story to feed many. The church committee then started to think of feasible plans. After a careful survey, they set up a special team and drafted a detailed plan for the project named “Social Coffee”. They then secured a free venue approved by the government and the church built a cafe where free meals are provided. There is only one full-time staff in charge of management while all the caterers are volunteers. The church recruited volunteers and arranged for them to cook in shifts at the cafe. On learning of the project, the local government began to provide an annual subsidy. Low and middle-income families in the community can also dine here but they need to pay a certain fee to help maintain the daily operations of the cafe. In contrast, church-run projects in China are still mainly supported by daily donations of cash or goods. Nursing homes run by Chinese churches tend to provide free care to senior citizens and the onerous burden of cost becomes too heavy to bear, inhibiting their sustainability.

To say the least, church-run social service in China is in its infancy. To improve the situation, the social ministry of Chinese churches requires advocacy and professional training systems that allow church co-workers to learn and fully recognize the importance of social services.

Amity’s approach and partnership with churches

Since its foundation, Amity has been adhering to the principle “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Mathew 6: 3-4) in charity work. Despite the complexity encountered in its formative stage due to its religious background, Amity has the conviction that we bear witness to Christ’s love through our deeds and actions. We want more people to know and understand the church and Christians through what we do. Accordingly, most Amity projects are open to social participation so that the neediest issues can be addressed. Whether the project is proposed by a church or not is not a deciding factor in launching these projects.

Emphasizing a participatory mode of management, Amity invites government agencies, higher education and research institutions to join in its projects. In the past thirty years, local churches have not been able to fully participate in Amity projects because of their inadequate

capacity and lack of a talent reserve. They can only work with Amity on conventional projects that are far less complex than the comprehensive development projects that Amity implements in rural and urban communities. There are exceptions though. The CC/TSPM of Hunan Province, some local churches in Hunan, Luzhou (Sichuan) and northern Jiangsu have enjoyed long-term collaboration with Amity. There, pastors and deacons have a thorough knowledge of Amity projects and identify with Amity concepts.

In today's world where social service is much in demand, Amity is thinking about how to establish a talent pool of church-based social service professionals that will embody Amity's concepts and practices. Theresa Chong Carino, senior consultant to Amity, stresses the importance of revisiting the project areas to listen to local churches and learn from their experience, which is of great significance to Amity's future work.

Amity established its current "Church and Social Service" program in early 2009 to promote Christian participation in social issues. The projects, extending from Jiangsu to other parts of the country, intends to assist local churches in their social service ministry.

Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund as a model

The Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund, a joint initiative of Amity and the Jiangsu CC/TSPM, was established in April 2009 to encourage diaconia, promote churches' role in economic and social development, spur inter-faith dialogue and advance faith and social harmony. To standardize its practice and boost sustainable development, a committee jointly led by the chairs of Jiangsu CC/TSPM and the secretary-general of the Amity Foundation was set up to manage the fund. The Charter for Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund was also enacted so that all fund-related issues must be discussed and decided by the governing board.

With support from the leadership of the United Front Work Department and the Bureau of Religious Affairs of Jiangsu Province, Amity Foundation and Jiangsu CC/TSPM conducted a province-wide survey in 2009 to better understand the status of social services run by Jiangsu churches and to provide data relevant for the future plans of the Fund. Three survey groups, working simultaneously, collected answers

through questionnaires and interviews. Research results show that social service is indeed a weaker link in church ministry. Some grassroots church leaders have realized that it is necessary to have social ministry though it largely remains in its infancy.⁵ Researchers also discovered that multiple churches have set up nursing homes for senior citizens and simply rely on believers' passion and contributions of time and money to run these homes. Residents at these homes are not charged any fee. Many of these homes were eventually closed down because this operational mode was not financially feasible. The worst part was that shutting down these homes affected many elderly people's lives and frustrated those who had offered their services.

The project team also noticed that grassroots churches fail in their attempts at social service because low incomes at the grassroots level hinder their capacity to implement projects. Rather, preachers and missionaries at this level need to be aided first. The vastness of China, imbalanced economic development, and different levels of church development in the eastern and western regions have resulted in disparities in church-based social service. To quote Lei again,

*"It is imperative to upgrade social service and public welfare. In recent years, the Christian community has contributed immensely to charitable work and social service and achieved impressive results. However, at the grassroots level, social service has not been given due attention. Local churches still emphasize preaching more than social service. Many churches only respond to the government's call to practice social service."*⁶

The Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund is an excellent model for church-based charitable service, and a new pathway for local churches to participate in social welfare. In 2015, the managing committee of the fund formulated a "one body, two-wings" development strategy to face more challenges. The committee unanimously agreed that precedence should

5 "In its infancy" means that social ministry at the grassroots level is in a relatively primitive state. Church leaders run social service projects fueled mainly by believers' passion and love. There is no systematic plan for the future of the project. Participants volunteer their services based on the biblical teaching: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." They are not given proper encouragement and remuneration. The prominent features of this primitive state of service are: speedy imitation and abortion and unsustainable service when volunteers encounter setbacks and frustrations.

6 Lei, op. cit.

be given to the cultivation of Christian public welfare talents. Thus, “one body” refers to the priority given to talent cultivation, a cornerstone of the development of the Fund and church-run social service. Brand building is coupled with the construction of a talent pool and the international network set up by Amity needs to be reinforced and utilized to promote inter-church communication and advocacy of advanced social service concepts.

Need for professionals

There is a pressing need for more Christian social service professionals. Many pastors and deacons have realized the significance of participating in social service. When they are making blueprints for their new churches, they would now plan for land to be reserved for church hospitals and nursing homes. Amity has received requests from churches all over China to send teams to foster social service in those areas. The Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund has already sponsored ten workshops for the capacity building of “Charity Volunteers,” with a total of 200 trainees. However, these training sessions were far from being systematic and adequate for the volunteers to start and sustain their own services, despite their passion and love for diaconia. Without sustained training and concepts, those volunteers become easily befuddled and frustrated in their work. Therefore, it is vital to promote professionalism in social service. In addition to biblical and theological training, the concept of project management needs to be strengthened. For those churches that are setting up nursing homes and hospitals, specific courses need to be offered in management, operations, team building and professional training.

Conclusion

Church-run social service has its origins in the Bible. It is not only a part of mission but also a cherished tradition of the Church. Though it constitutes a major part of “practical theology” that is taught in seminaries, social service has only been an endeavor of the Chinese Church for merely a decade in spite of the fact that China’s opening up and reform began in 1978.

The majority of Chinese churches, seminaries and many church-related organizations have yet to put the same kind of priority on social services as they do with their ministry to church congregations. Chinese churches are therefore late starters in providing social services and these suffer from insufficient professional training, a lack of diversity and slow growth. What aggravates the situation is the disparity in how religious policies are implemented in different parts of China, resulting in divergent levels of development.

As a faith-based organization, the Amity Foundation has assumed, since its establishment, the mission and responsibility to support and promote social services among grassroots churches. With the Party and government encouraging religious communities to actively participate in social philanthropy, Amity's Church and Social Services program aims at helping the church to engage in social services. Its projects span the entire country. Together with the Jiangsu CC/TSPM, Amity founded the "Jiangsu Christian Charity Fund for Social Service" to promote advanced practices and disseminate an excellent service mode to other provinces and regions.

As China is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the social service ministry of the church should not only serve believers, but should go beyond the church and enter communities to serve a larger number of people of different nationalities and beliefs. The focus of future social church-run social service is to cultivate faith-based public welfare professionals and to transform service types and specializations so as to foster profound and sustainable development.

It is important to encourage religious circles to participate in social service, to learn from and complement each other, and develop social ministry in a professional, diversified, systematic and sustainable manner. By acting in love and inspiring others in love, we can achieve the ideal "service brings us together" and practice God's "Agape".

Part V

Women, Religion and Development

Métis and the New Testament: Wisdom for Chinese Women from Mark 7.24 – 30*

Zhang Jing

The story of Métis

From antiquity, humans have constructed their ritual traditions and ethno-cultural identity through story. In the rhetoric, spread, adaptation and use of stories meaning is generated and sustained. As Jean-Pierre Vernant has pointed out, trans-generational stories are ‘transmitted without books and become the treasure box of knowledge filled with virtues outside of the books’.¹ Complex cultural understanding of speech, behavior, propriety, morality, physical prowess and military skill are simply yet profoundly taught through story. Stories define and explain identity. Myth (a story that is reckoned *profoundly* and *lastingly* true) is culturally foundational. This study traces *métis* to an ancient Greek myth about a goddess named *Métis*.

In Greek mythology, *Métis* was Zeus’ first wife. She was daughter of the ocean god, Okeanos and of the wisdom goddess, Tethys. She is famously cunning and intelligent. She understands manual crafts, as well

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1 Translated from Chinese. See Vernant, 众神飞飏 Zhong shen fei yang [The universe, the gods, and men] VII-VIII.

as being a gifted strategist and alchemist.² According to Greek mythology, *Métis* helped Zeus in the Titan War, her drug forcing Cronos to ‘disgorge first the stone and then the children he has swallowed’.³ After Zeus has gained power and brought stability to the universe, however, he consumes *Métis* to prevent any repetition of cosmic chaos and destruction. At the time *Métis* was pregnant, and, in due course, the child she bore, Athena, would herself be full of *métis* becoming in time Zeus’s greatest ally.⁴

But *Métis*, the goddess, disappears from mythology (and is rarely remembered as Athena’s mother). Her memory and gifts are, however, preserved in a range of pre-fifth-century CE texts (notably, Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,⁵ Oppian’s *The Treatise on Fishing* and *The Treatise on Hunting*, and in works by Plato, Plutarch, Pindar and Aristotle) and in particular skills (viz. hunting, fishing, carpentry, medicine, navigation, and various forms of ‘sophistry’). Consequently, *Métis* (and the cognate terms *dolos*, *techne*, *mechane*) is ever after associated with cunning, intelligence, subversion and, crucially, the conviction that the ‘defeat of the weak and the frail is not a foregone conclusion’.⁶ Hence, *Métis* is often contrasted with *bie* (might, brute strength) and oscillates between opposites to turn weakness ultimately into strength.⁷ Like modesty and hospitality (and other abstract social virtues) *métis* is more often seen than described. There is no systematic treatise on the term; indeed, after the fifth century CE, the word and its origin disappear.⁸ In the 1960s, however, two French classicists, Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, published a book on *Metis* and the characteristic intelligence and marginalised wisdom she represents, thus reclaiming the concept for postmodern biblical and literary criticism.⁹

My argument in this article is that the values *Métis* enshrined are common in antiquity: they are, however, not only conveyed in various literary motifs, but reconstructed with new meaning in different socio-

2 Hesiod, *Theogony*, 358; Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, I. 6.

3 Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, I. 6 and 20, 28, 31.

4 Hesiod, *Theogony*, 886 - 900, 929; Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology* I. 20.

5 In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus is described as *polymétis* (i.e. possessed of all kinds of wily skills). In *The Iliad*, Odysseus is said to ‘know every manner of trickery and crafty counsel’ (3. 202).

6 Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, 28.

7 *Ibid.*, 5.

8 Anagnostopoulos and Chelidoni, ‘Metis and the Artificial,’ 436.

9 See Detienne and Vernant, *Les Ruses d’Intelligence: La Métis des Grecs*.

historical contexts. The practical skills and moral values *Métis* embodied are taught and learned through story; methods that dominated pedagogy in the ancient world, including China. Hence, I argue here, China has stories of skilful, intelligent *Métis*-like figures, who twist and turn, trick and deceive and thereby subvert power.¹⁰ Stories abound in China of the weak fighting for their rights and overcoming the strong; some, like *Metis* willingly consumed by the powerful, others consciously subverting power *from within*. In other words, through the lens of the *métis* motif, we are brought to consider the relation of power and the powerless. It is a theme we consider here in relation to Jesus' dialogue with the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7. 24 - 30. To some, Jesus is the master of *métis*; as such, consciousness of the *métis* motif can shed new light on him, on an old story, and particularly here on the liberation of women in the church.

On the exegesis of Mark 7. 24 – 30

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs'. But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs'. Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter'. So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. (Mk. 7. 24 – 30)¹¹

This story is found also in Matthew 15. 21 - 28, with noticeable differences. Jesus' praise for the woman is changed from simply 'for saying that' (or 'because of your words/*logoi*') to 'because of your faith/*pistos*'. But why was 'word/*logos*' replaced by 'faith/*pistos*'? At first glance this is simply a healing miracle in which a mother asks on behalf of her sick daughter. More is going on. For the first and the only time in

10 In the folklore of many cultures there are figures who trick others, sometimes through supernatural power. These stories have been studied and re-interpreted since early nineteenth century. On this, see Jung, 'On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure'; Pelton, *The Trickster in West Africa*; Nicholas, *The Trickster Revisited*. For books on Chinese tricksters, see Qi Lianxiu, 智谋与妙趣 Zhi mou yu miao qu [Resourcefulness and Entertainment]; Zhou Xiaoxia, 颠覆与顺从 Dian fu yu shun cong. [Subversion and Obedience].

11 Biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

the New Testament, Jesus rejects the woman's appeal, and, as crucially, he uses a seemingly unreasonable excuse to reject her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs' (7. 27). As Theissen stresses, Jesus' words are morally offensive: 'How can one refuse a request for the healing of a child by saying that children are to be preferred to dogs?'¹² It is like a doctor refusing to treat a sick child just because she is foreign. Many have tried to justify Jesus' reaction to the woman's response, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs' (7. 28). We look at some explanations briefly here.

1. Jesus' words

Some scholars see Mark as the first to try to soften the harshness of Jesus' words by adding 'first or *proton*'. Matthew goes further: 'I was sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15. 26)'.¹³ To soften the apparently derogatory term 'dogs', scholars have argued: (i) Jesus is using a popular saying; (ii) it is the proverb that is harsh not Jesus; and, (iii) Jesus intends to be provocative, to stimulate conversation and through this to awaken faith.¹⁴

A second approach builds on the two words for 'dog', viz. *kunarion* (pet dogs) and *kuōn* (street dogs). Some scholars use this to explain Jesus' reply, viz. he is using the affectionate, domesticated term *kunarion* ('pets') to describe the Syrophoenician woman's access to the food of the gospel.¹⁵ This approach is unpopular today, with Nineham pointing out that the Greek *kunarion* has no corresponding form in Hebrew or Aramaic and cannot therefore be used to mitigate the force of the

12 Theissen, *The Gospel in Context*, 61, 65.

13 Almost all the scholars (except Vincent Taylor) treat 'first' as a redaction because it softens the harshness of verse 27b, with the implication of offering help in a temporal sequence. In addition, verse 27a does not appear in Matthew, and has often been linked to Paul in Romans 1: 16. On this, see Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 38; Schweizer, *The Good News*, 151; Gnllka, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus*, 1: 290; Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 63.

14 Hare, *Mark*, 85; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 469; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 298; Burkill, *New Light*, 118; Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," 65 - 70; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 387 - 9.

15 Miller & Miller, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 139. See also Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 386; Perkins, "Mark," 610.

exchange.¹⁶ More scholars agree with Burkill: ‘As in English, so in other languages, to call a woman “a little bitch” is no less abusive than to call her “a bitch” without qualification’.¹⁷ However, as Mitchell points out, ‘Since Jewish law considered both dogs and Gentiles to be unclean, dog made a ready name for Gentiles.’¹⁸ Exegeting the passage is, then, far from straightforward.

A third strategy rationalizes Jesus’ behavior. He rebuffs the woman because he is disappointed with his own people, the Jews.¹⁹ Hence, Taylor hypothesises that in 7. 27 Jesus is so preoccupied by the scope of his ministry he is effectively talking to himself when he addresses the woman.²⁰ Agreeing with Taylor, Hasler sees Jesus as still uncertain of God’s will, and so ‘there is a kindly smile or a humorous look accompanying the words’.²¹ Japanese feminist theologian Kinukawa similarly suggests Jesus’ harshness here may be a carry-over from his earlier confrontation with the Pharisees: his real target is the Jews not the woman.²² To Camery-Hoggat, Mark is using biting irony to force a reaction.²³

The usual way to soften Jesus’ words has been to ‘paradigmatised’ his reply; that is, to see his words as a test of faith and his healing of the daughter as a sign of God’s inclusive love. In this case, Jesus is acting deliberately, testing the woman’s faith while always intending to heal her daughter.²⁴ Seen in this light, Jesus’ response is an enacted lesson in the *theological* mystery of God’s initial ‘reserve’ in the face of human need, through which, it is argued, he then more generously displays his grace and power.²⁵ As Marcus argues,

In Mark’s plot the words in 7: 27 are in the nature of a test of faith and the expression of the Markan view of salvation history. Luther may be on the right exegetical track when he uses our passage as the basis for a moving exhortation to

16 Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 201; Perkins, “Mark,” 610.

17 Burkill, *New Light*, 114

18 Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 110.

19 Weiss, *Die drei ältesten Evangelien*, 128; quoted in Theissen, *The Gospel in Context*, 62.

20 Taylor, *Mark*, 350.

21 Hasler, ‘The Incident of the Syrophenician Woman,’ 460.

22 Kinukawa, *Women & Jesus in Mark*, 60 - 1.

23 Camery-Hoggat, *Irony in Mark’s Gospel*, 150 - 1.

24 Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 469; Pokorny, ‘From a Puppy to the Child,’ 328.

25 Luther, ‘Second Sunday in Lent’, 152.

*Christians to persist in trusting God even when he seems to turn his back on them; they must learn to see the 'yes' hidden in his 'no' (WA 17.2, 200 - 4).*²⁶

In short, scholars have struggled to justify Jesus' behaviour; and, as feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza claims, justifications generally 'seek to explain away [...] religious-ethnic prejudice and exclusivity', and give reasons to 'diminish the prejudicial character of Jesus' insulting word.'²⁷ To Schüssler Fiorenza Jesus' offence remains: he was quite simply rude and condescending when he refused the woman's request.

2. The Woman's riposte

While some scholars have sought to explain away Jesus' harsh words, most agree the woman's reply is remarkable. She uses an everyday image to force a change of mind in Jesus. Here is *métis* at work. Exegetes offer the following insights on this: First, that the woman exemplifies faith. She is humble but persistent. She accepts her inferiority - and the 'divinely ordained division between God's people and the Gentiles'²⁸ - but stands her ground. Such meekness and humility was revered in the early and medieval church; hence, Euthymius' paraphrase, 'since then I am a dog, I am not a stranger'.²⁹ Luther and other Reformers likewise see the woman as 'a true example of firm and perfect faith', who teaches 'in a beautiful manner the true way and virtue of faith [...] that it is a hearty trust in the grace and goodness of God as experienced and revealed through his Word'³⁰ Luther writes, 'We are the guests and strangers who have come to the children's table by grace and without any promise. We should, indeed, humbly thank God and, like the Gentile woman, have no higher wish than to be the little dogs that gather the crumbs falling from their master's table.'³¹ Later writers, like David Rhoads and feminist theologian Sharon Ringe, interpret the Markan narrative as demonstrating the power of faith over difficulty and as an indictment of the disciples' unbelief. Sharon

26 Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 469.

27 Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 82.

28 Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 199; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 387; Jeremias, *Jesus's Promise to the Nations*, 30.

29 Quoted from Swete, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, 158.

30 Luther, 'Second Sunday in Lent', 148f.

31 Luther, *LW*, 41: 51.

Ringe sees the woman's faith as opening up a new understanding of the relationship of Jews and Gentiles.³²

Second, the woman is seen by some scholars as a female Cynic. That is, she demonstrates a remarkable freedom of thought and action that is characteristic of Cynic philosophers. Her reply to Jesus accepts her position as a 'dog', but, like a skillful Cynic she turns the metaphor to her advantage.³³ Myers and Tolbert reckon Mark's audience would appreciate this skill: here is a Cynic's classic disregard for convention and refusal to be reduced to a 'dog'.³⁴ Building on the work of Mack, Fischel and Beavis, Kathleen Corley sees parallels with Cynic philosophy in the image of the 'dog' and 'crumbs'.³⁵ Downing sees here the public philosophising of Cynic women; others Cynic confidence in a woman's ability to refute criticism and to match male qualities.³⁶ Not all accept this connection with Cynic philosophy and tradition, however. Miller sees no evidence of subversive Cynic teaching here: to her the woman is simply an anxious mother wanting her daughter healed.³⁷ That said, the story's uniqueness and Jesus' recognition of the logic of the woman's argument ('logos', lit. word, reason, or argument) are striking.

Thirdly, some scholars see in this pericope an early instance of a female apostle and a skilful representative of marginalised and oppressed people. Schüssler Fiorenza, Mitchell and Perkinson draw attention to the power of the woman's 'word/ *logos*' and her readiness to reply from a position of weakness.³⁸ To Schüssler Fiorenza the woman 'represents the biblical theological voice of women, which has been excluded, repressed, or marginalised in Christian discourse'.³⁹ Mitchell, a student of Schüssler Fiorenza, sees the woman as a 'double outsider' who is both 'foreign and female'; *but*, she teaches Jesus and shows us how. She writes, [The woman] speaks the truth of her experience to him when he refuses to help her. She finds her voice. She talks back to the voice of authority

32 Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," 65.

33 Greek women were relatively independent in comparison with Jewish women of the day; see Pomeroy, *Goddesses Whores, Wives and Slaves*, 149 - 189; Clark, *Women in the Ancient World*, 17 - 21; Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters*, 134.

34 Myers, *Blinding the Strong Man*, 203; Tolbert, 269.

35 See Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals*, 100.

36 Downing, "The Woman from Syrophenician," 145.

37 Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 96

38 Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 13; Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 8.

39 Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 11.

that dismisses her. She insists on dialogue. [...] This story anticipates the need for dialogue between voices of experience and voices of authority in every age, if faith is to live.⁴⁰

Schüssler Fiorenza connects the woman with the female divinity Sophia-Wisdom, who also offers the bread of understanding. As such, the woman's reply puts her on a par with Jesus;⁴¹ indeed, to some she is one of the 'apostolic foremothers' of Gentile Christianity⁴² and a key figure in the debate about the Gentile mission. The woman's readiness to answer Jesus back represents, to Mitchell, her rejection of a pre-assigned status and her effective emancipation. Mitchell writes,

*In the face of authority speaking prejudice, the woman models emancipatory dialogue. She counters Jesus' closed word with a transformative word from her own experience and social location outside the boundaries of Jewish society. She speaks the truth of her experience in her Gentile household, where dogs have a place and eat the crumbs children let fall beneath the table. She models an active, transformative receiving of gospel that emancipates its word from socially and culturally constructed biases and boundaries.*⁴³

Perkinson sharpens this further, claiming the Syrophenician is blessed precisely *because* she beats Jesus 'at his own speech game'.⁴⁴ Seen in this light, the woman's readiness to be called a 'dog' is 'a posture, a negotiation, a canny play to turn the dialogue back on Jesus' and, as such, 'a covert displacement' of Jesus' exclusionary maneuver.

Fourthly, the Woman's multi-cultural identity is used as a model for inter-faith dialogue and post-colonial interpretation. Asian and African theologians have used 'cultural studies' concepts (such as 'otherness', 'subject-object relation' and 'marginality') to read biblical texts in post-colonial contexts. In this milieu, the woman's identity is culturally complex: she is a Syrian and a Phoenician, living in a Greek region. Post-colonialism does not assume the woman subsequently became a disciple; rather, it acknowledges she came 'with a faith in Jesus as the healer and miracle maker more than a messiah'.⁴⁵ What's more, as Indian theologian

40 Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 8.

41 Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 13.

42 *Ibid.*, 97.

43 Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 108.

44 Perkinson, 'A Canaanite Word,' 75f.

45 See Rebera, 'The Syrophenician Woman,' 107.

R. S. Sugirtharajah points out, her multi-cultural identity and wise riposte are an example of balanced, inter-faith dialogue. To Sugirtharajah,⁴⁶ this passage cautions *against* treating Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists or Sikhs as a ‘target for evangelization and absorption into the Christian community’ and seeing Judaism as ‘a dead letter awash with legalism and ritualism’.⁴⁷ Likewise, Hong Kong feminist Kwok Pui-Lan sees the woman’s story as habitually *not* told ‘by her own people, the Syrophenicians with other religious beliefs’, but by Christians, who use her for their purposes.⁴⁸ To Kwok, missionaries to China focused on the woman’s faith and humility, and made her an example for Christians and heathens alike. Hence, Jesus’ harshness is over-looked and his love for people praised. But she is, to Kwok, a ‘faithful representative of women’, who demonstrates the superiority and independence of (non-Christian) women in Asian societies. Western feminists, she argues, fail to problematise the text as justifying colonialism.⁴⁹

Asian feminist theologians have read this story in different multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts. They have shown how Western interpretations do not fit an Asian context, and fail to see innate hierarchical and androcentric bias. Japanese feminist Hisako Kinukawa sees the ‘interactional relationship’ as key to understanding the story. In this encounter the woman challenges Jesus to ignore the barriers between Jews and Gentiles and opens the way for Jesus to cross the boundary, to submit to defilements and ‘to become least in order to break through the exclusively group-oriented faith of his fellow Jews’.⁵⁰ Sri Lankan scholar Ranjini Wickramaratne Rebera celebrates the woman’s independence of mind and robust faith. And, in contrast to interpretations that focus on social taboos, she sees the exchange as both empowering and defining the woman’s position. Here is, Rebera argues, ‘mutual ministry’ too ‘often lost in a focus on [...] what is clean and what is unclean’. That said Rebera and Kinukawa also interpret this story in light of ‘purity’ issues in their cultures.

46 Sugirtharajah thinks the story has been misread because of (i) missionary motives (viz. Mark 7.24 - 30 is a sign of the gospel reaching the non-Christian world); and, (ii) a perception of faith (viz. the woman manifests authentic faith in contrast to Jewish legalism and ritualism). See Sugirtharajah, “The Syrophenician Woman” 13f.

47 Ibid.

48 Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 72.

49 Ibid. 79, 82.

50 Kinukawa, *Women & Jesus in Mark*, 60 – 61. Kinukawa recognizes her power, but treats in a way that enhances the anti-Semitic interpretation of the text.

African feminist Musa Dube goes further than Kwok and Kinukawa in a remarkable post-colonial interpretation based on the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15. Having ‘de-colonized’ the story (in the imperial context of first-century Palestine), she sees Matthew as deliberately editing the Markan pericope in order to create a Canaanite woman who is willing to accept her inferior position as a ‘dog’. As such, the woman is a symbol of the Gentiles who were willing to eat the crumbs under the master’s table. However, the symbols of ‘dogs’ and ‘crumbs’ also express for Dube the plight, heartache and low self-esteem of all colonized and evangelized peoples. Imperialism, not the woman’s faith or word, are crucial for her.⁵¹

Interpretations of the woman’s words in Mark 7.28 likewise arise from different social, historical and cultural contexts. Some stress the woman’s quickness of mind and wisdom (Schüssler Fiorenza, Mitchell, Perkinson), others her complex cultural identity as the ‘Other’ who is the object of imperial rule and/or colonial abuse (Sugirtharajah, Kinukawa, Rebera, Kwok). Most exegesis still focuses, however – for apologetic and evangelistic purposes – on the woman’s faith and humility, and on its message for Christians. But the racial, gender and hierarchical biases identified above force us, I believe, to seek fresh interpretations of the Markan pericope. It is here the *métis* motif may prove its worth.

***Métis* and Mark 7.24 - 30**

Detienne and Vernant define *métis* as a type of intelligence that encompasses a complex range of mental attitudes and practical, verbal actions. It denotes flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism and a host of developed skills.⁵² Jesus is a master of *métis*. In Mark *métis* shapes Jesus’ confrontation with the authorities, it springs traps set for him.⁵³ The style of gospel stories also reflects *métis*: they are witty, funny, memorable and easily

51 See Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, 127ff.

52 Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, 3f. NB. their other definition: ‘From a terminological point of view, *métis*, as a common noun, refers to a particular type of intelligence, an informed prudence; as a proper name it refers to a female deity, the daughter of Ocean. [...] *Mêtis* plays a major role and is presented as a great primordial deity at the beginning of the world’(7).

53 E.g. Mark 2.17, 23 - 8, 7.1 - 23, 11.27 - 33, 12.13 - 7.

communicable by Jesus' followers. As such, *métis* was familiar to Jesus' followers and to early recipients of the Gospels: it shapes all their ministries.

We find *métis* in a close reading of Mark 7.24 - 30. It is a deeply clever story. It begins when Jesus leaves the predominantly Jewish region of Gennesaret (Mark 6.53) in Galilee⁵⁴ for Tyre (7.24), a Mediterranean city inhabited mostly by Greeks. Though Tyre was dependent on Galilean agriculture, trade enabled it to exert economic power in the region. Historical enmity existed between Tyre and the Galilee: Josephus speaks of the Tyrians as, 'notoriously our bitterest enemies'.⁵⁵ Jesus, as a Jew, consciously enters then a region that is demographically Gentile and historically hostile.⁵⁶

Before this journey, Jesus has been traveling and healing on both sides of the Sea of Galilee (1.21ff). He is already well-known for his miracles, authoritative teaching and power over demons. Crowds, we read, 'rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was' (6.55). Indeed, the crowd causes Jesus and his disciples to work without rest: 5000 need feeding (6.34 - 44), sick need healing (6.53 - 56) and Pharisaic criticism needs answering (7.1 - 23). After all this, Jesus makes his journey. He enters a house 'wishing no one to know it' (7.24b), and yet, we find, 'he could not escape notice'. Thus, 'a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet' (7.24c - 25).

The reader's focus (and, perhaps their sympathy) is on Jesus; especially, perhaps, when the woman is described as 'a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin' (7.26a).⁵⁷ But why stress her birthplace and

54 Malbon thinks this is a Jewish area because the Pharisees and Scribes come immediately (Mark 7. 1). See Malbon, 'Fallible Follower,' 42.

55 Theissen, *The Gospel in Context*, 72 - 80; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 297.

56 Donahue & Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 232; Guelich, *Mark 1-8*, 384.

57 Theissen sees people in ancient time as commonly characterized by an invariable factor (origin) and a variable aspect (culture or place of residence). He believes the details of the woman's race, language and nationality may reflect her economic, social and legal status; in other words, that she is a Greek-speaking, educated and upper-class woman. (Theissen, *Gospel in Context*, 68; Guelich, *Mark 1-8*:26, 385) Other scholars (Marcus, 462; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 297) agree that 'Greek' denotes this woman's religious or cultural identity; hence, she is a 'pagan' or 'Gentile'. Others take 'Syrophenician by birth' to indicate her citizenship as a *Syrian* Phoenician instead of a Phoenician from Libya (see Nineham, 200; Guelich, *Mark 1-8*:26, 385; Donahue & Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 233).

identity? Does Mark mean simply that she is a Syrophoenician *by birth*, or does he mean she is a Greek speaker/citizen who is also, perhaps, rich? Mark states her purpose simply: ‘She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter’ (7.26b). Even though she is a Gentile the woman comes and ‘immediately’ bows down at Jesus’ feet (7.25). Readers understand the woman’s haste. They know how she has heard of Jesus. Most recently he has driven demons from a deranged Gentile in Gadara (another Gentile region), who has then gone to proclaim in the Decapolis ‘how much Jesus has done for him’ (5.20).⁵⁸

At this stage, Mark 7.24 - 30 is another miracle story. Jesus is asked (and expected) to exercise miraculous power over demonic ‘unclean spirits’. His power can save the daughter, as it has often before. Readers have seen Jesus accede to every request, exhausting himself (and his disciples) in the process. No request has been denied. All kinds of people have been healed, including Simon Peter’s mother (1.29 - 31), a leper (1.40 - 42), a Paralytic (2.1 - 12), a hemorrhaging woman (5.25 - 34), a Synagogue leader’s daughter (5.35 - 43) and the demoniac in Gadara (5: 1-20). On each occasion Jesus overcomes not only sickness and evil, but also barriers of gender, race, social status, purity and defilement. His power is expressed differently in each situation. He ‘amazes’ everyone everywhere with his wisdom, power and authority. Readers are drawn in by these amazing stories. Now we wait for another marvel, another chance to see Jesus’ intelligent power (*métis*) triumph and another boundary crossed.

We are (differently) astonished then to hear Jesus say, ‘Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs’ (Mark. 7.27). What does this refusal mean? What *métis* (cleverness) is demonstrated now in his rejection of a woman who is neither a religious nor political leader, but just a nameless, weak, needy woman? Why use the metaphor of food and ‘dogs’ to rebuff her?

Readers familiar with Jewish tradition may grasp his meaning immediately:⁵⁹ ‘dogs’ are scavengers as the woman is for Jesus’ help. The comparison is strikingly unflattering since, as Mitchell points out, ‘Jewish

58 In Mark 3.8 people come from ‘Tyre and Sidon’ to be healed by Jesus. Marcus believes it is the explosive news of Jesus that enables the woman to hear about him (see Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 467).

59 Taylor quotes Rabbi Eliezer: ‘He who eats with an idolater is like unto one who eats with a dog’ (Taylor, 350); see also Burkill, 118; Ringe, 65 - 70; Guelich, *Mark 1-8*, 387.

law considered both dogs and Gentiles unclean', and 'dog made a ready name for Gentiles'.⁶⁰ Those who grasp Jesus' meaning may find good reason: the woman's request breached cultural *mores*, she brought shame on Jesus.⁶¹ We might go further, she perhaps should not have bothered (a very tired) Jesus, nor presumed as a Gentile 'dog' (in Jewish eyes) to address a Jewish man. Her (probable) upper-class Gentile status may even have reminded Jews of Galilean poverty and their historic animosity towards Tyre.⁶² She should, surely, at least have waited patiently; for, following the sequential nature of the encounter, Jesus' power to heal is 'a limited resource', which should be safeguarded for those who are willing to wait.⁶³

Readers of Mark also know Jesus likes to end conversations with a witty unanswerable word. His audience expects this here.⁶⁴ He has rebuffed the woman so skillfully we expect her to withdraw quietly. But Mark again amazes his audience. This 'dog' will not go quietly: in fact, it barks back audaciously, 'Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs' (7.28).⁶⁵ As Mitchell puts it, 'She talks back to the voice of authority.'⁶⁶ Readers cannot have expected this response: it is without precedence. However, the fact the woman calls Jesus 'Lord'⁶⁷ and 'turns a metaphor of exclusion – bread for children – into a metaphor of inclusion – crumbs for the dogs – demonstrates her extraordinary intellect and skill; for our purposes, her *métis* is self-evident.⁶⁸ The tables are turned. The same image of 'dogs' and 'crumbs' is used, but what was

60 Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 110; also, Taylor, 350; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 464.

61 Myers, *Blinding the Strong Man*, 203.

62 Theissen, *The Gospels in Context*, 77.

63 Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story Revisited," 90.

64 Ringe points out, 'If the story ended here, it would be a simple echo of Jesus' insistence on what liberation theologians have called "God's preferential option for the poor"' (ibid., 90.)

65 Most MSS include 'nai/yes' (possibly a further assimilation to Matthew) which turns the woman's reply into meek acceptance of Jesus' words. Hence, Schüssler Fiorenza sees 'nai' as downplaying the woman's 'alla/but' (Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 12). France counter-argues claiming the omission in P45 D W et al., is a misunderstanding and that the word designates a firm repudiation of Jesus' 'ouk estin kalon' [it is not good], while the substitution of *alla* after 'kurie/Lord' in 'D' is based on a misunderstanding (see France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 295).

66 Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence*, 110.

67 Many scholars see 'Lord' as meaning more than 'sir' to a Gentile (see Taylor, 351; Guelich, 388; France, 297; Marcus, 465). In other words, the woman anticipates what the disciples only perceive later.

68 Mitchell, 110; Perkins comments: 'Her response uses the ambiguity surrounding the term dog to turn the demeaning metaphor to her advantage' (Perkins, "Mark", 611).

(heard as) a term of contempt becomes an image of domestic provision. It is the woman's logic which now cannot be refuted; metaphorically, she has the last word. Though 'alien', the woman side-steps cultural projections and social prejudice; as Ringe writes, 'Her tactic is the verbal form of the strategy in martial arts of meeting the opponent's attack by using its own force against the perpetrator. Instead of confronting the insult, she turns the offensive label into a harmless one, and uses it to her advantage.'⁶⁹

Readers shocked by the woman may be even more surprised to hear Jesus say, 'Because of this word, you may go – the demon has left your daughter'. She goes home and finds 'the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone' (7.29 - 30). The woman's canny 'word', her skilful use of *métis*, overturns Jesus' rejection. His mind is changed: in that, too, lies *métis*; as it does also in power over sickness at a distance. It all makes for remarkable reading.

To Dietenne and Vernant, 'The only way to triumph over an adversary endowed with *métis* is to turn its own weapon against it'.⁷⁰ Jesus conquers the cunning spirit in the religious and political leaders of his day through *métis*. The Syrophenician woman uses the same skill to reply to Jesus and thereby secures her daughter's healing. As Perkins points out, 'She uses the same technique on Jesus that he has used on his opponents'.⁷¹ Her superior *métis* – despite being a double outsider as foreign and female – teaches Jesus that she and her daughter are worthy of attention.⁷² It is a powerful and wonderful story.

Mindful of this, we should remember *métis* was important to Greek culture for over a thousand years. Biblical scholars and ancient historians have not registered this sufficiently. Ancient Greece sympathized with the weak in the face of the strong. It applauded those who conquered weakness and danger through intellect and skill (*métis*). We see this in their admiration for Odysseus, in whom unexpected success (through *métis*) subverted strength and made him such a compelling, popular (because essentially sympathetic) figure.

69 Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story Revisited," 90f.

70 Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence*, 42f.

71 Perkins, "Mark", 611.

72 Many scholars believe the woman is teaching Jesus (see Donahue & Harrington, 237; Mitchell, 8; Jim Perkison, 82; Ringe, 72; Kinukawa, 60 - 1).

So what is Mark's purpose in this 'strange' story of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman? Table fellowship with Gentiles was, we know, one of the most divisive issues in the early church (cf. Gal. 2.11 - 14). Is it possible the woman articulates a Gentile perspective on this debate? If the saying, 'Let the children be fed first. It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs', was a well-known Jewish saying in Mark's community, will the Jewish Christians accept a change after hearing, 'dogs eat the crumbs under the table'? Is it possible Mark was confronting Jewish thinking at this turning point in his Gospel? Jesus' subsequent journey through Gentile Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis seem to confirm the difficulty of breaking down boundaries. Opposition is intense, the 'tradition of elders' strong: seen in this light the pericope in Mark 7.24 - 30 has an important *theological* and *practical* purpose. The Syrophoenician woman's multicultural, many-layered social identity makes her swift reply symptomatic of a reality Mark and Jesus had to confront. The woman is instrumental in redefining Jewish-Gentile relations and a host of other cultural shibboleths. *Métis* is a destructive *and* a constructive instrument in her hands.⁷³

Conclusion: *Métis* in China and the Chinese Church

Sensitivity to *métis* helps to reinforce key stylistic, cultural, relational and theological issues in Mark 7.24 - 30. Jesus and the woman both use *métis* in a story that redefines the nature and scope of Jesus' ministry and the role of (Gentile) women as agents of divine revelation. *Métis* empowers the weak to confront and teach the strong. In time, it would strengthen the persecuted church as it confronted imperial might.

As indicated at the outset, *métis* is found in many ancient cultures, including China, and the Chinese word for *métis* is Ji Zhi 机智. Lisa Raphaels and François Jullien have both written at length on this theme.⁷⁴ Pre-Qin scholars (in the so-called 'Hundred Schools of Thought') utilised *métis*, their practical wisdom becoming in time established cultural theory. Hence, Confucianists see *métis* as central to 'order' and definition, Daoists find *métis* in the fluidity of language and meaning, and soldiers

73 Donahue & Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 237.

74 See Lisa Raphaels, *Knowing Words*; François Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy*.

(*pace* works like *Master Sun's Art of War* 孙子兵法) turn *métis* into military strategy.⁷⁵ Raphaels likens Odysseus to Chinese heroes in novels such as 三国演义 [*Romance of Three Kingdoms*] and 西游记 [*Journey to the West*].⁷⁶ Many other instances of Chinese literary usage can be found. At root *métis* is about survival, justice, community and canny wit. Chinese people know a lot about *métis*! And so did Jesus and people of his day. *Métis* is a legacy Chinese share with first-century Palestinian and Hellenic culture.

When Chinese churches, in which women are in the majority,⁷⁷ read the story of the Syrophenician woman *métis* is in their minds. It should and must be so. The situation and interpretation of the story has hardly changed in the last century and more.⁷⁸ The story still conveys the need for faith and humility; it encourages mission to (Gentile) neighbors; it recognizes a divine predisposition towards the Jews.⁷⁹ Few readers see the woman's wit, skill, courage and strength (her *métis*) as enabling change: but it is her 'word' that saves.⁸⁰ Caricaturing the Syrophenician woman as simply gentle, tender and loving misses her persistence, acuity, courage and, as Jesus recognizes, her exemplary faith. Though Chinese tradition commends these female qualities, patriarchal, dualistic thinking conditions their interpretation of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician woman. As feminists have pointed out, though, it is insufficient to simply subvert hierarchy (that is, as Derrida puts it, 'still to operate on the terrain of and from within the reconstructed system' and be 'within the closed field of [these] oppositions'⁸¹); instead, we should enter that second

75 See Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy*, 4 - 20.

76 See Raphaels, *Knowing Words*, 129 - 228.

77 It is hard to tell the exact number of Chinese Protestants. According to a survey published in 2010 there are approximately 40 million Protestants in China of which more than 50% are women. See Katharina Wenzel-Teuber, David Strait, 'People's Republic of China: Religions and Churches Statistical Overview 2011'.

78 The earliest Chinese commentary I found on this story is by a German pastor: it is dated 1894; see, Hua Zhi'an, 马可福音讲义 Ma Ke fu yin jiang yi [Lectures on Mark].

79 See Sun Bin, '迦南妇人的信德 Jianan Furen de Xin De' (*Faith and Virtue of the Canaanite Woman*); ZhongShiji, '罕见的信心 Hanjian de Xinxin' [The Unusual Faith]; Vong Suoli, '迦南妇人的心——慧心 Jianan Furen de Xin - Huixin' [The Heart of Canaanite Woman - The Heart of Wisdom].

80 It may be unfair to criticize these sermons for ignoring the woman's 'word' and focusing on the woman's 'faith'. However, the Chinese Union Bible (1919) entitles this pericope, 'The Faith of the Canaanite (sic) Woman'. What's more, pastors tend to read Mark through Matthew and so prioritise the Matthean story.

81 Derrida, *Positions*, 42.

phase ‘the irruptive emergence of a “new concept”, a concept that can no longer be, and never could be, included in the previous regime’.⁸² Unless we see take risks with the traditional interpretation, the story of the Syrophenician woman will never act as it was surely intended; namely, to commend and emancipate women. Faith in a Chinese context is not to be limited to the traditional Western (and Chinese Christian) virtues of submissiveness, meekness, humility, but must be reckoned a God-given instrument to confront powerlessness, domestic violence, discrimination and spiritual (*qua* religious) manipulation. The story of the Syrophenician woman also challenges us to recognize a divine gift of grace that comprehends human failures and divisions and unites humanity in a higher vision of God’s inclusive love. Faith is, surely, central to Jesus’ exchange with the Syrophenician woman. Indeed, the story invites recognition of faith’s active engagement with (and overcoming of) the seemingly impossible. *Metis* empowers women in China to believe in their right to ‘talk back’ at oppressive systems and cultural prejudice in society and the church. But we have a long way to go.

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82 Ibid., 42 - 3.

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Religion and Development: The Role of Women

Claudia He Yun

Though the sages of all major religions have articulated messages to state the important role of women in shaping this world, their lessons are often distorted or ignored to fit in with the existing patriarchal culture. Nevertheless, today we are facing major social challenges which demand to be addressed by women and men jointly, and women will play more and more important roles in development. For instance, in water issues, women need to be involved in making water investment decisions since in many societies they not only are responsible for getting the water but also are the most affected by water problems. In addition, more opportunities and resources need to be specifically allocated to women to achieve poverty reduction. Only when women are given their equal roles in society and in development can we hopefully bring about a better future for humankind.

According to the Daoist tradition, the Great Dao gave birth to the Yin and the Yang and the Yin and Yang gave birth to everything else. While Yin and Yang oppose each other, they also nourish and give birth to each other. One can not live without the other and both are important forces in shaping this world. According to this tradition, Yin is feminine and Yang is masculine. Since it is only with the balance of the Yin and Yang that our world can prosper, Daoism has given woman and man an equal position in this world, granting them equal strength and power. In other words, in Daoism, women are just as capable as men as a force to shape this planet.

But there is more to it than that. In the Daoist Trigrams (八卦) which were used by the ancient Chinese to explain the world and predict

the future, the water trigram consists of one inner Yang and two outer Yin lines whereas the fire trigram is made of one inner Yin and two outer Yang lines. If we were to take these symbolic representations of the feminine and the masculine literally and translate them into our perceptions of female and male, female has two outward Yin appearances with an inward Yang core, and male has two outward Yang appearances and an inward Yin core. This could be interpreted as symbolizing masculinity in a woman and femininity in a man. This is something that contains great truth but which our traditional gender education is trying to deny. Daoist philosophy therefore implies dynamic harmony between the feminine and the masculine, both in society and in the human being, within the organic nature of the universe.¹

In some Daoist folk traditions, there are examples of women playing more important roles than men. In Christianity, God made the world in seven days and men are created by God. In Daoist folk religion however, it is the Goddess Nu Wa, a female, that fixed the big hole in heaven to stop the rain from drowning the earth. Nu Wa also made man so they may prosper again on this planet. In this sense, you may even say that the creator and savior of the world in the Chinese folk tradition, is a woman. By the way, one of the sacred stones (七彩石) that Nu Wa used to mend the heavenly crack is said to be in Louguantai, where Laozi wrote the *Dao De Jing*. I think it should be considered a symbol of women's rights.

In Buddhism, although it is believed by some that a woman has to reincarnate into a man before achieving enlightenment, the *Sudharma Sutra* (法华经) says otherwise. The *Sudharma Sutra* is widely believed to cover the last lessons the Buddha taught before he passed into nirvana (涅槃), hence are the most important ones. In the sutra the Buddha tells the story of how the Dragon's daughter (龙女) achieved *prajna paramita*, the wisdom of the other bank. In this story, the Buddha himself specifically grants equal capabilities and position to men and women in the path to enlightenment.

In both Buddhism and Daoism, female Goddesses play important roles in elevating this world from suffering and desperation. The most popular deity in both the Buddhist and Daoist traditions is the Goddess Guan Yin. In the Buddhist tradition, Guan Yin is the translation of the

1 Allerd Stikker, *Closing the Gap: Exploring the History of Gender Relations*. Salome: Amsterdam University Press. 2002. pp. 80-81.

Sanskrit word *avalokitesvara* and this means “the one who hears the cry of the world, the compassionate one, the one who answers your prayers”. In the Daoist tradition, she is called Ci Hang Pu Du, the compassionate one that ferries all to the world of bliss (慈航普渡真人). In both traditions, Guan Yin is arguably the most worshipped deity. It is believed that she is the one who will answer all the prayers and free all from their sufferings. She is the one that the majority of Chinese Buddhists and Daoists have a personal devotion to.

I visit a lot of temples and most of them have a place called the “pagoda of many deities (万佛塔). It is basically a home for broken statues. People would come and leave their family statues of deities if they no longer want them at home. This way the deities can continue to enjoy offerings and worship. I have been to many places like this, and I saw that most of the statues left there are Guan Yin statues, which means that the majority of statues kept at home are Guan Yins.

In the theological hierarchy, however, Guan Yin is not the most important deity. In Buddhism, her enlightenment falls behind that of the Buddha and her celestial position in Daoism is less distinguished compared to the Jade Emperor. But she is the one that people go to when they seek comfort and hope. She is the one who is believed to answer all prayers and free all from suffering. Why? I think one of the reasons is that she is a Goddess while the majority of other deities are male. Her popularity is an example of the important role women can play in hearing the cries, helping the needy and alleviating suffering in this world and beyond.²

Some Christian sages in Orthodox Christianity have traditionally placed women in an inferior and subordinate position to men, as is reflected in the works of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, who believed that women are both inferior and incomplete and have inherited original sin from Eve and therefore culpable for mankind’s fall from heaven. However, in a historic *mea culpa* ceremony in Rome on March

2 But Guanyin had not always been a Goddess. In the Hindu tradition, Avalokitesvara started as a male god in India worshiped by Hindus. And Then, he was taken up by Buddhists who brought him to China around the Fourth or Fifth Century AD. But at this point Guanyin was still a male god. Around the time of the Song Dynasty (10th century AD), Guan Yin became a female deity and remains so today. For a detailed study of this transformation see: Martin Palmer, *The Jesus Sutras: Rediscovering the Lost Scrolls of Taoist Christianity*. Wellspring: Ballantine. 2001.

13th 2000, that negative stance towards women was changed, when Pope John Paul asked forgiveness for the past attitude towards women by the Catholic Church. He was seconded by seven cardinals.³

Gnostic Christians also held very positive attitude towards women this was proved by the discovery from the so called apocryphal manuscripts found in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, a location far upstream of River Nile in Egypt. Recent specialized literature on the Nag Hammadi papers comes to a consensus the Nag Hammadi papers were possibly drafted in ancient Greek around the same time as the oldest Gospel. Because they were later ruled as heresy and destroyed on a large scale, those which survived were likely to have been hidden and therefore suffered less from manipulation and adaptation.⁴ In this sense, it is possible that the Nag Hammadi papers are very close to the original messages of Jesus.

The Apocryphal Papers contain the only complete Gospel of Thomas, in which Jesus stated, “When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner and the upper like the lower and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male, nor female be female, then you will enter (the kingdom)”.⁵ In this statement, Jesus believed in the unity of male and female and called on his disciples to see both male and female as equal in nature.

In *On the Origin of the World* and in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the taking of fruit from the tree of knowledge by Eve is seen as a blessing and not a sin. A blessing because it brings intrinsic knowledge and consciousness to humanity, thus transmitting a spark from the ultimate divine, the pre-existential, universal and androgynous source of Creation.

3 One of these sins was the humiliation and marginalization of women. However, there is still no consensus with regard to female priesthood in the Catholic hierarchy.

4 Most literature believe that the Nag Hammadi Papers were probably set down in and around 375 CE in the Egyptian Coptic language and that the original Greek texts date from between 50 and 70 CE. This is the same period as that of the oldest gospel, Mark, but possibly somewhat earlier. It is certainly earlier than the gospels of Mathew, Luke and John which were dated between 70 and 100 CE. The Four Gospels in the current Bible were endorsed as final texts of the New Testament at the Council meetings of Hippo Regius in 393 CE and of Carthage in 397 and 419 CE. On the other hand, the apocryphal documents were rejected at an early stage as heretical and mostly destroyed as a result. See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 1979.

5 Marvin Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas: the Hidden Sayings of Jesus*. San Francisco: Harper Collins. 2009. p. 33.

In the Gospel of Mary, Mary Magdalene is depicted as one of the apostles, favored with insight and visions that go beyond even those of Peter.⁶

Although the Nag Hammadi papers were considered as Gnostic texts instead of classical Christian scriptures, their discovery shed a lot of light on the teachings of early Christianity.⁷

Although it is widely believed that Islam put women in an inferior and subordinate position to men, some scholars believe that original texts of the Koran were in fact misogynic and represent a correction to the strongly patriarchal tradition of the Middle East.⁸ For instance, there is no story of Adam and Eve and no such thing as original sin. Therefore, there is in Islam no need for redemption and no universal blame heaped on women for stealing the fruit of wisdom and henceforth for original sin. But motherhood and family care are the only areas where, according to the Koran, women have a duty, whilst men have the responsibility to provide economic conditions. Most leaders of Islamic societies tend to stress that therefore women can have no political or economic functions and no leave to appeal against men's absolute "rule" in society. But Islamic scholars such as Riffat Hassan have opposed this kind of interpretation of the Koran. According to Professor Hassan, whereas patriarchal Islamic society interprets the word "Qawwamun" in the Koran as ruler, linguistically it actually means "provider".⁹

Though it seems that the sages of all major religions have voiced statements that all men and women are equal and constitute equal forces in shaping this world, their lessons are often distorted or ignored to fit in with existing patriarchal culture. Male domination theories have prevailed

6 Allerd Stikker, *Closing the Gap: Exploring the History of Gender Relations*. pp. 95 - 105.

7 In another historical Christian document by the Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Church Fathers who in 190 CE makes reference to God in feminine as well as masculine terms and with respect to human nature postulates that "men and women share equally in perfection and are to receive the same instruction and the same discipline. For humanity is common to both men and women, and for us in Christ there is neither male nor female." Quoted from James Judd, *The Female, the Tree and Creation*. Xlibris Corporation. 2000. p. 150

8 Professor Riffat Hassan is a champion of such a view. She is a Pakistani-American theologian based in Louisville, Kentucky. See Riffat Hassan, "Women's Rights and Islam: from the I.C.P.D. to Beijing" in *Interfaith reflections on women, poverty and population*. Centre for Development and Population Activities, Washington, D.C. 1996. pp. 59-70.

9 Allerd Stikker, *Closing the Gap: Exploring the History of Gender Relations*, p. 122 quoted from Betty Milstead, "Feminist Theology and Women in the Muslim World: An Interview with Riffat Hassan," *Feminist Theology*, Dossier 4, 1988.

in Islamic cultures and in recent years, we have witnessed a steady deterioration in women's status in many Muslim countries along with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. Although the Catholic church has made tremendous progress in promoting gender equality, female priesthood is still far from becoming the consensus.

Even in Buddhist and Daoist communities which are generally believed to be gender-neutral, in my work with them over the years, I have also encountered people who refuse to believe that men and women are equal. I have been to a famous temple for a lecture once and remember vividly how the monk who was organizing the event directed all male followers to the front and all females to the back seats. It reminded me a great deal of the segregation system prior to the civil rights movement in the United States, where whites were assigned better seats while black people could only occupy separate and inferior ones on public transportation. I have also encountered other people of faith, who could talk at length about why both man and animals are equal beings (众生平等), but when it comes to men and women, they would cite many different reasons to explain why they are not equal in the path to enlightenment.

It seems that we still have a long way to go in fully realizing women's potentials both in religion and in facilitating the development of human society. To an extent, whether women will be allowed to play these roles will determine whether our humanity could develop in a sustainable way.

We are facing an aging world in which the median age of the world population, which was close to 20 at the start of the 20th century, will likely rise to 40 by 2040. For many countries, caring for the old will be a major concern, and a shortage of productive labor vital to economic welfare will be another. This is already happening in China and has contributed directly to the abandonment of the one-child policy. But this will have major consequences for gender relations. It means that major social challenges will have to be addressed by women and men jointly, and women will play increasingly important roles in development.

One of these challenges is water. Many people in the world have no access to clean water. This is likely to worsen with the increasing frequency and severity of droughts due to climate change in different parts of the world. According to the World Health Organization, the lack of clean water is expected to cause the death of 3.4 million people

(mostly children) annually.¹⁰ Women carry most of the burden of finding and fetching water and the lack of sanitation in most cases has more devastating effects on women's health due to childbirth and menstruation, yet decisions on investments and distribution of water are more often than not exclusively handled by men. This imbalance clearly needs to be addressed. More women need to be brought in or encouraged to take charge of water issues and investment, and more investments and resources should be poured into helping more people access clean water. Climate resilience must be built into water-related decisions.

The second major challenge is for women to play a more significant role in poverty reduction. Poverty hurts women the most and successful poverty reduction initiatives such as micro-financing projects can help women gain economic independence, self respect and become agents of economic growth. While poverty reduction has been a major focus for developmental work and has been sitting on the UN agenda, the connection between poverty and women needs to be more explicitly addressed. More resources and opportunities need to be made especially for women.

Lastly, since we are having this conference in Jiangsu, I want to introduce to you a local champion for women's role in development. His name is Wang Fengyi (王凤仪, also known as 王老善人) and he was a well known Chinese educator in the late 19th and early 20th century. During his time, the majority of women were not allowed into schools and were denied any chance of education. Although he did not receive an education when he was young (he taught himself to read and write later in life), he was the first to open free schools for young women in China. Remember that at this time, China was in the process of great social transformation. The two Opium Wars and the Eight Countries' Invasion had brought China to the brink of colonization and Chinese elites were pondering about how to make China powerful again. Wang believed that the solution lay in the hands of young women, because their education and values would directly influence not just society, but the quality and education of the next generation, and hence the future of China. Since Wang opened his first free schools for young women, his example has been followed across China. Today, there are as many female students

10 WHO Water Day Report, available at: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/takingcharge.html.

in schools as male, if not more. We owe part of that to him, but more importantly, I think we should also remember what he said about the role of women, who hold the key to the future.

Women and men both play important roles in making this world a better place, and furthering our human spirit. And our world cannot be without either. As the Book of Change (易经) says: “Yin alone could not give birth, and Yang alone could not grow” (独阴不生, 孤阳不长). Only when the two are given equal status, strength and power, can the world prosper (乾坤和谐, 阴阳交泰).

Feminine and Affective Management of Faith-based Philanthropic Organizations

A case study of Tzu Chi Foundation in Nanjing¹

Zhong Xin²

At the end of 2010, the globally renowned Buddhist charitable organization, Tzu Chi saw an increasing rise in its beneficiaries in 72 countries and regions across the world.³ Tzu Chi began its projects in the Chinese mainland following its relief efforts in response to the devastating East China Floods in 1991. It was officially registered in the mainland on January 14, 2008 as “Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation”, and is now headquartered in Suzhou City in the Eastern part of Jiangsu Province.

The debut of Tzu Chi’s sign-language musical *Profound Parental Love* in Nanjing in 2007 heralded a wide variety of charitable efforts, including philanthropic visits, educational support and advocacy, environmental protection as well as volunteer workshops.

This study is based on data collected through the author’s participation in events hosted by Tzu Chi Nanjing office (TC-NJ) both in and outside of the city of Nanjing. Findings on its volunteer recruitment

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- 1 This study constitutes part of the findings from the project “*On the Operation Models of Buddhist-based Charitable Organizations*” (中国佛教背景公益组织的运行模式研究 10YJC840101) with grants from the Youth Fund of Humanities and Social Science Research, Ministry of Education, China.
 - 2 Dr. Zhong’s main research focus is on Buddhism-based charitable organizations. She can be reached through email at 13584059264@139.com.
 - 3 Cited from the *2010 Annual Report of Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation*, issued on April 4, 2011. P. 566.

and operational modes in the mainland based on the collected data can be verified in other studies. This article centers solely on the emotional and psychological aspects of those events with a view to providing references for researchers and practitioners in fields relevant to charitable organizations. The philanthropic endeavors of TC-NJ were studied through participatory observation and interviews from a sociological perspective. It was found that by adopting the operational model of the Tzu Chi Headquarters in Taiwan, TC-NJ events are of a high quality mainly because of its emphasis on the aesthetic, affective and feminine style of management.

Tzu Chi's feminine style of management

The organizational framework of Tzu Chi is bureaucratic on the surface and consists of a “4-in-1 framework of three-dimensional glass concentric circles” (hereafter referred to as the 4-in-1 framework). But it is different from Max Weber's highly rational modern bureaucracy as the Tzu Chi framework features an innate affective flexibility. This flexibility demonstrates itself in the following ways:

1.1 Feminine and affective organization

Tzu Chi's organizational structure, that is the “4-in-1 framework”, was put forward by its founder – the venerable Dharma Master Cheng Yen – in 2003⁴. This framework is rooted in a spiritual notion of delivering accountable, unified, concerted, committed and pious social services. Its volunteers are categorized accordingly into four groups, namely *Hexin* (One-mind), *Heqi* (Harmony), *Hu'ai* (Amity) and *Xieli* (Hand-in-hand). Of these, *Hexin* is composed of Tzu Chi's senior commissioners, who constitute core members assigned to transmit Tzu Chi values to the next generation. *Heqi* members are in charge of project development and management while *Hu'ai* is composed of project monitors and coordinators. *Xieli* members are responsible for project implementation and task fulfillment. Master Cheng Yen once compared the Tzu Chi

4 Pan Xuan. *Master Cheng Yen and Her three-dimensional concentric circles* (证严法师立体同心圆). Global View-Commonwealth Publishing, 2004:432.

framework to a tree, *Hexin* being its root, *Heqi* its trunk, *Hu'ai* its branches, and *Xieli* its foliage.⁵

At present, TC-NJ operates with only two lower categories *Hu'ai* (amity) and *Xieli* (hand-in-hand) and ten functional groups, handling training, photography, catering, general affairs, visits and consolation, publicity, finance, senior service, environmental protection and event coordination respectively. Group sizes increase or decrease depending on project needs. With these functions clearly defined, volunteers are recruited and assigned to their posts even as they stay connected with one another for optimum collaboration across different functions.

The *Xieli* (Hand-in-hand) group with TC-NJ consists of four teams organized according to their areas of residence in the city of Nanjing. These teams handle routine work in the office such as being on duty and coordinating book club events.

Among Tzu Chi members, address one another using kinship terms, such as brother, sister, aunt, uncle, is a common practice. All members refer to Master Cheng Yen as the head of the family. Senior female Tzu Chi members are addressed with the title of “mama” attached after their names as a sign of respect and filial piety.

Bureaucratic as its organizational structure may appear, the use of notions such as “concentric circles”, “tree”, “roots”, “trunk”, “branches”, “foliage” and *Hexin* (One-mind), *Heqi* (Harmony), *Hu'ai* (Amity) and *Xieli* (Hand-in-hand), reflects a high expectation of solidarity similar to that among family members. In Master Cheng Yen’s words, Tzu Chi’s undertakings are those of “Buddha”, and are “to be regulated with love and managed with discipline”.

The “4-in-1 framework” presents a clear-cut modern operational model. When coupled with a feminine perspective, its underlying rational and depersonalizing nature attains a warm and humane touch which complements well the absence of affective influence in the modern conventional bureaucracy through feminine expression.

1.2 Compassion and devotion in Tzu Chi’s organizational hierarchy

Differing from Weber’s bureaucratic and rational authority, Tzu Chi’s organizational hierarchy consists more of charismatic authority.

5 Pan Xuan. Ibid. p. 429.

Participants in Tzu Chi events are neither driven by external rewards nor intimidated by the fear of being penalized. For them, the role modeling by senior commissioners can best trigger feelings of compassion and strengthen their devotion. The study revealed that senior commissioners of Tzu Chi mostly assume backstage roles despite their having advanced experiences. Their commitment constitutes a great stimulus to novices in a way that is distinct from the conventional task-based authority mechanism. Tzu Chi's volunteers learn from their role models, free from the influences of economic and political interests and stimuli.

Shouldering trivial and procedural responsibilities, high-ranking volunteers entrust novice volunteers with visible, rewarding and in-the-spotlight roles. In this way, a sense of being respected, valued and acknowledged is nurtured among the latter. Gradually, the number of volunteers grows as more people identify themselves with the values of Tzu Chi.

Most Tzu Chi campaigns include internal interaction sessions. In those gatherings, members recall their personal experiences throughout the campaigns and the changes that have taken place in them. These interactions often involve personal stories so touching that many volunteers are moved to tears.

Besides, internal mutual support among group members is also a working area of Tzu Chi. Home visits to ailing members, financial support for needy members, emergency replacements and birthday celebrations are all very deeply felt activities for volunteers involved.

1.3 Aesthetic pursuits of Tzu Chi

For many volunteers, Tzu Chi is a magnet of intriguing aesthetic quality. At the very least, its attraction lies in the following aspects:

■ Volunteer uniforms

Tzu Chi volunteers wear uniforms in different color sets (either grey or navy blue) depending on their rank.

Navy blue uniforms (tops) are officially awarded by Master Cheng Yen to senior volunteers with three or more years of working experience.

The sets include the White Clouds in Blue Sky (navy T-shirt and white pants), the Noble Eightfold Path (navy blue dress) and Humility Tolerance Coat (Cheongsam for wearing to major celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year). The latter two in particular, if worn in groups, can best present the stateliness and grace of the Tzu Chi spirit. Some volunteers openly speak of their love for their uniforms. This is also shared by formal members of the Tzu Chi commission, who intimately refer to them as their *Ci Hong* (ships delivering mercy to all from torment with benevolence).

■ Venues

All venues of Tzu Chi events are furnished in good taste with flowers, fruits and rockeries to show grace and ease of a combination of Chinese and Buddhist traditions.

In the TC-NJ Office, visitors are first greeted in the reception area by a long desk on which Tzu Chi publications (*Jing Si Aphorism*, for example) are neatly laid out. Looking up in the reception area, visitors will see Master Cheng Yen's calligraphy scroll mounted on a wall. A brief tour of the office is often impressive with its minimalist decoration and great sanitation. At the entrance is a sign reading "please take off your shoes here", with slippers and shoe covers ready for use. Toilet doors are attached with slogans calling for the economical use of water and paper. The Jingsi Hall in Hualien, Taiwan, where the Tzu Chi Headquarters is found, has a distinctive style different from typical Buddhist temples. The whole setting beams with the elegance of the color gravel. The Hall has an entrance nestled under an eave in the shape of "人" (the Chinese character for Humanity), definitely not the conventional Buddhist style. Eaves in this particular shape speak not only of the thoughts behind the architectural design, but also the values of Tzu Chi. With only two simple strokes, the pictographic design can be readily associated with Tzu Chi's values by visitors, even those from abroad. Other symbolic venues constructed by Tzu Chi, such as Da Ai Gallery and Project Hope, all successfully carry, wherever they stand, strong messages of Tzu Chi's prioritization of humanity and humanitarian needs. It is indeed an inspirational innovation.

What permeates every Tzu Chi event is simplicity and solemnity in a blue and grayish setting decorated with natural plants. Bright and dazzling colors are often avoided in lighting and illumination. Even the vegetarian snacks prepared by Tzu Chi are known for their eye-pleasing shapes, colors and nutritious ingredients as well.

In short, for a large number of volunteers, Tzu Chi has helped cultivate their sense of beauty, and brought them inspiration to live lives of greater promise.

■ Musicals in sign language

Music is an indispensable component of Tzu Chi events. Songs and short musicals such as “Profound Parental Love” are rhythmic and convey heartfelt emotions.

Some of the most popular songs include “Love in the World”, with part of its lyrics reading as follows:

*I know there's love in this world that's worth waiting for
Closed hearts will open up eventually
Wounds will heal when we forgive, doubts will vanish when we care
Trust is the most moving love.*

Another song “We Are Family” conveys to the audience the message that

*Because we are family.
We are together and filled with gratitude.*

Two lines from “Love and Care for All” read thus:

*Let us pray for peace in our land
Keep our hearts from sorrows and pain.*

With simple lyrics, these songs offer encouragement, warmth and love to everyone in the audience where many find themselves becoming emotional after being carried away by the heartfelt lyrics or as they join unconsciously in the chorus.

In addition, the annual Tzu Chi concerts in recent years, such as those in Nanjing, Beijing and Hangzhou in 2016, were joined by well-known musicians and became phenomenal events in these cities.

2. Concluding remarks on Tzu Chi's feminine style of management

2.1 Affective management style

TC-NJ has a modern bureaucratic organization in terms of its organizational structure, authority hierarchy and institutional system. However, distinct from the purely de-personalized and oppressive routine⁶ found in Max Weber's bureaucratic model, Tzu Chi has favorably created a self-image of a large, love-inspiring, kinship-bound family among its members through the adoption of a feminine style of management, which can be spotted in its interactive events, mutual kinship-like support and appellation system, tearful and cuddling hugs in its advocacy events, conversational styles, songs, event venue decoration, and respect and tenderness-provoking gift preparations. Being part of its events does change indifference into empathy, numbness into passion, self-abasement to self-confidence. Therefore, it is justified to say that it is Tzu Chi that calls up the positive emotions of its members, echoing the previous studies of Ding Renjie and Lu Huixin on this charitable organization initiated in Taiwan. Moreover, as stated by Master Cheng Yen, Tzu Chi is "regulated with love and managed with discipline". The unification of love and discipline is an integration of a feminine flexibility into the rationality of its institutional system. As one of its offices, TC-NJ has fully exemplified this innate style in its organizational construction. As a result, it has flourished as an increasing number of volunteers are drawn to this growing family through the proliferation of love and care.

2.2 Aesthetic appeal

Musical performances in sign language, graceful uniforms, food preparation, and venue decoration for Tzu Chi events best express both the minimalist elegance and solemnity that it represents. Love, beauty and kindness are reproduced in diverse ways. This pleasant diversity has

6 Weber, Max. *Sociology of Domination*. Guangxi Normal University Press, 2010:24.

built up Tzu Chi's outstanding capability for recruiting quality volunteers, which in turn, enhances the quality of its campaigns while contributing to higher levels of aesthetic awareness among its members.

At present, non-governmental charity organizations are at different developmental stages and have different operational modes. Whether their campaigns succeed or fail, they exist side by side in mainland China. As they strive for official and public support and trust, more limitations will emerge in their efforts at organizational capacity building and at raising levels of professionalism in project management. In this sense, the feminine and affective style of management and the aesthetically-oriented operations of Tzu Chi, a Buddhist charitable foundation from Taiwan, may shed some light on the research and practices of non-governmental organizations in related fields.

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Caring for the Elderly and Lepers: Women's Silent Work in The Evangelical Church of Vietnam-South

Le Ngoc Bich Ly

I. Introduction

According to the Earth Charter, empowering and caring for the vulnerable and marginalized is one of the fundamental values and principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the twenty-first century.¹ In Vietnam, the government aims to realize this goal through social welfare and health care for all the population as one of the country's objectives in the country's Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the Period of 2011-2020. However, social welfare in Vietnam is still under-developed and the government is not able to care for a large population (90 million in 2013) especially the socially marginalized groups such as the elderly and lepers. According to the 2008 Vietnam Household Living Standard Survey, Vietnam had an estimated total number of 9.47 million elderly people or 11% of the total population. It is estimated that this number will reach 12 million in 2020.² Concerning lepers, Vietnam ranked among the top 14 countries with leprosy.³ According to statistics from WHO, in 2012 there were 296 new cases

1 "The Earth Charter," *Earth Charter*, n.d., accessed November 8, 2016, <http://earthcharter.org/discover/the-earth-charter>.

2 Nguyen Thanh Binh, "Elderly People in Vietnam at Present Time," *International J. Soc. Sci. & Education* 2, no. 3 (2012): 277.

3 Nguyen N. et al., "Leprosy: Ongoing Medical and Social Struggle in Vietnam," *J Cutan Med Surg* 12 (July 2008): 147–154.

detected.⁴ Hence, the role of religious groups in response to the needs of these people becomes prominent. In Vietnam, caring for these vulnerable people has been predominantly done by religious women.

By focusing on two cases of women's silent and invisible work in caring for the elderly and the lepers in a Christian organization, namely the Evangelical Church of Vietnam-South (ECVN-S), the paper will provide an in-depth analysis of their roles and contributions to sustainable development in the Vietnamese context. While women's work from other religious groups such as Catholic and Buddhist women have attracted media attention, this women's group has been invisible. Hence this study makes known the voices of this marginalized women's group who care for vulnerable and marginalized people. Data was collected from in-depth interviews with the women in charge of the work, their friends familiar with their work, and publications from these women.

This study shows how these religious women contribute to sustainable development by attending to the urgent needs of these people especially in times of crisis. It will argue that these women's silent and sacrificial contributions to this area of work are not only driven by their religious values, particularly compassion and humility, but also facilitated by opportunity structures. It also argues that while they contribute to sustainable development, their work might not be sustainable in the long-run because it is closely connected to their "inferior" and marginalized status as Christian women and to their personal charismatic leadership that maintains the work and attracts donations. The study also raises problems pertaining to the religious paradigm of social work in relation to gender and socio-political context in Vietnam.

The issue will be approached first by providing a general picture of the social roles of religious organizations in Vietnam. Then there will be a brief presentation on the background of the ECVN-S and its social role to highlight the context for the role of women in this church. Finally there will be an analysis of the two case studies of women's silent and "invisible work" to care for the elderly and lepers in this church in light of the above arguments.

4 World Health Organization, "Weekly Epidemiological Record (WER)" 88, no. 35 (August 30, 2013): 378.

II. Religious Organizations and Social Roles in Vietnam

According to the United Nations report on religious freedom in Vietnam in 2015, Vietnam had 24 million followers of recognized religions out of a total population of 90 million people with their proportions as follows:

Table 4.2. Government statistics of religions in Vietnam in 2015⁵

No.	Religions	Adherents (persons)
1	Buddhist	11 million
2	Catholic	6.5 million
3	Cao Dai	2.5 million
4	Protestant	1.5 million
5	Hoa Hao	1.3 million
6	Muslim	78,000
7	Bahai'i	7,000
8	Hindu	1,500

The roles of religious organizations in Vietnam continue to be limited due to the legal framework of the communist government. Since the 1990s, with the change in the government's attitude towards religion, religious groups have contributed significantly to the development of the country especially through social and humanitarian work.

a) Legal framework for social-religious activities in Vietnam

Right after the reunification of Vietnam under the communist government in 1975, the government planned to build a socialist and secular society in

5 United Nation Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, on His Visit to Viet Nam (21 to 31 July 2014)*, January 31, 2015, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/Visits.aspx>.

the whole country. Traditional rituals and religious activities were viewed by the government as part of backwardness and superstition, wasteful of resources, antithetical to national construction, and incompatible with Marxist-Leninist ideology.⁶ Based on this understanding of religion, the government started to “impose anti-religious (especially anti-Christian) policies”.⁷ The government confiscated church property, closed religious schools, arrested priests and sent them to re-education camps.⁸ Hence, during the period 1975 – 1990, religions did not have a public role in Vietnamese society.

However, since the 1990s, Vietnam has changed its domestic policies and its approach to international relations. It normalized its relationship with China in 1991 (after the war in 1979). In 1994, the United States lifted its trade embargo against Vietnam and normalized its diplomatic relations with Vietnam a year later. Vietnam became a member of ASEAN in 1995 and a member of the World Trade Organization in 2008. It was also the very first time that the Vietnamese communist government recognized the long lasting existence of religion and the positive roles that can be played by religious culture and ethical values. This integration process of Vietnam into the global economy started to open up opportunities for foreign investment activities, and was accompanied by a religious resurgence.⁹

Regarding public roles, the government has expanded the space for religious groups in the areas of social and humanitarian work. Their role is specifically stated in the Ordinance on Belief and Religion 2004 as follows:

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- 6 Hy V. Luong, “The Restructuring of Vietnamese Nationalism, 1954-2006,” *Pacific Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2007): 440–441.
 - 7 Scott W. Sunquist, ed., “Vietnam,” in *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 882.
 - 8 Lan T. Chu, “Catholicism vs. Communism, Continued: The Catholic Church in Vietnam,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 3, no. 1 (February 2008): 163, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.1525/vs.2008.3.1.151?uid=3738224&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21102660478521>; Quang Hung Nguyen, “Vietnam’s Policy on Religious Affairs Since 1990: A Cultural-Religious Viewpoint,” in *Religion, Public Policy and Social Transformation in Southeast Asia: Managing Religious Diversity Vol. 1*, ed. Dicky Sofjan (Globethics.net, 2016), 200.
 - 9 Nguyen, “Vietnam’s Policy on Religious Affairs Since 1990: A Cultural-Religious Viewpoint,” 201–206.

*The State encourages and creates favorable conditions for religious organizations to take part in humanitarian activities in compliance with the charters and regulation of the organizations and the provisions of the law. Religious leaders and members of religious communities, in their civic capacity, are encouraged by the State to organize educational, medical, charitable, and humanitarian activities in accordance with provisions of the law.*¹⁰

Viewed from the perspective of Vietnam's internal development under the communist government, this policy represents a leap in the government's perspective on religion. However, if viewed in the wider context of Southeast Asia, especially in comparison with countries such as Indonesia, and Thailand where religious organizations are allowed to participate in politics, run universities, hospitals and NGOs, the role of religion in Vietnam appears to be very limited. According to this policy, religious groups are allowed to organize educational and medical activities; however, in practice, these activities are limited to charitable medical work and primary level education.

b) Contributions of religions to social and humanitarian work in Vietnam

Since space was given for religious organizations to take on a public role through social-humanitarian activities, many religious organizations in Vietnam have contributed significantly to caring for the needy and marginalized in Vietnamese society. According to Nguyen Thi Minh Ngoc's study published in the official website of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha, these activities include providing free medical care, homes for the elderly, vocational training centers, kindergarten and free classes for the poor, centers for HIV/AIDS patients, and other humanitarian activities. For example, during the period 1992-1997, the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha operated 655 traditional medicine centers all over the country. The Catholic Church, at present, has 100 medical clinics and 25 leprosy centers. Regarding homes for the elderly, the Buddhists have over 20 elder-care centers all over the country with a total of over 1,000 residents. The Catholic Church also has 14 homes for the disabled, orphans, and the elderly. At present, in the education sector, the Buddhists

¹⁰ *Religion and Policies Regarding Religion in Vietnam* (Hanoi: Van hoa pham printing company, 2006), 62–63.

have over 1,000 free classes for over 20,000 children. In particular, Ky Quang Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City opened 6 primary classes with 119 pupils in 2008-2009. The Catholic Church also has 1,025 kindergartens and charitable classes, and 7 primary schools in Long Xuyen.¹¹ These are just a few examples of the social-humanitarian activities of religious organizations in Vietnam.

The above examples show that religious groups in Vietnam have played active roles in shouldering the responsibility, with the government, in caring for the needy and marginalized in Vietnamese society once this space has been opened to them, despite the existing limitations. However, dominating the scene, as presented above, are religious majority groups such as Buddhists and Catholics. Hence, this paper is focused on giving voice to a religious minority group or women in the ECVN-S through two case studies of how women silently and sacrificially care for the elderly and lepers especially in times of crisis.

III. Background of the ECVN-S and its Social Work

The ECVN in Vietnam was the product of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) missionaries from North America who successfully planted the Protestant faith in Vietnam in 1911 and established this local church in 1927 with 4,236 believers in 74 churches all over the country.¹² This is the biggest and oldest Protestant church in Vietnam. The ECVN was separated into two churches: ECVN-North and ECVN-South in 1954 when Vietnam was divided into two countries: North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Though the country was reunited under the communist government in 1975, the two churches have remained separate churches

11 Nguyễn Thị Minh Ngọc, “Vài Nét về Hoạt Động Từ Thiện Xã Hội Của Các Tôn Giáo Tại Việt Nam Hiện Nay [An Introduction to Social and Charitable Work of Religions in Vietnam Today],” *Giao Hoi Phat Giao Viet Nam*, last modified June 10, 2014, <http://phatgiao.org.vn/tham-luan-sach/201406/Vai-net-ve-hoat-dong-tu-thien-xa-hoi-cua-cac-ton-giao-tai-Viet-Nam-hien-nay-14245/>.

12 Hoàng Phu Lê, *Lịch Sử Hội Thánh Tin Lành Việt Nam (1911-1965): Gi dấu 100 năm Tin lành trên đất Việt (1911-2011)* [The History of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (1911-1965): Marking 100th Anniversary of Protestantism in Vietnam (1911-2011)] (Nhà Xuất Bản Tôn Giáo, 2010), 125–131; Thanh Xuân Nguyễn, *Bước Đầu Tìm Hiểu Đạo Tin Lành trên Thế Giới và ở Việt Nam [Introduction to Protestantism in the World and Vietnam]* (Hà Nội: Nhà Xuất Bản Tôn Giáo, 2002), 372, 380.

with their own church synods until today. This paper will focus on the ECVN-S.

In 2011, according to government statistics, The ECVN-S had over 600,000 adherents, 820 pastors, minor pastors, and preachers working in 34 provinces from Quang Tri southward; however, this church reported having 1 million believers.¹³ In 2016, the official website of the ECVN-S listed 1,550 churches and cell-groups, 1,124 pastors, minor pastors and preachers including 39 female preachers.¹⁴

During the period 1954-1975, Vietnam was divided into two countries under different types of government: Northern Vietnam under the communist government led by Ho Chi Minh and Southern Vietnam under the Alliance of Ngo Dinh Diem's government and the United States. The southern socio-political context provided the ECVN-S favorable conditions to expand their activities beyond religious purposes to include educational, medical and social activities. By 1970, this church owned 3 hospitals, 5 medical centers, 6 orphanages, and 77 schools. Secondary and high schools were opened in many places. By 1975, the ECVN-S had 142 secondary and primary schools with 800 classes for 50,000 students.¹⁵

In 1975, the whole country was reunified under the communist government. The ECVN-S's religious and social activities were interrupted. Many church leaders and members fled to foreign countries. All educational, medical and social facilities were handed to the government. The government dismissed all missionaries, sent 90 pastors to reeducation camp, and closed all theological schools and ninety-nine percent of churches of ethnic Vietnamese origin.¹⁶ The government did not recognize the status of the ECVN-S until 2001. Hence during the period 1975-2001, the ECVN-S did not play any significant role in society.

13 Thanh Xuân Nguyễn, *Một Số Tôn Giáo Ở Việt Nam [A Few Religions in Vietnam]* (Hà Nội: Nhà Xuất Bản Tôn Giáo, 2013), 298.

14 "Danh Bạ [Directory]," *Tổng Liên Hội - Hội Thánh Tin Lành Việt Nam Miền Nam*, last modified 2016, accessed August 13, 2016, <https://httlvn.org/index.php?do=danhba>.

15 Nguyễn, *Bước Đầu Tìm Hiểu Đạo Tin Lành trên Thế Giới và ở Việt Nam [Introduction to Protestantism in the World and Vietnam]*, 399; "89 Năm Tin Lành Đến Việt Nam [89 Years of Protestantism in Vietnam]," *Người Chân Bầy 10*, Sóng Tận Hiến (2000): 7.

16 Van Thien Tu Truong, "Menh Troi: Toward a Vietnamese Theology of Mission" (Doctoral dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, 2009), 52; Sunquist, "Vietnam," 879-880; "89 Năm Tin Lành Đến Việt Nam [89 Years of Protestantism in Vietnam]," 8.

Since its recognition by the government in 2001, the ECVN-S has actively participated in charitable work such as providing free medical and dental care for the poor in remote areas, Christmas gifts for poor children and the elderly, caring for the disabled, and giving aid to people hit by natural disasters. However, since this church is still in the process of recovery, the scope of their social-charitable activities has been very limited compared with that of other long-established religious organizations such as the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha and the Catholic Church.

In fact, there are two more social ministries which are not mentioned in the above listed social-charitable activities of the ECVN-S in its official social ministry: one is caring for the elderly widows of pastors and retired pastors; the other is caring for the lepers. This is because this work is being done, silently and voluntarily, by individual women in this church. The long period of crisis facing the ECVN-S between 1975 and 2001 makes the work of these women extremely important in sustaining the needs of two groups of people: elderly widows of pastors, and lepers.

IV. Women's Silent Work in Caring for the Elderly and Lepers

This section presents two case studies of women from the ECVN-S. The first case study is about the pastor's widow Le Thi Ngu Huong who has been caring for pastors' widows and retired pastors in the ECVN-S for more than 20 years. The second case study is about the female preacher Tran Thi Lieu who has been serving lepers for 42 years. Data for the first case study was collected from a direct in-depth-interview with the pastor's widow Le Thi Ngu Huong in February 2016. Data for the second case was collected from correspondence with the female preacher Tran Thi Lieu, her co-worker, and an overseas friend of hers via email, and reports on her work published in the ECVN-S's official website in 2016.

a) Case study 1: Caring for the elderly in times of crisis

The pastor's widow, Le Thi Ngu Huong, started to take care of pastors' widows in 1988 when her husband, Rev. Nguyen Son Ha passed away. As a widow herself, she could empathize with the situation of others like her. Hence she started to seek out other widows that she knew. She visited them to see how they lived. She felt deep pain on seeing their

plight. She said “Oh my God, they have suffered too much. Many didn’t have enough to eat. They had no houses to stay in and worked hard. Their children were also very poor so that they could not take care of their mothers. God put this burden in my heart. It felt so painful I couldn’t bear it.” In 1989, she went to see the vice chairman of the church synod and told him “Reverend, I went to see a number of widows. Their lives are miserable. A person who has served God her whole life is now in such a lonely and poor situation. No one cares for them. The church didn’t pay attention. I felt so sorry. Is there any way that the synod can help these widows?” She proposed that the synod would have a committee to take care of these widows and she would cooperate with them. While waiting for the decision from the synod chairperson, she went and investigated the situation of other widows. Everyone was in suffering. She was then invited to see the synod chairperson. She told him:

Dear reverend, I not only think of the widow, but I also think of descendents of the pastors as well. If in the future, they are called to follow in their parents’ footsteps, if they see this situation, they will get discouraged. They have served all their lives, and now that they have retired, no one cares for them. It is hard for them to enter this path. I think our church has the responsibility to care for them. It has to show love. Honestly speaking, we have said a lot about love, but there is very little love in action. We said God will take care, but if we don’t take care of them, how can they live? At least we should see the love between the Christian community and God’s servants. I feel so sorry for this.

After listening to her, both the synod chairman and vice chairman were very pleased; however, they could not do anything to help because of the difficult situation of the country. They told her:

We see that it is hard to create anything new. In such a situation of the country, it is good if we can keep what is already there. It is not possible to add new things. So, you just do whatever you can, quietly, to help the widows. We support you. The synod can’t stand out for this.

Finally, she had to manage to help the widows by herself. At that time, it was impossible to communicate with the outside world. Even sending a letter to the outside world was not simple. Inside the country, everyone was poor. No one could help the other. She had a son who was in Holland. So she sent him a letter to ask him to communicate with relatives in the US about the situation of the widows in Vietnam. For the

first time, she received 300 USD. At that time 300 USD was a lot. She went to see the vice chairman and said:

Reverend, I have received a gift and I want to share it with the widows. Instead of sending it to their homes, please allow me to invite them to gather at your home so that they can get to know one another, become acquainted and share their experiences. And you can also have God's word to comfort them. After that I will give them the gift. What do you think?"

The vice chairman agreed. The first gathering had 18 widows at the home of the vice chairman. They were very happy to meet one another. There was a widow saying "I have been a widow for more than 20 years, but I didn't know anyone else." Actually people had just remained in their own homes, did not go anywhere, and so did not know one another. Now they knew other sisters of the same situation. They asked each other about their families and shared information. They were very happy. The reverend also had God's word to comfort them. They worshiped and prayed. They also had a light meal. Then they went home. They said, "So happy! Please don't stop this, Mrs. Reverend. We need to continue this." They met every three months. For the first year, they gathered at the vice chairman's house. Mrs. Huong and her co-widow worker had to use their own money to treat the widows with light lunch and help them with half of their transportation costs when they came to the gathering. Since their gathering was illegal, they had to move here and there. They tolerated the situation for several years. In 1993, Mrs. Huong built a new house and since then she has had them gather in her house.

Mrs. Huong travelled to Europe and the U.S. to share about her work and raise funds for the widows in Vietnam. She said the donations had always been enough to meet their needs each year. The number of widows increased after 12 years. In 2002, retired pastors came to ask her to care for them as well. She said "How can I have the ability to care for all? My heart really wants to help, but my ability is limited. If there is a man who stands out to take care of retired pastors, it is better. If I am also responsible for it, I am afraid I can't do it well." After that she waited but no one did anything. She and the widows' committee felt sorry for them, so they also took on responsibility for the retired pastors. Since 2002, she has been taking care of 90 families in total, including retired pastors and widows in the whole south from Quang Tri to Ca Mau. She also organized retreats for them, both to comfort them and for them to have fun. Since the past four years, she has also bought medical insurance for

those who are under 79 years old because the government has taken care of those above 80.

b) Case study 2: Sacrificially caring for the lepers

The female preacher Tran Thi Lieu had compassion for the lepers when she was 10 years old. She started her ministry among Jarai ethnic women in 1974. For the past 42 years, she has been silently serving the lepers at Nui San Church in Nha Trang province and leprosy villages in the Central Highlands. In Gia Lai province particularly, there are six leper villages under her ministry. Five out of six villages now have prayer houses. Four villages have become Christian. There is also a big church with 1,000 seats to serve lepers in three villages.¹⁷

To reach these leper villages before nightfall, she and her co-workers have to leave very early in the morning to travel hundreds of kilometers up the mountains, over rough and slippery roads. Their compassion for these lepers gives them strength to endure the travel over long distances and to overcome their tiredness. Once she lost her way in a rubber plantation on the way to a leper village. She cried and prayed to God and walked in faith to find the village. She finally found it. Whenever she visits them, she brings God's Word to comfort them, prays for them, and brings them medicine and gifts. There are lepers in the final stage, suffering from serious conditions, bad odor and unbearable pain. They are laid outside, alone, with no one daring to come close. Ms. Lieu is the one who takes care of their wounds. She reports of the joy that could be seen on the faces of the lepers when they were cared for and loved. One of the patients said "...my wounds have been bandaged; my tears have been washed; I have received food and medicine; my shoulders have been embraced; I have received the living food... I am loved. Thank God for looking for and saving me!"¹⁸

17 "Thăm Viếng Các Làng Cùi Tại Gia Lai [Visiting Leper Villages in Gia Lai Province]," *Hoi Thanh Tin Lanh Viet Nam (Mien Nam)* – Tong Lien Hoi.

18 "Nhật Ký Hành Trình - Tháng 03/2016 [Journey Record - March 2016]," *Hoi Thanh Tin Lanh Viet Nam (Mien Nam)* – Tong Lien Hoi, last modified 2016, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://httlvn.org/ubpn/?do=news&act=detail&id=29>; "Đồng Hành Cùng Người Truyền Đạo Không Tên Tuổi [Accompanying the Anonymous Preacher]," *Hoi Thanh Tin Lanh Viet Nam (Mien Nam)* – Tong Lien Hoi, last modified 2012, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://httlvn.org/ubpn/?do=news&act=detail&id=12>.

Through Ms. Lieu's co-worker and friend, I have learned that Ms. Lieu has managed the ministry by herself. This is voluntary work. The ECVN-S has not paid attention to this ministry. Consequently her work relies on donations from inside and outside the country. The co-worker said that she herself has to pay for her own transportation costs and use her own money to buy gifts for the lepers whenever she travels with Ms. Lieu to visit the lepers.

V. Reflection and Analysis of the Two Case Studies

These two case studies, show how religious women contribute to sustainable development by attending to the urgent needs of these people especially in times of crisis. They also highlight how religious values enable these women's silent and sacrificial contributions to this area of work while arguing that opportunity structures or political and religious structures also play a role in their agency. It may also be argued that while they contribute to sustainable development, their work might not be sustainable in the long-run because it is closely connected to their "inferior" and marginalized status as Christian women and to their personal charismatic leadership that maintains the work and attracts donations. Finally this section also raises problems pertaining to the religious paradigm of social work in relation to gender and the socio-political context in Vietnam.

a) Contributions to sustainable development

The two case studies of women in the ECVN-S caring for the elderly and lepers show that these women significantly contributed to the wellbeing of these vulnerable and marginalized people. This includes assistance not only to their physical health but also their mental and spiritual health. This assistance becomes more urgent and meaningful in times of crisis. In the first case study, the pastors' widows faced crisis because of poverty and abandonment by the church and even their own families during the difficult socio-political period when the country was poor and isolated from the outside world and the church was not recognized. In response to their plight, Mrs. Huong extended help, care, and love to them. The material help may not be much, but the mental and spiritual gains after each gathering bring them joy, strength and solidarity. In the second case

study, the lepers' crisis shows in their being isolated from society, their suffering of stigma, and unbearable physical pains in the final stage of their sickness. Ms. Tran Thi Lieu has been giving them not only physical care but also mental and spiritual care. It is not just a passing help which is often given by charitable organizations or groups, but a long term, persistent service and friendship between her and them. This holistic care is manifested in the statement of a leper in the story above "...my wounds have been bandaged; my tears have been washed; I have received food and medicine; my shoulders have been embraced; I have received the living food... I am loved. Thank God for looking for and saving me!"

Since 2002, the ECVN-S has paid attention to the needs of pastors' widows and retired pastors. However, it can only help them with small amounts of money. For example, the regulation on retired pastors and widows of the ECVN-S in 2002 stated that pastors aged 65 and up, and female pastors aged 60 and up who have served for at least 30 years without interruption will receive 20,000,000 VND (around 900USD) with 15,000,000 VND (around 650 USD) for those serving over 20 years, and 10,000,000 VND (around 450 USD) for those serving over 10 years. Besides that, the synod also raises funds during New Year's Day and distributes these among the retired parties 4 times a year. According to this regulation, pastors' widows have no rights. They can only receive the aid through the status of their husbands.¹⁹

On 29 September 2015, the ECVN-S issued a new regulation on retired pastors and widows, which reflected several improvements regarding their welfare. The welfare benefit includes: a one time package: 25,000,000 VND (around 1150 USD) for serving over 40 years, 20,000,000 for serving over 30 years, 15,000,000 for serving over 20 years, and 10,000,000 for serving over 10 years. Many new benefits have been added. It is important to note that according to this new regulation, pastors' widows also have their rights to welfare.

Despite the involvement of the ECVN-S in a welfare program for retired pastors and widows, Mrs. Huong's program remains meaningful because it not only cares for their physical needs but also mental and spiritual needs. It is the need to be cared for, loved and in solidarity with people in the same situation. Her work was essential during the crisis

19 *Quy Chế 2001-2012 [Regulations 2001-2012]* (Tổng Liên Hội Hội Thánh Tin Lành Việt Nam (Mien Nam), n.d.).

period and continues to be important in meeting these holistic needs. The ECVN-S has not paid attention to the leper ministry. In this context, Ms. Tran Thi Lieu's work has been essential in meeting the needs of this group. Therefore, sustainable development depends on the specific needs of the people at each stage of life and also in each historical period. These needs are holistic.

b) Religious values that enable their work

The two case studies also show that it is religious values such as compassion and humility that enable these women to silently, persistently and sacrificially serve the needs of these two vulnerable and marginalized groups of people over a long period of time.

Compassion and humility are the core values of Christianity. These values are taught and embraced in the life of Jesus, the founder of this faith tradition. Christians believe that it is out of love or compassion for humanity that God sent his only Son, Jesus, to the world to save people from evil ways of life. Jesus also teaches how this love and compassion should be realized in specific actions in feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, and welcoming strangers (Matthew 25:35-37). Jesus also shows his humility through washing the feet of his disciples.

This compassion and humility can be clearly seen in the work of the women in the two case studies. In the first case, the pastor's widow Le Thi Ngu Huong felt compassion for the plight of pastors' widows who lived in poverty, homelessness, and abandonment by the church and family during the most difficult socio-political period of Vietnam. She felt their pain and this led her to act on their behalf. She also stated this motivation when she spoke to the synod vice chairman:

I think our church has the responsibility to care for them. It has to show love. Honestly speaking, we have said a lot about love, but there is very little love in action. We said God will take care, but if we don't take care of them, how can they live? At least we should see the love between the Christian community and God's servants. I feel so sorry for this.

Similarly the female preacher Tran Thi Lieu became involved in the leprosy ministry because she had compassion for the lepers since she was 10 years old. It is this unconditional love that has enabled her

to sacrificially and committedly care for these socially marginalized and abandoned people for more than 40 years. It is this great love that helps her overcome the fear of being infected by this deadly disease and bandage the wounds of these people. The two women also show their humility in their silent and sacrificial service for the two groups of people. They do not demand any recognition or status.

c) Structural opportunities that enable their work

Besides religious values, opportunity structures, specifically opportunities from the socio-political context of Vietnam and formal religious structures, also play a role in enabling these women's agency. In political science, "opportunities" or "political opportunity structures" often refer to both formal political structures and the environment that affects the dynamics of social movements.²⁰ In this case, opportunity structures refer to changes in the wider political context and formal religious structure that affect the women's agency in getting involved in their work in the two case studies.

Indeed, the socio-economic and political situation of Vietnam during the period 1975-1990s manifested itself in economic, political and religious crisis: poverty, political isolation, and religious repression. After 1975 the entire country was under the rule of the communist government. Vietnam faced economic crisis and isolation from the outside world for a couple of decades. After reunification, Vietnam adopted the socialist economic model whereby the individual and family-based economy was banned and discouraged. All land was common property and farmers had to work in collective farms and their households received the share of the output based on their recorded working hours in the communal land. However, this collective model brought very low economic results. Consequently, Vietnam became a net importer of rice.²¹ Facing this

20 Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization," in *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*, ed. J. Graig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans (London: UCL Press, 2005), 83–98; Doowon Suh, "How Do Political Opportunities Matter for Social Movements?: Political Opportunity, Misframing, Pseudosuccess, and Pseudofailure," *The Sociological Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2001): 437–460.

21 Quy Toan Do and Lakshmi Iyer, "Land Titling and Rural Transition in Vietnam," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 56, no. 3 (April 2008): 534–535.

economic crisis, Vietnam started its economic reforms (Renovation) in 1986 by changing from a collective to an open-market economy whereby the household became the basic unit of the economy. Households could own, rent and sell land and their agricultural produce.²² The economy started to take off.

Regarding international relations, from 1976 to 1989, Vietnam relied heavily on the support of the Soviet Union. During this period, the U.S. prevented the world financial institutions and nations trading with the U.S. from giving aid to Vietnam.²³ As a result, Vietnam was isolated from the outside world. The case of the pastors' widows in the ECVN-S is an example of how the socio-economic situation of Vietnam affected the lives of older people in this church. Even though they were leaders of this religious community, they still suffered the effects of the situation.

At the same time, the government also imposed repressive policies on religious groups in Vietnam, which has already been presented in the third section of this paper. The ECVN-S, did not have a legal status until 2001. Between 1976 and 2001, the hierarchical leadership of this church was not recognized by the government. Consequently the leadership did not have much power to decide on communal issues. This is clearly seen in the case of the pastor's widow Le Thi Ngu Huong. When the men could not do anything, this woman had no other choice than to take courage to stand up for her cause. Because she is a woman and a widow, somehow her marginalized status gave her the opportunity to escape and to minimize trouble with the authorities. Similarly this crisis period also gave opportunities to the female preacher Tran Thi Lieu to establish her work among the lepers in the Central Highlands while the ECVN-S as an institution could not have any power over the ministry. Hence, the socio-political and religious contexts of Vietnam played a significant role in enabling the women in the ECVN-S to become involved in ministries to the elderly and to lepers.

22 Philip Taylor, "Poor Policies, Wealthy Peasants: Alternative Trajectories of Rural Development in Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2, no. 2 (August 2007): 7, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.1525/vs.2007.2.2.3?uid=3738224&uid=2&uid=4&id=21102660478521>.

23 L. Shelton Woods, *Vietnam: A Global Studies Handbook* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 79.

d) Challenges to their work

Despite the positive contributions of these two women, there are challenges pertaining to their work. While they contribute to sustainable development, their work might not be sustainable in the long-run because it is closely connected to their “inferior” and marginalized status as Christian women and to their personal charismatic leadership that maintains the work and attracts donations.

Their inferior and marginalized status is due to their gender status within the ECVN-S’s system. For over a hundred years of its existence, the ECVN-S has viewed women as inferior and subordinate to men. The highest position that a woman can hold in this church is that of a female preacher with the conditions that she must be celibate for life and never be ordained. This is not required of men. Currently, this church has 38 female preachers compared to 1,085 male pastors both ordained and non-ordained.²⁴ Prejudice against women’s leadership is still strong within the ECVN-S. At present, only 5 of them are ministers to local churches since these women have, over a long period, built these churches from scratch and with much personal sacrifice under conditions of political difficulty. Pastor’s wife is the most accepted position in this church; however, pastors’ wives are generally expected to support their husbands through prayers behind the scene, bearing and raising children, and doing chores at church so that their husbands could focus on preparing Sunday sermons and managing church affairs. After the death of their husbands, pastors’ widows have to leave the church and usually would stay with their children. They become invisible in the ECVN-S. This inferior and marginalized status of the female pastor and pastor’s widow means that these women do not have a voice or power in the system. Indeed, these two women, Mrs. Huong, and Ms. Lieu have been silently and sacrificially serving the elderly widows and lepers without any official recognition from this church. This also means that these two ministries have not had a chance to gain attention and involvement from the larger religious community. Hence, the continuity of the work cannot be guaranteed.

24 “Danh Bạ [Directory].”

The second challenge to their work is closely connected to their personal charismatic leadership that maintains the work and attracts donations. Weber defines ‘charisma’ either as a gift naturally bestowed on a person or a capacity acquired through some extraordinary means such as asceticism which awakens that capacity within the person. With a sense of calling and some exceptional personal qualities, these leaders inspire loyalty and obedience from followers.²⁵ In this paper, charismatic leadership refers to the ability of the women to selflessly and compassionately serve the two marginalized groups of people and to gain trust and financial support from others for their work over a long period of time. Since the activities and financial support to sustain the work are closely connected to their personal charismatic qualities, the future of the work may be unstable. Once these charismatic leaders pass away, leadership succession will be a problem and their work might not be sustained in the long run. Trust and support for their ministries might be withdrawn. This can be seen in the fact that the ECVN-S has not taken over the work of these women.

e) Problems pertaining to the religious paradigm of social work in Vietnam

Within the larger socio-political context of Vietnam, social work undertaken by religious believers has been performed under a cloud of ambivalence in the attitudes of both the religious entities and the government. On the part of religious people, the motive for social work might not always be purely stimulated by religious values such as compassion and selfless service. Oftentimes, they have hidden agendas and politics, which is to convert the needy to their faith or to gain favor from local authorities for making greater contributions to the society compared to other religious groups. This does not deny the genuine compassion, selfless service, and life-meaning that religious people have brought to countless needy and vulnerable people. From the government side, the involvement of religious groups in social work is promoted but there is wariness about the influence and spread of religion. This ambivalence and tension is reflected in the writing of the Vietnamese scholar Nguyen Thanh Xuan who wrote about the ECVN-S’s social work during 1954-1975 as follows:

25 Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 2–3.

*The evangelists of the ECVN-S in 1954-1975 were patient, clever and practical. Wherever they went, they were zealous to organize social activities, cared for daily needs such as food, clothes, shelter, funerals to leave good impressions, then gradually introduced the new faith. Especially, they also exploited the difficult socio-economic situations, the depressing situations of wars and disasters to draw people to the faith.*²⁶

When religions are given limited space in society, this space cannot avoid becoming the arena for competition and contestation among different religious actors for public recognition. This can be a healthy sign that encourages religions to be more socially engaged and to practically enter into the lives of the common people. However, it can create an unhealthy environment when social work becomes a tool for establishing the status of the religious group rather than as a response to human needs.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has given voice to women from a minority religious group, namely the ECVN-S in Vietnam, through two case studies of their silent and sacrificial work in caring for lepers and the elderly widows of pastors. Their work has been essential in meeting the needs of these vulnerable and marginalized groups especially during times of crisis. The two case studies have shown that compassion and humility that are basic Christian values have enabled these women to silently and selflessly serve these vulnerable people for an extended period of time without any official acknowledgement from the church. The paper has also shown that their agency has been enabled by opportunity structure, specifically changes in the socio-political context of Vietnam and the religious structure. The economic, political and religious crisis during the period 1975-2000 gave these women opportunities to become involved in these ministries while the male leaders of the church were unable to do anything to help.

Despite their positive and essential contributions to sustain the livelihood of a portion of the community, their work is unstable since it is closely connected to their “inferior” and marginalized status as Christian women and to their personal charismatic leadership that maintains the

26 Nguyễn, *Bước Đầu Tìm Hiểu Đạo Tin Lành trên Thế Giới và ở Việt Nam [Introduction to Protestantism in the World and Vietnam]*, 393.

work and attracts donations. It is only now that the ECVN-S has paid attention to the needs of widows and retired pastors by providing them some financial help. However, needs are not only material, but also mental and spiritual. The ministry towards lepers has not received much attention from the church and the Christian community. Hence the work of these two women remains important in meeting the needs of these vulnerable people. Additionally, despite their sacrifices and long-standing contributions to the community, they have not been given recognition by the church. Hence, it can be said that their “invisible” work is identified with their inferior and marginalized status in the church structure.

Finally the paper has observed that while religious values enable people to genuinely and selflessly care for the community through social-charitable work, this kind of work can also become a tool for some religious groups to expand their influence in competition with other religious groups since this is the only public space available to them. In Vietnam, this public space is still limited due to the current legal framework of the country.

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Part VI

Inter-Faith Initiatives and Approaches to Development

Experiences of Inter-faith Cooperation in Asia: APAY's Inter-faith Initiatives on Just-Peace

Nam Boo-Won

A Brief Introduction of APAY

The Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) is a regional body of the world YMCA movement comprised of 24 national or territorial councils of YMCAs in the Asia and Pacific region. It is an integral part of the World Alliance of YMCAs to which 119 national or territorial movements are affiliated. The Young Men's Christian Association is a faith-based NGO working for social justice for all youth, regardless of religion, race, gender or culture. The YMCA is a global ecumenical movement reaching 58 million people in 119 countries worldwide. Founded in 1855, the World YMCA movement is the oldest and largest movement for youth in the world. The office of APAY is in Hong Kong.

YMCA Mission and Inter-faith Dimension in Context

As you may be aware, the YMCA, at its early beginning in England in the mid 19th century, was a Christian youth movement uniting young Christians from different denominational backgrounds. During that period, the movement had a strong evangelical nature. At the same time, as found in the history of the world YMCA movement, the founders of YMCA in its infant stage were social reformers¹ committed to social

1 Clarence Prouty Shedd, "History of the World's Alliance of YMCAs", SPCK, London, 1955, pp. 17-18

change such as reducing working hours in the context of 19th century England characterized by the industrial revolution. It is a well-known fact that the Paris Basis², the Mission Statement of World YMCA adopted at its first World Council in Paris in 1855 served as a reference base for the formation of the mission statements of WCC, WSCF and World YWCA.

As the YMCA movement spread towards Asia giving birth to new YMCAs in different countries, a regional entity came into being as an outcome of the collective efforts by those national movements. Finally in 1949, the APAY was formed as the Asia Area Committee under the supervision of the World Alliance of YMCAs with a view to seeking regional identity as well as contextual mission reflective of the challenges of the times.

One of the challenging realities of Asia then was the inter-religious and inter-cultural context faced by Asian YMCAs. In their quest for being true servants of Jesus Christ in responding to the aspirations of Asian people, the leaders of Asian YMCAs began to question Christian expansionism and the concept of 'Christendom'. In fact, "the YMCA was one of the first Christian organizations to recognize that there was truth in non-Christian faiths as well. Therefore, the best method of the mission was conversation and not confrontation with other religions".³ Earlier at the Far Eastern and India Area Conference in Baguio, Philippines in 1933, the participants stated that "We, as followers of Christ, firmly holding to the fundamental truths and inner religious experience of our Christian faiths, should regard those of other faiths with respect and share with them in a humble spirit the deepest things of life, thus enriching and deepening one another's fellowship with God." (source?)

From then on, the themes of major YMCA conferences held in this region at this time reflected these concerns. For example, the Leaders' Conferences themes were: "The Role of YMCA in Changing Asia" (1963), "Together in a Developing Asia" (1971), "Identity and Mission of the YMCAs in Asia" (1975), and "YMCA Committed to Reconcile in Asia" (1979).

2 "The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of his Kingdom amongst young men."

3 M. D. David, "A Symbol of Asian Solidarity", Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, Hong Kong, 1998, p. 83

Experiences of Inter-faith Cooperation Forum (ICF) in Asia

There have been many programs initiated by the APAY to address the issue of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation for building communities and societies characterized by justice and peace in the region. In this paper, I would like to focus on the recent experiences of a program called “Inter-faith Cooperation Forum”, a joint project by APAY and CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) which came into being as a regional inter-faith movement, an outcome of a Consultation on Interfaith Cooperation in Asia (April 5 – 10, 2003) held in Prapat, Indonesia. The consultation was organized by APAY, CCA together with then EED with a view to developing a movemental response to 9/11 2001.

How it came into being

Following the dire events of 9/11 resulting in President Bush’s “war on terror”, religious leaders and activists throughout Asia were, with a sense of urgency, seeking ways to respond relevantly to the cause of 9/11 and its foreseen impacts on global politics. Initiated by CCA and APAY, 37 concerned individuals with different faith backgrounds gathered in Parapat, Indonesia from 5th to 10th April 2003 for a Consultation on “*Inter-Religious Cooperation in Asia - An Interfaith Endeavor to Learn from Each Other’s Wisdom to Live Together*”. After much vigorous discussion, a strong consensus was reached that a regional interfaith movement is to be created with a view to building a viable response to this new post-9/11 global political landscape. In its final statement, titled “To Seek Peace, Justice and Sustainable Lifestyle”, participants urged in a common voice that “Religion should make an option for the oppressed and marginalized, rather than for the rich and powerful.” They also came up with recommendations that would be responsible for initiating and monitoring the following tasks:

1. Form a website with the papers of consultations and other interfaith activities in Asia;
2. Prepare further consultations on gender justice, religious leaders, youth groups and donor organizations;
3. Undertake a research project to examine and evaluate school text books to identify cases of prejudices and stereotyping and

- to propose educational materials that enhance interfaith respect, harmony and human values;
4. Initiate national training programs, and internship, student exchange and live-in program aimed at interfaith leadership formation;
 5. Form interfaith mediation and reconciliation teams that can intervene in situations of violent conflicts;
 6. Encourage and support an Asian Interfaith Day, when interfaith events would be held in each country;
 7. Prepare a manual for peace that would highlight the common points among religions, that could be used by groups of ordinary people and get translated into local languages;
 8. Create a justice and peace fund for Asia to support local initiatives focusing on interfaith justice and peace building;
 9. Examine the patriarchal theologies, structures and practices of our religions and cultures in order to empower women by developing alternative educational resources for the promotion of equal partnership between women and men;
 10. Identify and make better known the existing resources for peace education in Asia and explore the feasibility of an Interfaith Institute for the Study of Peace.⁴

In response to this, an Interfaith Continuation Committee was formed and a mandate was given to the committee that it would meet at least once each year and initiate and monitor the development of a regional interfaith movement.⁵ EED then offered to provide funds to the committee to help in developing a vision for a regional interfaith program. CCA and APAY, together with the committee, provided a stewardship for further developing concrete programs of ICF. Under the guidance of this committee, the newly formed Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) organized two workshops in 2003 and 2004 to continue to search for an appropriate program response in the name of ICF. The two

4 Tony Waworuntu, Max Ediger (Ed.), "To Seek Peace, Justice and Sustainable Lifestyle", CCA, Hong Kong, 2003, p. 3~4

5 Members were: Ms. Meka Rajeswari, Hindu from India, Ms. Rose Wu, Christian from Hong Kong, Ms. Lapapan Supamanta, Buddhist from Thailand, Mr. Maáirif Jamuin, Muslim from Indonesia. Dr. Ahn Jae Woong, GS of CCA, Mr. Yip Kok Choong, GS of APAY and Mr. Max Ediger of DAGA (who was later asked to serve as coordinator)

workshops were: “Towards Gender Justice and Genuine Partnership of Women and Men” held in Thailand in April 2003; and “Young People as Peacemakers and Culture Bearers” held in India in August 2004.

These two workshops provided valuable inputs on how to best give space where youth and gender issues would be effectively represented in ICF programs. With the inputs and recommendations made by the consultation and the two ensuing workshops, the committee formulated the concept of a School of Peace (SOP) through which youth could learn about interfaith just peace as well as formed a regional network to address inter-religious conflict and violence through engagement and dialogue.

School of Peace: a flagship program of ICF

In February of 2006, the first SOP opened on the Visthar campus in Bangalore, India. Seven Asian countries were represented by 16 young participants, all between 20 to 30 years of age. In keeping with the ICF goal to be interfaith in nature, the group consisted of 7 Muslims, 6 Christians and 3 Hindus, of which 9 were women and 7 men. Briefly, the curriculum focused on the following month-long modules: 1) Multiple Identities and Conflict; 2) Conflict, Violence and War; 3) Transformation – Personal and Community. Several sub-themes were used to help participants more easily reflect and remember specific learning points such as: 1) moving from tolerance to acceptance to engagement; 2) moving from discussion to dialogue; 3) religion, faith and spirituality; 4) don't be busy – be effective; 5) think outside the box; 6) conflict as opportunity – conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation; 7) gender as a cross-cutting issue; 8) deep listening; 9) respect for differences; 10) tools for analysis; 11) human rights.

An action/reflection praxis was practiced with lectures and input by resource persons. After each field trip and each module, participants were requested to write and present a reflective essay on their own transformation process during the month. At the end of the SOP, their final reflective essay also focused on how they hoped to make use of their new knowledge in their local communities and organizations after returning home.

The 2007 SOP again was held on the Visthar campus and started in February with 16 participants from 8 Asian countries. Along with Christians, Muslims and Hindus, three Buddhists and one Indigenous

person attended that year. SOP continued to be held on the Visthar campus in 2008, 2010 and 2012. The ICF Committee agreed that the SOP did not need to be held annually, but occasionally the alumni of past SOP programs should be brought together for workshops to keep them connected regionally and to help them improve their knowledge and skills. Through these workshops ICF could also develop SOP alumni as resource persons in specific areas. In response, a series of six workshops were held in 2009, giving all SOP alumni an opportunity to join one which they considered most relevant to their work. The six workshops selected for this process were:

1. Community Organizing, held in Nepal
2. Journalism, held in Thailand
3. Religious Fundamentalism, held in Indonesia
4. Human Rights, held in Mindanao, Philippines
5. Organic Gardening, held in Sri Lanka
6. Drama, Bangalore, India

In the following years, ICF has continued to organize numerous workshops based on the local and regional needs of alumni. Through these workshops, SOP alumni are also developing their leadership skills as well as gaining confidence to serve as ICF resource persons in the future. This helps provide sustainability for the program.

Statistics of SOP

ICF has now completed the three-month SOP seven times with a total of 115 participants from 17 countries.

	COUNTRY		SEX		FAITH	
1	Bangladesh	7	Female	54	Christian	39
2	Burma	11	Male	61	Muslim	37
3	Cambodia	14			Buddhist	25
4	Canada	1			Hindu	9
5	China	2			Indigenous	4
6	England	1			Free Thinker	1

7	Hong Kong	1		
8	India	3		
9	Indonesia	18		
10	Laos	5		
11	Nepal	15		
12	Philippines	12		
13	Sri Lanka	4		
14	Thailand	13		
15	Timor Leste	4		
16	USA	1		
17	Viet Nam	3		

ICF keeps in touch with the participants through e-newsletters, workshops, national forum meetings, chats, phone calls, and mentoring visits.

Based on feedback from SOP alumni, the success of the program lies with the challenge ICF gives to the participants to reflect deeply on their motivation for being involved in interfaith justpeace, and to identify the ideology and vision that will keep them focused and working long-term to build new communities of interfaith justpeace. According to Max Ediger, ICF Coordinator, “without a vision a movement will quickly die and accordingly much emphasis is placed on helping participants look deep into their souls to identify their motivation for work, their ideology that will guide them in that work, and their vision which provides them with a clear and detailed blueprint of what they want to build. As they build their ideology and vision, they are further challenged to try and make their lives and their local organizations clearly reflect that ideology and vision.”⁶

Formation of National Forums

By 2009 some countries had a growing number of SOP alumni. The time was right to form National Forums in countries where there were

6 Max Ediger, “People without vision will perish”, in Report of the “Consultation on re-envisioning the mission and objectives of ICF”, held in Hong Kong 27-29 Sept. 2016, p.6

5 or more SOP alumni. National coordinators in those countries would be selected locally, and those coordinators could strengthen cooperation between ICF and local SOP alumni and also help to expand the network to include other like-minded individuals and organizations. The National Forums were established in 9 countries - Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Laos and Bangladesh.

The responsibilities of the national coordinators include:

1. Coordinate all national level programs that grow out of ICF involvements.
2. Ensure that all local SOP alumni participate in all levels of all local activities including identifying activities, planning, preparing, facilitating and evaluating.
3. Strengthening unity among local SOP alumni through email contact and national-level meetings when appropriate.
4. Working with all local SOP alumni to expand the local and national network.
5. Share information regularly to ICF coordinators about forum activities.

Development of Mini-SOPs

In early 2010, APAY proposed to carry out some shorter SOP courses for those who could not leave their present job for three months. In October, the first Mini-SOP was organized in Sri Lanka focusing on dialogue and diversity. The course lasted for three weeks and about 25 people participated from YMCAs around Asia. Two more Mini-SOPs, organized by APAY, were later held in February 2011 (Nepal) and July, 2011 (Bangladesh).

A fourth Mini-SOP was organized by the World Alliance of YMCAs from March 21 – 29, 2015 on the Peace Boat. A fifth Mini-SOP was just completed in August with participants sent by YMCAs and NCCs in countries where ICF alumni have already formed National Forums. Eleven people from 7 countries participated.

ICF has encouraged National Forums to begin organizing their own local Mini-SOPs in order to strengthen and expand their national forums. In 2015, the forum in Timor-Leste organized a 10-day Mini-SOP for

18 participants in Dili. And in 2016 similar Mini-SOPs were organized by Indonesian, Cambodian and Burma forums. Other forums are now planning for Mini-SOPs in their countries as well.

Workshops

In 2007 ICF began organizing workshops specifically for SOP alumni. These workshops were from 5 to 10 days in length and were designed to strengthen the regional networks and help participants gain new knowledge and skills in areas specific to their work and needs.

WORKSHOPS held

TOPIC	DATES	LOCATION	PAX
Gender Justice and Youth	May 14-19, 2004	Wongsanit Ashram, Thailand	30
Young People as Peacemakers	Sept 5 – 11, 2004	Hyderabad, India	51
Peace Education for Children and Youth	Nov 26 – Dec 1, 2005	Hyderabad, India	21
Tsunami Trauma Healing	May 14 – 20, 2005	Pahang, Malaysia	28
The Role of Religion to Overcome Violence	Aug 15-20, 2005	Cipayung, Indonesia	31
SOP Refresher Course	Oct 12-19, 2007	Medan, Indonesia	13
Indigenous Spirituality	Oct 19-24, 2007	Medan, Indonesia	27
Religious Fundamentalism and Re-Reading our Sacred Texts	July 20-26, 2008	Jakarta, Indonesia	15
Human Rights	Dec 2 – 8, 2008	Hong Kong	9
Drama	April 25-May 7, 2009	Bangalore, India	15
Human Rights	Aug 3-9, 2009	Mindanao, Philippines	11
Organic Farming	Sept 6 – 12, 2009	Galaha, Sri Lanka	10
Community Organizing	Oct 25-31, 2009	Nepalgunj, Nepal	30

Indigenous Spirituality	Nov 11-16, 2011	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	9
Breaking Walls, Building Bridges	Jan 29-Feb 4, 2012	Bhubaneswar Orissa, India	26
Community Organizing	Sept 10-14, 2012	Negombo, Sri Lanka	6
Human Rights	Sept 24-28, 2012	Jakarta, Indonesia	17
Indigenous Spirituality	Oct 20-26, 2012	Siem Reap, Cambodia	13
Tools for Transformation	Dec 5-9, 2012	Siem Reap, Cambodia	16
Faith and Justpeace	Feb 12-16, 2013	Solo, Indonesia	10
Human Rights	Feb 17-23, 2013	Solo, Indonesia	8
Community Organizing	March 1-9, 2013	Penang, Malaysia	9
Tools for Transformation	June 10-16, 2013	Siem Reap, Cambodia	12
Children's Education	June 22-28, 2013	Phnom Penh, Cambodia	8
Community Organizing	March 17-21, 2014	Nepal	7
Children's Education	June 10-15, 2014	India	9
Indigenous Spirituality	August 4-8, 2014	Siem Reap	6
Tools for Transformtion	August 9-12, 2014	Siem Reap	15
Community Organizing	August 9-12, 2014	Siem Reap	7
Human Rights	Oct 18-22, 2014	Phnom Penh	12
Tools for Transformation	Jan 12-19, 2015	Pattani, Thailand	20
Human Rights	Jan 30-Feb 5, 2015	Pattani, Thailand	6
Community Organizing	June 27-May 30, 2015	Sri Lanka	6
Children's Education	May1-5, 2015	Sri Lanka	8
Tools for Transformation	Aug 24-Sept 1	Karen State, Burma	20

Consultation on re-envisioning ICF Mission and Objectives

A Consultation on ICF was held from 27th to 29th September 2016 in Hong Kong. After 10 years of operation, ICF has reached a threshold and there is a strong need to fundamentally assess whether its original mission and objectives have been met. At the same time, a need has also been felt for more integration of ICF activities with the constituencies of the project holders, the APAY and CCA, with a view of fulfilling its mission

and objectives to be a “regional inter-faith justpeace movement”. The involvement of the constituencies of the two organizations is expected to bring more strength and effectiveness to the activities of ICF as a region-wide network. The ICF’s thrust is to enable ecumenical organizations to go beyond the ecumenical circle, reaching out to the interfaith public sphere and working more effectively in bringing ‘peace with justice’ to this fragile world.

Keeping this in view, the need was widely felt by the co-holders of the project, to review ICF activities, re-envision its mission so as to reflect current regional realities, and draw up a more proactive and comprehensive program plan which addresses the constituencies of the two ecumenical organizations and ensure more integration with other possible stakeholders. Representatives of CCA, APAY and ICF coordinators and resource persons from different religious backgrounds and with rich experience in this field participated in the common task of evaluating the ICF’s work so far as well as in re-envisioning its mission and objectives based on the evaluation and reflection of the current regional realities and contexts.

At the end of the consultation, there was a general agreement that the ICF project will have the following three main components in the coming years so as to strengthen it as a “regional inter-faith justpeace movement” as originally planned.

1. The “School of Peace” with mini-SOPs to be maintained with periodical review to upgrade the quality of the School
2. “Asian Inter-religious Peace Charter” to be created through a consensus-building process by inter-religious communities in Asia
3. A periodic Inter-faith Forum to be organized by inviting representative religious bodies and institutions as well as respected individual leaders; this Forum will lead to the creation of an “Asian Inter-religious Summit” comprised of respected leaders from different religions and their representative bodies.⁷

⁷ Report of Consultation on re-envisioning the mission and objectives of ICF, held 27-29 Sept. 2016, p. 8

Outcomes so far and thoughts for the future

As regards the outcome of the ICF program for the past 10 years, I quote here part of the external evaluation report made in 2012:

The School of Peace (SOP) has an entirely convincing concept bringing young people with a conflict background from different faiths and cultures together and facilitating a process of learning, self-reflection, analysis and mutual understanding. Participants describe the SOP as deep learning experience, much more profound than learning in schools or universities. They learned critical thinking, thinking outside the box, how to search for root causes and how to search for solutions. They learned to respect other societies and religions and that peace needs justice. Participants increased their confidence and skills in presentation and communication massively. They show great commitment to non-violence and just peace and attribute this commitment to their experiences at the School of Peace. Overall, a picture of a profound personal transformation of the participants emerged.

All alumni contacted had put at least some of their learning in practice, some to a large extent. All had changed the way they communicate with people and analyze issues. They take a broader perspective. Some are teachers and have a more open style of teaching now and encourage students to think independently and share their thoughts. Many changed their way of community work, took new initiatives, changed the way their organization worked or engaged as volunteers.⁸

To our frustration, despite all these year's intensive work of ICF and other like-minded peace movements in Asia, inter-religious conflict and violence are on the rise. It is with pain that we witness the negative trend towards religious fundamentalism and radicalization of religious movements. Their intensification has led to deepening social polarization, increased hatred towards minorities, civil conflict and war, a huge refugee crisis and the emergence of 'new nationalism'. There is an urgent need to start something afresh in addition to the ongoing work. As a cross-cutting agenda, Peace Education (or Global Citizenship Education) has to expand towards all levels of educational institutions, NGOs and religious organizations to motivate youth to accept differences, celebrate

⁸ From an external evaluation report done by Bread for the World, Germany, in 2012. Dr. Bernward Causemann of FAKT, Germany and Ms. Sarrah Jane C. Guerrero of Kabacan, Philippines were hired by EED to carry out the evaluation. They focused their evaluation on identifying the impact ICF and SOP have had on participants.

diversities and learn how to live in a harmonious way. Also, according to alumni's suggestions, the following programs need to be strengthened in the coming years. They include: a) justpeace education for children and youth; b) faith and justpeace; c) tools for transformation; d) community organizing and structural analysis; and e) human rights.

SOP will continue to be a flagship program of the ICF. As generally agreed by the consultation in September 2016, the "School of Peace" with Mini-SOPs will be maintained with a periodic review to upgrade the quality of the School. Together with this, we need more concerted efforts, bold and strategic planning, to realize the original mission of the ICF to be a genuine "regional inter-religious movement for justice and peace" aimed at reversing these negative trends if not preventing them. In this regard, as new components, we are planning to create an "Asian Inter-Religious Peace Charter" through a consensus-building process by inviting inter-religious communities in Asia in the near future. In addition, a periodic Inter-faith Forum will be organized by inviting the participation of representative religious bodies/institutions and respected religious leaders. This Forum will lead to the creation of an "Asian Inter-Religious Summit" comprised of respected leaders from different religions and their representative religious bodies. The Summit will hopefully serve as a venue for various activities such as research, networking, mediation and reconciliation, and advocacy on current issues of inter-religious conflict and violence.

Overall, it can be said that the ICF program for the past ten years has been a meaningful achievement with its main focus given to personal transformation and networking among young people with different faith backgrounds through SOP, National Forums and Workshops at local and national level. From now on, the newly proposed programs will be a new attempt to create a regional inter-religious platform through which diverse peace-building actions can be taken to tackle the issues of inter-religious conflicts and violence. We sincerely hope that, with these new programs together, ICF could grow as a "regional inter-religious peace movement" in Asia in the near future.

Empowerment Towards Development: An Inter-Religious Approach

Carlos Emilio Ham-Stanard

*The oil of religion should never be used to ignite the fires of hatred,
but should be used to soothe and heal the wounds of others.¹*

First of all, I am very grateful for the opportunity of attending, learning from and contributing to this relevant forum. I will be speaking mainly as a Cuban Christian theologian, professor and pastor. In my presentation I am aiming at exploring both the meaning and interrelationship between *Empowerment and Development* from a Latin American and interreligious perspective. There will be a special focus on ecumenical theological education in Cuba, which, according to the approach of our Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas, embraces sciences of religion, in order to reach the ultimate goal of *Koinonia*.

Empowerment

Firstly, the analysis of the term empowerment can be traced to the 1970s when it was first developed as a concept, in the USA, specifically applied as a method of social work,² in the struggle for civil rights in the black population, among women and other oppressed minorities, as well as groups that have struggled for survival in situations of dependency.

1 Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania and a former World Council of Churches President.

2 Barbara Solomon, *Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

A second moment identified is when, for example, we come to Latin America, where one of the main concerns is to discover and affirm the power of the impoverished in history, as the theologian of liberation Gustavo Gutiérrez has highlighted.³ It clearly sets a contrast and an epistemological turn in relation to the previous moment, marked, among other reasons by the change of contexts, that is, between the global North and the South, where the latter has contributed substantially to this debate, from this other perspective.

A particular expression of this is the philosophy of empowerment that has been considered rooted in the popular education approach, developed from the work in the 1960s of Paulo Freire, who saw *critical literacy* as a key component of empowerment.⁴ It was also closely linked to the so-called *participatory approaches* present in the field of development since the 1970s and later became better known in the 1980s, fundamentally in relation to women's rights.

Freire's understanding of empowerment can help to observe critically some apparent misconceptions of the term, at least in three aspects, which I find helpful as it relates to development. Firstly, for him, empowerment is not about giving power to a powerless person from a paternalistic and individualist point of view, rather it consists of helping to activate the potential creativity of the person; secondly, and related to the first, empowerment is a social and political act, in relation to the other, to the community; and finally, it binds together *conscience* with the notion of freedom, enabling dignity and capacity to transform situations of injustice; since for him, it is impossible to be free without going through a process of conscientization.⁵ Therefore, Freire's perspective is about social pedagogics, which is complemented with the Theology of Liberation that brings in a liberating praxis.⁶

3 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (NY: Orbis, Mariknoll, 1983).

4 His classic book was: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Harmondsworth, 1972), but he deals for the first time with the concept of empowerment in the book 'Fear and Daring' published together with Ira Shor in 1986.

5 This is a commented summary of Pedrinho Guareschi, 'Article Empoderamento', *Dicionário Paulo Freire* (Brasil: Editora Autêntica, 2008).

6 Carlos Ham, *Empowering Diakonia: A Model for Service and Transformation in the Ecumenical Movement and Local Congregations*, PhD Thesis - Free University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2015), pp. 27-28.

What Development? A Latin America and Caribbean perspective

As the economist Alberto César Croce puts it,⁷ Latin America and the Caribbean region is going through immense challenges. The inequalities have increased dramatically, particularly after progressive governments (in Brazil, Argentina – and now, a big crisis in Venezuela!) which have benefited a wide range of the populations, have been overthrown by right-wing sectors. In most cases, this has been done by manipulating the judicial mechanisms and the mass media, resulting in imposing privatization and neoliberal economies, which increase the gaps between rich and poor.

At the same time the international situation has worsened. The economic crisis hinders the international cooperation for development, since the countries in the global North face their own challenges (immigration, poverty) and merely support the victims of natural humanitarian disasters (which are more intense and frequent due to climate change). The private sector, seeking profit and speculation – rather than solidarity – in various situations control the State instead of the opposite, pursuing illegal transactions and avoiding paying taxes. Regarding the environmental issue, he goes on to mention the dilemma of wanting to “develop” the poor countries to the same level as the rich ones, which would lead us to a bigger disaster while, at the same time, not doing so would be an injustice.

This author concludes that in Latin America we count on a fundamental asset: the knowledge of our ancestors, of our indigenous people that is alive among millions of people, known as ‘*Sumak Kawsay*’ or ‘Good Living’. This is opposed to the type of Development of the countries that the North and the Center are proposing and imposing. Therefore, we wonder how to develop ourselves with our own model that is able to solve all these contradictions, that embraces each and every one, including the Mother Earth to which we belong.

7 Alberto César Croce, ‘Un Desarrollo Para América Latina Y El Caribe: Nuestra Propia Perspectiva’, *América Latina En Movimiento - ALAI (Agencia Latinoamericana de Información)*, 2016, pp. 1-3.

Empowerment Towards Development

A so called *empowerment* that is misused or manipulated to control and to dictate – both by any religion and the society – must be transformed into an authentic empowerment that aims to promote sustainable development. The latter provides the necessary *dynamis* to transform systems that precisely abuse power, generating injustices and at the same time necessities among the people that further require the social intervention of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), among other actors. Martin Luther King, Jr. defined power as “the ability to achieve a purpose. Whether or not it is good or bad depends on the purpose”.⁸

The process of empowerment enables individuals or groups to fully access personal or collective power, authority and influence, and to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society. In other words, as K. Blanchard puts it, “empowerment is not giving people power; people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting this power out”, he says.⁹ It encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society. It helps in ‘opening-up’ the supporting strength, knowledge and wisdom, helping to strengthen individuals, organizations and communities to gain control of their own situation.

In other words, the understanding of empowerment that is being defended here is to facilitate a process by which the people in need can rise as subjects of their own lives and of their respective communities. As Zimmerman puts it, empowerment is “a process of strengthening at which individuals, organizations and communities get a grip on their own situation and environment and this through obtaining control, critical consciousness and the stimulation of participation”.¹⁰ Therefore, a key

8 Grassroots Policy Project accessible at www.grassrootspolicy.org/power.htm

9 Quoted in Manmeet Kaur Sodhi, “Women Empowerment – Equal rights, Equal opportunities” at http://sikhinstitute.org/jan_2012/9-manmeet.html

10 M.A. Zimmerman, *Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organisational and Community Levels of Analysis. Handbook of Community Psychology* (New York: Plenum Press, 2000), pp. 43-63.

word here would be again “participation”, that is, the facilitation of a process by which people are being enabled to decide on their own future and to act accordingly.

Empowerment, consequently, has primarily both a personal and a collective dimension. The personal, even when it points to a process by which excluded people raise their levels of confidence, self-esteem and ability to meet their own needs, nevertheless ought to be for the benefit of the community or the society. On the other hand, the collective dimension of empowerment is based on the fact that vulnerable people are better able to participate and defend their rights when they unite with common goals, for example, women who come together to demand properties, farmers occupying unproductive lands, or neighbors who struggling united, claim water supplies in their neighborhood.

So, it is about the building of the indigenous and local institutions and the participation of the impoverished by expressing their needs. Even when they find themselves in a state of seemingly financial powerlessness, from the perspective of development conceived by the West, nevertheless, they have an intrinsic power to change their desperate situation to one of dignity and self-realization.

People are inspired by their own community’s wisdom, namely, indigenous knowledge and experience related to day-to-day living, occupations and culture passed-on from generation to generation, in areas like agriculture, industrial work and handicraft, herbal medicine, management of natural resources and environment, community-based business and fund raising, art and folk drama, local language and literature, and so on. In addition, the local congregations are empowered by their ecclesial nature, that is, living values of Christian solidarity, dignity and spirituality, and urged by the needs of the people. But this is also the case of other religions as well, since they are close to the people; in fact, they are part of the people, who are emerging *self-empowered* for action.

An Interreligious Approach

As has been mentioned in this conference, there is growing acknowledgement among governments, academe and social practitioners that the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 cannot be attained without benefiting from the positive contributions of religions. Some reasons

for this have been mentioned here above. Also, as analyzed by the World Council of Churches (WCC), “the [ecumenical] movement is challenged to recognize the strong faith that animates other religious communities” and it goes on to highlight the fact that their solidarity with the impoverished come as a result of their marginal origin, taking “... into account the common marginality of religious founders (for example, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohamed, etc.)”.¹¹ The problem then begins when the power of religion moves from the periphery to the center and becomes part of or blesses the *powers-that-be*, the *status quo*, or the *establishment*. Hence “religious power, in itself, is ambiguous”.¹² On the one hand, exercised from the center, it can be oppressive, conservative, absolute, reactionary, dominant, hierarchical, more formal, while on the other hand, experienced from the periphery, it can liberate, become proactive, subversive. So an important question is: “how to empower the people from the periphery towards sustainable development?”

Several initiatives have taken place in our region like the founding in 2014 of the Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance for Promoting Sustainable Development. In its founding document – relevant to this presentation – it points out: “We aspire to a development that is at the service of the human person under his/her own control; to a development that requires social responsibility; to a development that prevents being at the mercy of a few excessively economically powerful groups. The economic, social and political development that wants to be authentically human, needs to embrace the principle of gratuity, as an expression of fraternity... Reality calls us – as people of faith – since religion only has real meaning when it relates to the needs of the other”.¹³

When it comes to Cuba, our Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas – which was founded in 1946, hence this year we are celebrating our 70th Anniversary – is the only ecumenical theological institution. And we use the term ‘ecumenical’ in its wider meaning, since we have professors and students not only from different Christian denominations, but also from diverse faiths – and even of no faith.

11 Julio de Santa Ana, *Religions Today. Their Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*. Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 2005. p. 297.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 299.

13 *Declaración Final - Carta de Fundación de La Alianza Interreligiosa Latinoamericana Y Caribeña Para La Agenda Para El Desarrollo Después de 2014* (Panamá, Panamá, 2014) <<http://creas.org/alianza-interreligiosa-latinoamericana-agenda-2030/>> p. 3.

I am increasingly convinced of the transcendental role of training, particularly for dialogue among religions, since in many cases prejudices and conflicts arise because of ignorance and prejudice. Hence the importance of an INTRA-Religious formation (that the followers of each religious expression deepen their knowledge of its roots, its history, its own identity), as well as the INTER-Religious formation (so that we can and ought to learn together with the other faiths), especially in times when fundamentalism and sectarianism are increasing, producing divisions, crises and even conflicts. And this interreligious dialogue and formation, far from distancing ourselves from our faith, generally reaffirms it, when we have the opportunity to explain it and to relate it to other faiths.

So, in this regard, our Seminary runs the Ecumenical Higher Institute of Religious Sciences (ISECRE) that grants bachelor's and master's degrees in religious sciences. The novelty of this program, unlike our courses and careers in the area of Bible and theology, is that we contribute to the empowerment of students and professors from various religions present in the country, as well as non-believers, agnostics and atheists. On the other hand, there is a strong emphasis on multi-disciplinary training, with a faculty of very experienced teachers, with solid academic training, some from the University of Havana.

And finally, we also have an *Interreligious Cuban Platform*, which brings together persons of goodwill from different faiths to discuss issues related to the well-being of our nation, committing to unity, peace and justice, particularly in the current transition process of our country. I, nevertheless believe, that it should move one step forward in order to reflect on and try to contribute to the implementation of the various UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion

Again, the purpose of empowerment is to build capacity towards promoting and constructing sustainable development. As Faith Based Organizations and communities we are urged not only to co-exist, but rather to pro-exist, empowering each other, working together. Beyond competing against each other, we are called to complement each other in the quest for building alternatives along with other *secular* communities and civil society in general. As Jacques Dupuis, S.J. stresses in his article

Christianity and Other Religions: From Confrontation to Encounter, the religious traditions of the world serve as *paths* or *ways* that transmit the power of God who saves.¹⁴

This *pro-existence* is called to promote experiences to rebuild the economy and development from the worldviews and faith perspectives and experiences of our ancestral and indigenous villages and communities. This way we will be contributing to the search of an alternative to the neo-liberal approach of ‘development’ which excludes the vast majority of the population and tends to destroy their web of life.

As God’s instruments, we are urged to seek and construct new paradigms of relations between human beings and nature, in order to build *Koinonia*, to shape an inclusive and just community, an *oikos*, a household in which the entire creation is included, enjoying the fullness of life intended by God for all.¹⁵

14 <http://sedosmission.org/old/eng/dupuis2.htm>

15 This thought is based on the report of the WCC General Secretary at the time, Philip A. Potter, to its 6th Assembly, held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983. He said: “The ecumenical movement is, therefore, the means by which the churches which form the house, the *oikos* of God, are seeking so to live and witness before all peoples that the whole *oikoumene* may become the *oikos* of God through the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the life-giving Spirit.” in David Gill, *Gathered for Life. Official Report, VI Assembly of the WCC, Vancouver, Canada, 1983 (Geneva, 1983)*, p. 197.

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Religious literacy and religious inclusion

Kathleen Ferrier

When, as a child in Suriname, the former Dutch Guyana, I opened my eyes to life, to the reality that surrounded me, that reality was filled with religion and with religious expressions and symbols. I saw Christian churches, next to Hindu temples and I saw Muslim mosques next to Jewish synagogues. The language I learned was a language full of respect for “the higher powers”, that are part of our daily life.

As a Christian I went to church and on our festival days, like Christmas or Easter, we invited our friends, Muslims, Hindus or Jews, to celebrate with us our festivals, in our religious places, as they invited us to celebrate with them, in mosques or temples or the synagogue, their festivals.

As a woman from Suriname I could not imagine the existence of societies in which religion would not play a major role in the life of the people. Yet as I grew up and lived and studied in the Netherlands, I learned that religion can not only be considered as ‘not important’, but even as a threat, a threat to ‘modernity’.

Migration and religion

This was completely new to me. Therefore, it called my attention, and later, I saw how this way of thinking about religion was the basis for a huge mistake, committed by politicians and by society as a whole as well. Considering religion as something that is not part of modernity made politicians think that those who came to the Netherlands, and, wider, to Europe, in the sixties and seventies of the last century, as so called “guest

workers” would either go back to their countries or become as the Dutch. That meant: become modern people and “...giving up all the ‘backward stupidities’ related to a ‘backward culture’, of which religion is a part”. The policy was to “... just let them be, do not interfere with them, put them together in specific parts of the cities and, with time and patience they will automatically become like us: modern people”.

The wrong assumption underlying this policy is that the natural development of human beings only goes in one direction: towards modernity, and that modernity is the Western kind of modernity in which religion is only a marginal force. The reality is, that for many people who migrated to Western countries, religion became even more important in the new homeland, as a stronghold in a new, unknown, environment. This also goes for Christian migrants. In the Western countries they migrated to, the same countries that as colonial powers centuries ago brought them Christian faith, but where religion is now treated as a not too important force, migrant Christians also felt the urge to become missionaries and help their brothers and sisters to grow a new awareness of the importance of religion.

For many migrants, religion proved to be a strong force, and therefore it is seen precisely as a threat. Firstly, as a threat to modernity and later on, also as a threat to the authority of the state. Today we see how growing populism in the western world abuses migration, migrants and their religion by portraying them as a threat.

Win-win approach

But there are other examples to give and to stress. Those are the examples that show that it is wiser to include religion instead of excluding it. In many countries, secular states do co-operate with religious organizations, entrusting them with welfare, social work, elder care, care for orphans or differently abled persons. Facts and figures show that this can be a win-win situation, if well based in a proper *Memorandum of Understanding* between the parties. In that sense, I want to refer to the 2012 SARA (State Administration on Religious Affairs) notice in China on encouraging

and guiding religious groups to perform charitable work.¹ As we have seen over the past four or five years, this has been a good formula: the state providing churches with land for building, for instance, shelters for elderly people, and the churches providing the necessary care and doing what they, as churches, consider their task, that is, charitable works. A clear win-win situation.

However, even a win-win situation like this, can be brought much further, if it is used beyond only pragmatic or practical reasons. Religion is often a strong inspiration and therefore it influences behavior. Religious thinking encompasses the way believers look at life, it defines perceptions of human beings and of the world. Therefore, it defines goals in life, what we want to achieve and what we see as less desirable.

Religion and development

When I was a member of parliament in the Netherlands, I wanted religion to be taken much more into account when deciding on policies for international co-operation. In parliament a large majority agreed on the importance of international co-operation being effective and sustainable. That meant that whatever was to be achieved had to be determined by the target group itself and had to be a deep felt desire. To understand what such a deep felt desire could be, it was important for the co-operation partner to at least try to understand why certain aims are desired and others not. Therefore, I pledged in parliament, for that understanding of partners in international cooperation, we had to have at least a basic knowledge of what moves others. To understand partners in development, it is important to have knowledge of their religious convictions. It was not easy to convince my colleagues of the importance of this, (not even easy convincing the minister of my own Christian Democratic party), and explaining to them that this had nothing to do with converting people or promoting religion: it had to do with recognizing that religion in the majority of the countries around the world is a strong force that cannot

1 In early 2012, six ministries, including the State Administration for Religious Affairs, the Central United Front Work Department, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the State Administration of Taxation, jointly issued the “Opinions about encouraging and regulating Charity work done by religious communities.”

be denied! I am happy that today “Religion and Development” is an important topic.

World falling apart

If we look at our world today, we see that understanding each other and, thus, having basic knowledge on religious drives, motives and forces, is more important than ever. Our world seems to be falling apart, not only because of geopolitical changes and forces, but also because, in a world that seems more interconnected than ever before, thanks to social media and the so called ‘Professor Google’, contradictory enough, at the interpersonal level, we seem to be drifting farther apart from each other. As a world population, we are falling apart because we do not know each other. We have friends and followers by the thousands on We Chat, Weibo, Facebook and Twitter, but we do not know our neighbors. Therefore, we are easily influenced by threatening images and stories that go viral on the social media or in the speeches of populist political leaders.

Globalization has winners and losers. Winners are those who can benefit from it, those who can send their children to international schools and foreign universities. This is only a very small part of the world population. Losers are those for whom globalization is a threat. A threat to their own identity and sense of safety, because one’s space is invaded by strangers, who can easily be identified by their “strange” habits such as religion. Religion and migration are often scapegoated as the main reasons for discontent in Western societies, whereas the real reason is this other divide, the division between rich and poor, between the winners and losers of globalization. This division has nothing to do with migration and religion, as we see in the rustbelt of the USA, but with far reaching changes in demography and labor opportunities.

Religious literacy

In an ever more divided world, where there are forces that abuse religion as the cause for feelings of insecurity and loss of one’s identity it is important to strengthen the opposite forces. One of them is knowledge. Knowledge that leads to understanding and knowing what we talk

about when we talk about religion. We should learn and teach about the different religions, that is religious literacy. Religious literacy aims at mutual understanding and mutual learning.

New generations in our ever more connected, and yet at the same time ever more divided, world should have the chance to see and learn what I saw and learned as a child in Suriname. What religion is about, what it means to people and how it drives them. This is to prevent them from having prejudices, which are based on inadequate and incomplete knowledge and to enable them to connect and function in our ever smaller world.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a common destiny

There is another reason too. We are talking about the SDGs. As a member of the UN Secretary General's independent Expert Review Group (iERG) on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health, I watched at close range the shift from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals are about a 'common destiny for mankind'. Unlike in the MDG era, there is a broad and strong awareness, that "we are in this together". Whereas the MDGs were basically about poverty eradication, the SDGs are based on an awareness that we live in an interconnected world and that the challenges of our times, diseases, terrorism, modern slavery, climate change, cannot be solved by any country alone: they cross borders, cultures and societies and their solution demands the joining of forces.

One Belt One Road

This sense of a common destiny for mankind finds an explicit expression, not only in the United Nations SDGs but also in China's mega plan for the world: One Belt One Road (OBOR) or BRI, Belt and Road Initiative. It is my conviction that OBOR and China will play a defining role in this era, as we move towards 2030. That is why it is so important and interesting to have this conference here in China and therefore I see, also here in Nanjing, an important challenge for giving space for the understanding of different religions. Mutual understanding will, at the end of the day, be crucial for the success of OBOR. Religious literacy and religious

inclusion thus become important for a China that wants to take the lead in a geopolitically fast-changing world. This poses a huge challenge for China, that seems to take the opposite road, aiming at closing space and freedom for religious learning and religious expression. The new law on religious activities states, in Articles 40 and 41, that religious activities of religious citizens shall, in general, be held at religious activity sites and that non-religious activity sites must not hold religious activities.² One consequence of this could be that a pastor may not be able to pray with a member of the congregation when he or she is hospitalized since a hospital is not an official religious site. In the light of all these challenges, as we must deal with new geopolitical forces, religious literacy and religious inclusion become more and more important as a means for mutual understanding and unity.

For me, it means that gatherings like these are extremely important because we are in this together. For effective policies, we need religious involvement. For a sustainable future where, indeed, no one is left behind, we need religious inclusion and religious literacy.

2 See the unofficial translation of the Religious Affairs Regulation Deliberation Draft (08-09-2016), Chapter VI, Articles 40 and 41 at <http://www.chinalawtranslate.com/religious-regulations/?lang=en>

Conference Summary

Philip L. Wickeri

These have been a rich and rewarding few days that we have spent together in Nanjing for this international conference on “Religions, Values, Ethics and Development.” I think we should all be grateful to the Amity Foundation, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Chinese Christian Cross-Straits Exchange Association for bringing us together. These three very different organizations have also given us the time and space to reflect upon some of the seminal issues concerning contemporary social development.

In 1994, I worked together with Professor Zhuo Xinping on another Amity-CASS conference dealing with Christianity and modernization. This conference has already been mentioned several times. It was a ground-breaking international conference held in Beijing, dealing with the multifaceted relationship between Christianity and modernization processes. Our conclusion, or at least one of them, in that conference was that Christians can promote modernization and contribute to social welfare. In the Chinese context, this was a new and important idea at that time.

Compared to that conference, this one is much broader, building on the many gatherings that have taken place in between, and on the general advancement of knowledge with regard to religion and development processes. More so than the 1994 conference, I am happy to say that this one combines attention to both academic and practical work in development, reflecting the relative emphases of the sponsoring organizations that are involved.

In my concluding remarks, I would like to reflect briefly on the key ideas for our theme.

A great deal has been said about ‘Christian values’ in this conference, but I believe this is an ideologically burdened term. I follow the distinction between fact and value made by the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), the former being objective and scientific and the latter subjective and personal. Because of limitations of time, I cannot go more deeply into his critique here. To put it simply, values are a reflection of ideals and interests which are not particular to Christianity or any other religion or ideology. Christianity may proclaim universal ideals, but these are not necessarily reflected in Christian values. We like to think that ‘Christian values’ are transformative and life-giving human and global values, and through a common set of values, Christians can make common cause with other religions or with people who have no religion at all. But in Christian history, there have also been an entirely different set of values: slavery, the subjugation of women, anti-Semitism, apartheid, homophobia, destruction of the environment, capitalist exploitation and so on. Not all of Christian scripture and tradition is transformative. What makes the difference in the choice of which ‘values’ we choose to call ‘Christian’?

We need human reason and cogent social analysis to talk about sustainable development. The term ‘Christian values’ is, therefore, highly problematic, and I personally would like to reject the use of the term all together. It hides and obscures more than it enlightens. If we stick to ideals and interests reflected in religion, ideology and ethics, we will make more progress in analysing social development using resources that can be derived from interpretations of Christian faith that we find persuasive and life-affirming.

General Secretary Xi Jinping recently spoke about governance through law and virtue. Virtue is another ideologically charged term, but it is more redeemable. General Secretary Xi went on to say, “law is virtue put down in words, virtue is law born in our hearts.” Virtue, in this sense, means moral or ethical ideals (not values). Xi is speaking of the nourishing effect of virtues in governance which is related to a community’s or, in this case, a nation’s ideals and interests. Of course, we can debate what we mean by ethics (virtues), ideals, and interests, and we can agree or disagree with given interpretations. But the discussion of virtue is related to our discussions about development, and the leadership

of development organizations, especially in China. The relationship between law and virtue (or ethics) on development is something to which we should be more attentive.

Religion, development and governance can be considered together in the Chinese context. I want to say one thing about one way in which religion has been understood in China, centring on the concept of the “five characteristics of religion” (宗教的五性). This is an idea which Chinese scholars know a great deal about, far more than I do, but I think it is important to introduce the idea at this conference, because it helps us understand how religion can function in contemporary society.

The “five characteristics of religion” was developed in China in the 1950s. Its main proponent was Mr. Li Weihang (李维汉), an early Communist leader and the first director of the United Front Work Department. This theory is well-known in China, but it has virtually been ignored by scholars overseas.¹ The five characteristics of religion as a theory is a working hypothesis about the structure and function of religion in China. It is not a systematic analysis, a conceptual definition or scholarly construct of religion. The five characteristics of religion are: the mass character (群众性), religion as a phenomena embedded in the lives of the Chinese people; the protracted character (长期性), religion as a long lasting phenomena; the ethnic character (民族性), religion as related to ethnicity, both Han Chinese and the minority nationalities; the international character (国际性), religion and interreligious relations with other countries and regions; and religion as complex (复杂性), which requires detailed and in-depth study and understanding. The framework is well suited for the new emphasis on Sinicization. It allows for religion to be understood as a legitimate expression of social existence that can promote harmony and contribute to social welfare. It is therefore related to the themes we have been discussing at this conference.

Amity General Secretary Mr. Qiu Zhonghui has said that social service promotes harmony, and this is all the more so when social service is related to religion. The movement from charity to social service to development to advocacy in NGOs like Amity, combined with an understanding of virtue in governance and the five characteristics of religion helps us to situate what we have done in this conference in a

1 I discuss the theory at length in Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement and China's United Front*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988 pp. 83-89.

wider context. At the same time, it may help to indicate areas we have identified, and pursue them further. For example, issues such as gender in development, sustainability, advocacy and new issues in poverty alleviation and NGO ‘culture’. These have been some of the important new areas we have discussed and they will be taken up in the future

Amity’s first honorary president, formerly president of Nanjing University, was Mr. Kuang Yaming (匡亚明). He was fond of saying, “A true communist and a true Christian have at least one thing in common: serve the people.” He emphasized the word ‘true’ and wanted Christians and Communists to work together for society. Bishop K. H. Ting spoke a great deal about love as God’s primary attribute. He saw Amity as working towards the broadening of God’s love in society as a whole, promoting justice and thus making God’s love more widely known. These were wise ideas of our first leaders, and they still have an impact on Amity’s work. In this conference, we have helped develop these ideas for a new era, connecting the past with the present, and taking responsibility for a future that belongs to us all.

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There is growing acknowledgement among governments, academe and social practitioners that the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 cannot be attained without harnessing the positive contributions of religions. In December 2016, the Amity Foundation and the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences co-organized the International Conference on “Religions, Values, Ethics and Development” . It provided a platform for academics, social practitioners and government officials to engage in an assessment of the role of religions, how they have contributed and will contribute to sustainable development goals in the coming decades. More than 250 participants from different faiths, representing 15 countries attended the conference held in Nanjing, China.

The papers presented at this bilingual conference have been gathered in this volume. Read what renowned scholars, development practitioners and heads of leading Faith-based Organizations have to say about:

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