

Call for Papers

Christian Women in Chinese Society—The Anglican Story

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
26-27 June (Friday to Saturday), 2015

Background:

Christianity has played an important role in Chinese history not only in terms of the introduction of Christian beliefs and the establishment of the Church, but also in its significant contribution to intercultural exchange and social transformation in modern China. At the same time, Christianity came to China with its inevitable association with imperialism. From the nineteenth century onwards, missionaries and missionary societies shared the privileges of the Western powers in terms of extraterritoriality, financial and territorial access, and various other rights.

Women have played an important role in Chinese Christianity. Single women missionaries and missionary spouses, women in religious orders, Chinese Christian women, bible women, nurses, doctors, teachers, and evangelists of all kinds made immense contributions not only to the Christian church but also to social movements such as the anti-footbinding movement, the anti-*muitsai* movement, the women's education movement, the ecumenical movement and the temperance movement. In short, women were full participants of the reconstruction of the new Chinese nation and Chinese modernity. Unfortunately, Christian women, like the women revolutionaries who made incredible contributions to the national revolutions of 1911 and 1949, were forgotten in the succeeding history of New China. Historical records of Christian women in modern China remain scarce and fragmented. There are only a few volumes devoted to the subject and these are mostly confined to women's education and women's ministry. As interest in the Chinese church has grown over the last decades, there is room for further exploration of the history of women in Chinese Christianity, or alternately, Christian women in Chinese history in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Anglican and Episcopal churches and missionary societies were active all over China. Before and after the founding of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui ("Holy Catholic Church of China") in 1912, fifteen different churches, societies and religious communities from five English speaking countries sent missionaries to China. After China's defeat in the first Opium War and the cessation of Hong Kong Island to Britain (1842), the Anglican Church and the Church Missionary Society established a major foothold in Hong Kong and South China. Like the other mission societies and churches, including the American Church Mission in Shanghai and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in North China, Anglicans were active in education, social welfare and medical ministries.

The missionaries came into close contacts with Chinese women. "Women's work for women" was the call of the day and there were obviously a good number of women from overseas and from China itself taking part in this work. Anglican and Episcopal women missionaries pioneered in many intercultural exchanges, and, in the twentieth century, Chinese Anglican women assumed important positions in church and society. Beyond the world's expectation, Bishop R. O. Hall ordained the first Anglican woman priest, Florence Li, in 1944, and the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui became involved in the first debate on women's ordination.

Objective:

This conference is concerned with women's history within a specific tradition and locality, that is, Anglican women in Chinese Christianity. Our perspective will be interdisciplinary and cross-cultural. Different approaches – historical, anthropological, sociological, medical, theological, liturgical, musicological – are all needed in order to return the color and the diversity to the picture of women in ministry and in local churches at a time when they were not expected to make any major achievements to society. Papers from the conference are expected to be published in a volume on the subject that will fill in a gap on the role of women and Christianity in Chinese history.

Sub-themes:

Papers can deal with any aspect of the theme. We expect panels to be organized around the following areas or sub-themes:

1. Regional activities such as those of Fujian, South China, the Jiangsu Dioceses;
2. Anglican women in Chinese education;
3. Anglican women in medical work;
4. Anglican women's participation in politics and society;
5. Women's ordination and ministry in the Church; and
6. Women's participation in Anglican evangelism

Submission of Abstracts:

Papers in either English or Chinese are welcome. A 350 word abstract with the presenter's name, contact and institutional affiliation should be sent to Dr. Chen Ruiwen, secretary of the organizing committee, at anglicanwomen2015@gmail.com not later than 1 October, 2014. If accepted, a reply of confirmation will be sent to the contact by 1 December, 2014.

There is a registration fee of US\$ 60 (for coverage of lunches and conference materials). Limited conference scholarship (including waiver of registration fee) will be made available to young scholars with demonstrated needs. Application for conference scholarship should be made together with abstract submission.

Information for hotel reservation will be made available with the confirmation of acceptance of proposal.

Conference Organizers:

The conference is co-sponsored by Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Ming Hua Theological College; Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and the Divinity School of Chung Chi College.

Co-Chairs of the Organizing Committee:

Prof. WONG Wai Ching Angela, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dr. Patricia P.K. CHIU, Honorary Institute Fellow, Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities & Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong