

A Thesis Submitted to

The Protestant Theological University (PThU),

Groningen, Netherlands

By

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In Partial Fulfilment of

the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Theology

Master of Theology (MTh), In-depth Program

Specialisation Intercultural Theology

Thesis Title:

**Missions of the Hong Kong Churches in the Public Sphere: Reconsider the
Role of the Church from a Contextual Theological Perspective Offered by
Stanley Hauerwas and Amos Yong**

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Preface

This thesis finished in the period of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, and after the Hong Kong political unrest in 2019-2020. It is a challenging period of time for people all over the world and especially for Hong Kong people. My research would have been impossible without the aid and support of my supervisor Lieke Werkman. She was always considerate and pertinent to me. I would like to thank my home church members and friends in Hong Kong, who always keep me in their prayers. Above all, I would like to thank God for giving me a wonderful experience studying in the Netherlands and being the hope in my life.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction

1.1 Formulating the Problem

In 1997 the political situation in Hong Kong changed. Hong Kong came under Chinese rule during the Qin Dynasty. It became a colony of the United Kingdom for more than one and a half centuries since the First Opium War. British rule in Hong Kong ended in 1997 and the sovereignty over Hong Kong was handed over to the People's Republic of China. Concerning how to maintain the high degree of autonomy in Hong Kong after the handover, the United Kingdom and China signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration after a period of negotiation. In this declaration, the Chinese government promised to provide a "One country, two systems" principle for Hong Kong, so that Hong Kong can remain the capitalist economy, and continue to have rights to speech, press, assembly and religious belief for fifty years after 1997.¹

While the Chinese government see the handover as taking back control over Hong Kong, many Hong Kong people see the handover as the loss of freedom. They feel threatened by the shift of the political system. Because the system used in the colonized period is distinct from China who is exercising communism and socialism. Under British rule, many Hong Kong people enjoyed civil liberties such as the freedom of expression, free-market economy, their own judiciary, and their own laws. They were afraid such freedom and autonomy would be jeopardized once the Chinese government resumed its sovereignty. This fear might be not without a ground. According to the press freedom index in 2002 conducted by Reporters Without Borders, Hong Kong ranked 18 out of 139 countries in the world.² And it only scored an 80th place in 2021.³ This indicates that the freedom of speech in Hong Kong has been shrinking after the handover. Despite China gave the promise, the civil liberties of Hong Kong people are decreasing obviously.

¹ Becky Little, *How Hong Kong Came Under 'One Country, Two Systems' Rule*, <https://www.history.com/news/hong-kong-china-great-britain>, (accessed 15 Nov 2021).

² Reporters Without Borders, *the first worldwide press freedom index (October 2002)*, <https://rsf.org/en/reporters-without-borders-publishes-first-worldwide-press-freedom-index-october-2002> (accessed 28 Oct 2021).

³ Reporters Without Borders, *2021 World Press Freedom Index*, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking> (accessed 28 Oct 2021).

While the Chinese government has been tightening control in Hong Kong by narrowing the freedom of speech, people have become increasingly worried about the future of Hong Kong. A series of protests by people organized in what is known as the Umbrella Movement in 2014 show that the worriedness is getting more serious. It began with a peaceful protest that aimed to urge universal suffrage which is the right for all citizens to vote in the governmental leadership election. Protestors gathered and occupied one of the busiest areas in Hong Kong. However, the protests soon became violent with conflicts between protestors and police since the Hong Kong police used pepper spray to disperse the crowd after 79 days of occupation.

When social conflicts have continued to escalate in Hong Kong, discussions about how Hong Kong Christians should respond to public issues became also more vigorous these years. Christians tended to ignore the political and public issues previously. However, political and public issues have become increasingly unavoidable due to the influence they have on every aspect of daily life. Although many Christians are active participants in the public sphere, the theological understanding of their role in society was not well discussed among Hong Kong Christians.

1.2 Research Question and Sub-questions

The main research question of this thesis is how to understand the role of the Hong Kong Churches in the public sphere theologically. To answer this question a series of aims and objectives will need to be specified. It is important to understand the history of Hong Kong and the political climate, and to realize how the Hong Kong context influences the churches to understand their role in society. What is the theological understanding of the church's role in the public sphere? How to integrate these theological understandings within the context of Hong Kong?

1.3 Methodology

Literature review is the main method of this research. Empirical data from statistics will be used as well as a sociological interpretation of them. The main objective is to contribute to the theological discussion about the role of churches in the public domain. About the

theological discussion, Stanley Hauerwas and Amos Yong were the two theologians chosen to investigate for this research. They have different views on what is the task of the church in the public sphere.

Hauerwas is relevant to the Hong Kong context because his work is being discussed there. A discussion, in which Hauerwas himself participated, arose about the implications of his work in responding to the Umbrella Movement.⁴

Another theologian to be investigated is pentecostal theologian Amos Yong. He is being chosen for two reasons. Firstly, this thesis has the same goal as Yong, Hong Kong Christians are participating in social engagements but are currently lacking theological reflection. Similarly, pentecostals have a diverse participation in the public sphere without a theological framework. Secondly, Hong Kong Churches need a theological understanding of the role of the Church in the public sphere which allows cooperation between different churches and organizations. Yong's theology has more room for collaboration compared with Hauerwas' work. This is the reason why Yong's view is helpful to this thesis.

This thesis will examine Hauerwas and Yong in two layers. The first layer investigates their thoughts separately and the second layer compares their theologies. On the first layer, the focus is how they understand the task of the church in the public sphere theologically. On the second layer, a comparison between their thoughts is not aimed to decide who is the best but to examine their theologies by focusing on how they interpret the challenges that the church faces according to a specific context and the correlated theological reflections. To see how they respond to the context will help Hong Kong churches to reflect theologically from its specific context and use these theologies in the right way. This research ends with a critically evaluation of how to apply Hauerwas' and Yong's theologies in the Hong Kong situation.

1.4 Framework

⁴ Regent College, *Stanley Hauerwas Interview | Christian Social Engagement and the Umbrella Movement*,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rnSLNzHrd8> (accessed 24 Oct 2021).

This thesis starts with an introduction that provides the aim of this research, methodology, the author's positionality, and the framework. The next chapter is a preparatory section that provides an historical background and three statistics of the Hong Kong Christians to describe the Hong Kong context. The third chapter investigates the role of church in society from a sociological perspective. The fourth chapter focuses on Stanley Hauerwas's idea about the tasks of the church in the public sphere, including the interpretation of his idea and articulating the context and method of his theology. The fifth chapter investigates the task of the church in the world from Amos Yong's thought, and the context he refers to. The last chapter will compare the two's theologies and includes an evaluation by applying these theologies in the Hong Kong situation to see the relevance.

1.5 Positionality

I claim myself as an ecumenical evangelical Christian. I am a church member of a Hong Kong church that was established by a group of European missionaries which includes Lutheran and Reformed churches. I graduated from a non-denominational seminary and a Lutheran seminary separately. Personally, I had some charismatic experiences in a neo-pentecostal community. In general, I am open to diverse traditions in the theological study journey.

In terms of political position, I am a Hong Kong Chinese who is pro-democratic and concerned about human rights in Hong Kong and China. The Umbrella Movement in 2014 became active in the first year of my theological study which made me interested in public issues from a theological perspective. However, this thesis is not aimed to discuss which political system is better but to find a theological ground for Christians social engagement.

As a Christian in Hong Kong, I am an insider who acknowledges that my positionality may lead me to empathise with pro-democratic movements. Being influenced by multiple traditions and growing up in diverse cultures and religions, may have led me to have a pluralistic tendency that attempts to harmonize diverse perspectives. At the same time, such

positionality gives me a chance to reflect on theology contextually. And I hope this reflection may contribute both to the Hong Kong churches and ecumenical discussion.

Chapter 2 The Context of Hong Kong- Historical and Political Background and Christians' Political Participation in Recent Years

In order to understand the specific context of Hong Kong churches, some historical and political background must be discussed. Also, it is important to see how Hong Kong Christians respond to political issues when they are facing conflicts in society. Three statistics as empirical resources delineate the Hong Kong Christians' changing of the level of participation in political issues. This chapter aims to provide a description of the historical and political background of Hong Kong and Christians political participation.

2.1 Historical and Political Backgrounds of Hong Kong

The colonial history of Hong Kong started from the first Opium War in 1839. After China was defeated by the British Empire in 1841, the Treaty of Nanjing resulted in China ceding Hong Kong temporarily as an indemnity to the British. The Convention of Beijing in 1856 and the Second Convention of Peking in 1898 gradually extended the size of the British's controlled territory. And it allowed the British to have jurisdiction over Hong Kong for 99 years. As a result, Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997. For more than one hundred and fifty years, Hong Kong was governed and developed under Britain.⁵ The population, the Gross Domestic Product index and urbanization grew expeditiously during this period. Hong Kong developed rapidly from a sparsely fishing village to a global metropolis.

Since being a colony, Hong Kong inherited the government structure from the British. This structure separates the power and responsibilities into three branches, including the legislature, judiciary and executive. Hong Kong people worried about how this structure could be maintained when the sovereignty would be transferred from the British to China. Concerning the matter of the handover in 1997, the governments of the United Kingdom and

⁵ Becky Little, *How Hong Kong Came Under 'One Country, Two Systems' Rule*, <https://www.history.com/news/hong-kong-china-great-britain> (accessed 15 Nov 2021).

China signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984.⁶ The Chinese government promised that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) would be “One country, two systems” for fifty years after the handover. And Hong Kong would not practice socialism with Chinese characteristic which is exercised in mainland China. Chinese socialism was integrated with Marxist theory and capitalist elements. Chinese socialism was integrated with Marxist theory and capitalist elements. It included a planned economy and the public ownership of production means in accordance with the Marxist theory and, adopted private ownership and market economy from capitalism.⁷ After the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed, the regional constitution for Hong Kong (Basic Law) was written and has been in effect since the handover. According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, Hong Kong will sustain a degree of autonomic governance by their mini-constitution after China resumes their sovereignty over Hong Kong. For example, the right to vote is protected by the Basic Law and that the head of government is elected by the Election Committee which is composed of 1200 persons.⁸

Despite the fact that the Beijing government promised fifty years effectiveness of the “One country, two systems”, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson of China, Lu Kang, denied its significance after the Hong Kong handover after only twenty years. In a regular press conference in June 2017, he said the declaration was only used for the transitional period and “is now history and of no practical significance”, the United Kingdom or any other foreign country has no right to interfere in Hong Kong’s affairs because these are China’s domestic affairs.⁹ In addition, on 11th March 2021, the National People’s congress passed the ‘Decision

⁶ Becky Little, *How Hong Kong Came Under ‘One Country, Two Systems’ Rule*, <https://www.history.com/news/hong-kong-china-great-britain> (accessed 15 Nov 2021).

⁷ *What does ‘path of socialism with Chinese characteristics’ mean?* <https://www.cgtn.com/how-china-works/feature/What-does-path-of-socialism-with-Chinese-characteristics-mean.html> (accessed 16 Nov 2021).

⁸ Hong Kong Government official website, *Basic Law, Chapter IV- Political Structure*, <https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/chapter4.html> (accessed 26 Apr 2021).

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang’s Regular Press Conference on June 30, 2017*, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1474637.shtml (accessed 26 Apr 2021).

on Improving the Electoral System of the HKSAR'.¹⁰ As a result, the membership of the Election Committee would increase to 1500 persons, seats for directly elected representatives would decrease and seats elected by representatives of special interests like business, banking and trade, who were historically pro-Beijing, would increase. Such electoral reform can be seen as the Beijing government tightening control over Hong Kong as a response to the pro-democracy social movements and were meant to ensure the control of Chinese patriots over Hong Kong.¹¹

Hong Kong's colonial history not only influenced the government structure but also the political system. The political system in post-colonial Hong Kong is composed of two systems which Edmund W. Cheng characterized it as a hybrid regime. One system, the one that was introduced during the colonial period included elements such as civil liberties, independent judiciary and evolving electoral politics. Another system is the restoration of the sovereignty from China that includes corporatist domination, the pro-regime elite and a resourceful local government backed by an authoritarian sovereign.¹² For Cheng, this hybridity can be shown in two dimensions. The first dimension is the relationship between the local government and the central Beijing government. Although Hong Kong's constitution remains semi-autonomous, the corporatist structure not only intervenes in local politics but also earns political support from co-opting business tycoons and local elites. By doing so, the corporatist structure attempts to secure a majority in the executive elections and legislative branches. Thus, Hong Kong politics always wrestle with the Chinese imperatives and is influenced by the shared interests between the local government and Beijing government.¹³ The second dimension of hybridity is a concurrence of civil liberties and

¹⁰ Hong Kong Government official website, *Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021*,

<https://www.cmab.gov.hk/improvement/en/bill/index.html> (accessed 26 Apr 2021).

¹¹ BBC News, *Hong Kong: What is China's 'patriot' plan for electoral reform?*
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56534040> (accessed 26 Apr 2021).

¹² Edmund W. Cheng, 'Street Politics in a Hybrid Regime: The Diffusion of Political Activism in Post-colonial Hong Kong,' *The China Quarterly*, 226, June 2016, 384.

¹³ Edmund W Cheng, 'Hong Kong's Hybrid Regime and Its Repertoires.' In *Take Back Our Future- An Eventful Sociology of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement*, ed. Ching Kwan Lee, Ming Sing, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2019), 168.

executive domination. In the competition for Legislative Council seats, the pro-Beijing executive branch and political elite cooperate to hold a tight political power. Whereas pan-democratic seeks for connection with the voters by taking issues onto the street.¹⁴ In other words, while the pro-Beijing executive branch and political elite grasped an autocratic power, civil liberties have formed from the bottom-up and attempted to transform the power relations of the hybrid regime.¹⁵ Although this hybrid regime as a civil oligarchy brings order, stability and longevity by nature, it is not fully repressing dissent that allows new activism and protests to happen.¹⁶

Seeing China is tightening the policy in Hong Kong and moving towards a complete communist control society, many of the social movements began to play the role of keeper of autonomy. This was their way of expressing their grievances concerning the unactualized promises and the HKSAR government's failure. In 2003, more than 500,000 people marched against the national security reform; a protest in 2012 was against the amendment of the 'Moral and National Education; the Umbrella Movement in 2014 was an urge for universal suffrage; and the 2019-2020 protests were about the anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement. However, after the national security law was enacted in August 2020, many activists were arrested and sentenced to prison.¹⁷ Under social change, Hong Kong Christians have become more concerned about political and public issues.

2.2 Statistics of Political Participation Among Protestant Christians

The statistics in the following show that many Christians actively participate in the recent social movements, and many support democratization and freedom of speech. It seems their political practices are shaped by the political environment. J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer (2013) offered a comparison of Religions and State relations between Hong Kong and

¹⁴ Edmund W Cheng, 'Hong Kong's Hybrid Regime and Its Repertoires,' 169.

¹⁵ Edmund W Cheng, 'Hong Kong's Hybrid Regime and Its Repertoires,' 169.

¹⁶ Edmund W. Cheng, 'Street Politics in a Hybrid Regime', 403.

¹⁷ BBC News, *National security law: Hong Kong rounds up 53 pro-democracy activists*,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-55555299> (accessed 6 Aug 2021).

Taiwan. The study shows Hong Kong Christians have a strong connection between religious identity and political openness, with a great majority supporting democratization and freedom of speech. The research also shows the difference between “semi-democratic” Hong Kong and fully democratic. They show Taiwan that the churches in the latter are not concerned about democratization as much as the former.¹⁸ It indicates that the political environment would shape the practices of Churches. Christians in Hong Kong are more concerned about democracy because they are under the threat of losing democracy and freedom of speech.

2.2.1 Statistics of the Hong Kong Church Census Presentation in 2019

Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement is a Christian organization that has been conducting a church census every five years, it received 84.1% responses from 1,082 churches in 2014 and 80.4% responses from 1,305 churches in 2019.¹⁹ In the latest research published in 2019, it showed an increase from 43.5% in 2014 to 67% in 2019 in churches organizing particular prayer meetings and teaching in regard to socio-political issues.²⁰ Following the research from 2014 the top two issues the church is most concerned about are homosexuality and the attention to sects; the top five issues in 2019 are religious freedom (31.6%), social justice (31.3%), homosexuality (30.1%), the umbrella movement (29.5%) and poverty (29%).

In summary, church participation in social issues has increased significantly from 2014 to 2019. It is reasonable to believe such an increase is due to the socio-political conflicts that have happened in society. Also, the most concerning issues show the churches are not only

¹⁸ J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer, “Democratization, Human Rights, and Religion-State Relations in Taiwan and Hong Kong,” in *Religion and regimes: Support, separation, and opposition*, ed. Ted G Jelen and Mehran Tamadonfar, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 177-178.

¹⁹ Original Chinese Title: 2014 香港教會普查 (Translation: Research Method of the Hong Kong Churches Census 2014), <http://research.hkchurch.org/2014/> (accessed 14 June 2021).

²⁰ Original Chinese Title: 「香港教會普查」研究方法和運作方式 (Translation: Research Method of the Hong Kong Churches Census 2019), <http://research.hkchurch.org/2019/index.html> (accessed 14 June 2021).

worried about their self-interest, which concerns religious freedom but also about the interests of the whole society.

2.2.2 Statistics of the Extradition Bill Event in 2019

In 2019, HKSAR proposed an amendment on the extradition bill so criminal suspects can transfer between China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. Many Hong Kong worried this extradition bill would allow people who are activists, human rights lawyers, journalists, and social workers extradited to Mainland China and subject to unfair trial under China's judicial system. They see this extradition bill is a violation of the "one country, two systems" promise. Eventually, it caused massive protests to break out in 2019.²¹

An online survey conducted in August 2019 to collect young Christians' views on "the Extradition Bill " conflict,²² resulted in a total of 654 questionnaires being collected from Christians aged 10-29 years old. In this survey, most young Christians participate in the protest of the Extradition Bill and they are mostly pro-democratic. 95% opposed the amendment to the Extradition Bill, and nearly 80% of the respondents believed that the Hong Kong Churches could be salt and light for the recent political conditions thereby having a positive impact on society.

The survey found the top three reasons to oppose the bill were "threaten the freedom of speech and judicial independence" (85.7%); "untrust of the Chinese government" (81.2%); "sabotage the one country, two systems" (67%). 26.5% of the respondents participated in demonstration 5-10 times. The church's top three responsibilities were according to them

²¹ BBC News, *Hong Kong- China extradition plans explained*,
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-47810723> (accessed 16 Nov 2021).

²² Original Chinese Title: 「青年基督徒對「反送中」事件的看法 調查結果及回應」 (Translation: Young Christians' views on the " the Extradition Bill " event: survey results and response),
https://christiantimes.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp?Nid=159493&Pid=104&Version=0&Cid=2053&Charset=big5_hkscs&p=1, (accessed on 7 Jun 2021).

“walking with Hong Kong people and praying for Hong Kong” (73.7%), “against the unjust regime together” (65.3%), and “caring for everyone around” (60.7%). Third, how satisfied they are by their church’s reaction to social issues. 34% of respondents were disappointed with the performance of their churches; 81% of the respondents believed that biblical teaching can help them to make evaluation; 51% of respondents think their church’s teaching is insufficient or very insufficient.

2.2.3 Statistics of the Research Report on the Mental State, Spiritual Life and Social Participation of Hong Kong Christians in 2021

Another research conducted by a Christian Life and Ethics Research Center collected 1,009 responses named “Research Report on the Mental State, Spiritual Life and Social Participation of Hong Kong Christians” in 2021. More than 70% are pro-democratic²³ ; more than 80% of the respondents agree that the most important mission of Christians is to do justice and criticize the unjust act²⁴; 66% of people believe Christians should not break the law to achieve justice²⁵ ; more than 90% of the respondents disagree that Christians should use violence to respond to violence²⁶; more than 70% people think the church should not avoid controversial socio-political issues²⁷; people who think their church responded appropriately and inappropriately are half of the respondents.²⁸

From the analysis of the researcher, whatever the political stance they take, if a Christian has more involvement in social issues, they have a more empathic concern to others, they feel

²³ Original in Chinese: 李樹甘 · 香港基督徒心理狀態、信仰生命及社會參與研究報告 2021 年 4 月, Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state, Spiritual Life and Social Participation of Hong Kong Christians* Apr 2021, (Hong Kong: Life and Ethics Research Center , 2021), 15.

²⁴ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 27.

²⁵ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 28.

²⁶ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 29.

²⁷ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 31.

²⁸ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 32.

they have more social support, are able to resist anxiety and depression, and are more satisfied about their life, and they feel more connected to God and others.²⁹

In summary, this research is consistent with the latest statistics of young Christians that they are in general more pro-democratic than pro-government and also, that non-violence is embraced by the majority as an ethical value of Christians. And most of them think social issues are important because Christians should criticize unjust acts and the church should not avoid discussing controversial issues in society. However, the official churches are not appropriate responses that are in line with the thoughts of individual believers.

After the handover in 1997, Hong Kong society entered a post-colonial period that had a hybrid regime of the governmental and political system. The statistics show an increasing awareness of the church concerning political issues and how Hong Kong Christians are participating in the public sphere. Although these statistics have been accumulated from a literature review and are not designed for this thesis, it is reasonable to believe the increasing political participation and awareness are due to the social conflicts in recent years. The social context in Hong Kong is influencing Christians understanding of their faith and their relationship with God and society.

²⁹ Lee Shu Kam, *Research on the Mental state*, 46-47.

Chapter 3 The Church and State Relations in Hong Kong

After examining the background of Hong Kong, this chapter focuses on how to understand the role of the churches in the public domain from a sociological perspective. In the following, the relation between church and state will be introduced from three different perspectives, the first one is the Church-State relation model. It provides a broad view about how to study the Church-state relation in the Hong Kong context. The next part is the view of religions and the state from the Chinese regime perspective. Finally, the relation between Hong Kong Christians and the state is investigated.

3.1 Church-State Relation Models from Sociology

As opposed to most of the decolonized areas moving toward a democratic society, Hong Kong is moving from a relatively liberal to a communist political system. Although Hong Kong was never a fully democratic society in the colonial period, it enjoyed a high degree of human rights such as freedom of speech and press, and being a civilized society in general. After the handover, Hong Kong is in an awkward situation that neither fully exercised a democracy nor a communist system entirely. On the one hand, unlike what happened in the colonial period, democracy and many freedoms are shrinking in Hong Kong. On the other hand, Hong Kong owns a relatively high autonomy compared with other provinces in Mainland China allowing some policies to be implemented in a different way.

Compared with Western countries, many former colonies have a similar situation as Hong Kong. Having religious diversity, Christians in these places dealing with the aftermath of colonization are a minority religion in society. And what makes Hong Kong special is the fact that since it lacks the ability to become independent, it returned to the mother country, which is a communist regime.

Two professors Shun-hing Chan and Beatrice Leung (2003) from two different Hong Kong universities have been researching the Church-State relations of Hong Kong since late

1996.³⁰ Their research is helpful to understand how to study the Church-State relations in Hong Kong from a worldwide perspective.³¹ They mention three kinds of models in the Church-State relations study. The first model is the separation of church and state which originated and is practiced in America.³² In the American context, this model keeps a constitutional principle that supports democracy and protects the religious freedom of everyone equally. However, people argue that the general sentiment during the First Amendment adoption in 1791 was that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the State. So, the original notion of this separation was not only to keep a constitutional independence but also the government should aid the church. Some people also believe such separation only theoretically exists because America's Christianity roots have always affected state court decisions. Thus, they hesitate to what extent the separation of church and state model is applicable to other places.

The second model is the communist country model which promotes state dominance over the Church.³³ Unlike non-Communist countries, the church-state relations in Communist countries is that the Communist leadership see religious constitutions as potential political rivals or policy tools. It is the reason why Communist regimes tend to control the religious organization and to weaken the grassroots commitment. The state allows people to have a certain degree of freedom believing in particular religions and having religious gatherings but only if they are kept as an individual private affair. When a church surpasses the boundaries which the state sets, two tactics that the Communist regime usually applies. One tactic is that they will isolate the outspoken member of the clergy and entice the churches to have a more obedient relation with the regime. Another tactic is that they will defame the outspoken member in the press, harass the person and their family, or even fabricate charges for arresting them.³⁴ In fact, the fear of these tactics is the most powerful manipulation of the

³⁰ Beatrice Leung and Shun-hing Chan, *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 11.

³¹ Chan Shun-hing was responsible for the chapter 2 on the theoretical models and the sections on Protestant churches (chapter 3,4,5 and 7) in this book. He is a Professor at Department of Religion and Philosophy in Hong Kong Baptist University.

³² Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 11.

³³ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 15.

³⁴ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 15.

government, with people not daring to voice any injustice of the Communist regimes. And the churches spontaneously create self-censorship within the organizations to monitor each other's responses that may cause trouble.

However, these two models are not enough to study post-colonial Hong Kong. For the first model, Christianity is not as influential as in America on constitutional and population levels. For the second model, under the “one country, two systems” principle, the colonial history caused an exceptional Chinese governance practice in Hong Kong.

It is important to notice the specific circumstance of Christianity in Hong Kong.

Firstly, Christianity is considered as a western religion which is not rooted in Hong Kong history and culture. Christianity in Hong Kong has been developed during British rule. Secondly, religions in Hong Kong are diverse. Chinese folk religions, Buddhist and Taoist are the majority in the population and the number of Christians is less than these religions. However, it does not mean Christianity is not influential at all. According to the 2019 Hong Kong Year Book from the government, Christians (mostly are Protestant and Catholic) account for around 16% of the population.³⁵ From academic research which provided a meta-analysis in 2018, Protestant Christians may actually be 20.4% to 29.3% of the population; with these figures being 24.1% to 31% if Catholic believers are included. Also, 27.3% of the social service organizations are Christian run.³⁶ And more than 80% of education organizations are Christian based according to a newspaper in 2017.³⁷ Even though

³⁵ 2019 Hong Kong Yearbook Chapter 21: Religion and Custom, <https://www.yearbook.gov.hk/2019/en/pdf/E21.pdf>, (accessed 29 Oct 2021).

³⁶ Original Chinese Title: 許家欣 · 〈究竟香港有多少基督徒？〉 · 《城市心》 · 「全城轉化起動日」特刊《二零一八年八月》 · (Translation: ‘How many Christian in Hong Kong?’) http://rbc.bethelhk.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&lang=zh (2021年6月18日讀取), (accessed 18 Jun 2021).

³⁷ Original Chinese Title: 01 百科-香港宗教勢力比拼, (Translation: Hong Kong’s religions influence comparison),

Christianity is a minority and a foreign religion, it is influenceable to a certain degree in Hong Kong society.

Leung and Chan suggest a third model to apply in Hong Kong's unique situation. They used McCarthy's idea of institutional Channelling to depict the Church-State relations in Hong Kong. Institutional channelling indicates the state uses several mechanisms to narrow and standardize the structural forms of social movement organizations (SMO) by conditioned organizations' activities and development.³⁸ Channelling mechanisms from the state can seriously affect the SMO. First, it might affect SMOs internally such as activities, goals, and structure. Second, it can affect organizations externally such as changing the formation of boards of directors or limiting the mobilization of resources and tactics used. Lastly, it provides a subtle warning to other SMOs to fall in line. McCarthy's research in the American context shows only a small minority of organized groups was able to avoid the manipulation of these channelling mechanisms.³⁹

For Leung and Chan, the Hong Kong government often has indirect manipulation over the Churches and sees the churches as organizations like SMO.⁴⁰ And they suggest that the channelling mechanism framework is applicable in the Hong Kong context. All churches were set up through the company registration as a non-profit organization, thus they must follow the governmental regulation. Furthermore, many churches have established education, medical and social service organizations. While the official churches have been receiving subsidies or using land and resources of the government, their frontline organizations tended to not use governmental resources and be independent of the official churches.

https://www.hk01.com/特首選舉/2017/72626/剖析宗教界-01_百科-香港宗教勢力比拼 (accessed 18 Jun 2021).

³⁸ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 18.

³⁹ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 19.

⁴⁰ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 21.

Leung and Chan point out churches in Hong Kong have two institutional channelling characteristics.⁴¹ Firstly, they believe that the official churches were trapped in the State's channelling mechanism net. Because the official churches are receiving funding and resources from the government, they will lose this support if they criticize the government's policies and activities. Secondly, the frontline Christian organizations are able to be involved in political affairs. Because they are usually smaller than official churches and are more independent of the official church and government.

In short, the study of Leung and Chan delineate how the religion-state relation in Hong Kong can be seen as an institutional channelling. The local government places religious institutions in the same mechanism as a social service organization and to some extent manipulates them indirectly. Although the separation model in America and the communist country model are not entirely applied in Hong Kong, these models also influence the Hong Kong context which will be discussed later.

3.2 Religions and State Relations in Modern China

The way that the Chinese government treat religions is a significant background for Hong Kong churches. Despite the fact that Hong Kong is being treated differently under the "one country, two systems" principle, the Chinese government's perspective can project what the religions in Hong Kong will look like in the future.

Cheng-tian Kuo (2017) is a professor of the Political Science Department and Graduate Institute of Religious Studies at the National Chengchi University in Taiwan. According to him, the idea of 'separation of state and religion' was introduced to China in 1900. However, a unique interpretation became the catechism of Chinese nationalism later. There are two translations of 'separation of state and religion' in Chinese. The first one is 「政教分離」⁴²,

⁴¹ Leung and Chan *Changing church and state relations in Hong Kong*, 21.

⁴² Literal translation of 「政教分離」 is "politics and church depart from each other".

which is most popular among Chinese academics and politicians. It signifies the state and religion are separate entities and have no interaction between them.⁴³ The second one is 「政教分立」, which is more close to the original meaning.⁴⁴ This translation indicates the state should be free from the interference of religion in secular matters so that it allows the state and society to mobilize the resources and talents more effectively.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, influenced by the French law of *laïcité* ('secularization') passed in 1905, Chinese politicians claim the state may intervene in internal affairs of religion arbitrarily, but religion is prohibited from intervening in the state.⁴⁶ This inaccurate interpretation of 'separation of state and religion' became the justification of a one-way separation and implied an idea that religion should be subordinate to the state.

After World War II, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, with the Communist Party taking control until present. Kuo uses the analysis from Goossaert and Palmer that suggests three periods of transformation of religion-state relations in China. The first period is from 1945 to 1957, the Communist Party using the United Fronts Strategy formed a friendly alliance with all major religious groups which includes Catholicism, Protestantism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam and folk religions. Meanwhile, a quasi-fundamentalist religious form of Chinese communism was developing and became the preparation of Mao Zedong's cult.⁴⁷

The second period from 1957 to 1979, when Mao Zedong was in power as the Chinese Communist Party's chairman. All religions were eradicated during the Great Leap Forward and the Culture Revolution when religion was seen as an obstacle to development. At the same time, Mao was worshipped as the great teacher and the messiah of workers. His

⁴³ Cheng-tian Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 24.

⁴⁴ Literal translation of 「政教分立」 is "politics and church stand separately".

⁴⁵ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 17.

⁴⁶ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 24.

⁴⁷ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 25.

followers performed religious-like rituals to him, for example, they hung his picture in the office and home, recited his speeches and carried his Little Red Book everywhere.⁴⁸

The third and current period started from Mao's death in 1979. Due to the economic disasters in the previous period and the massacre of students in 1989, the religion-state relations returned to the United Fronts strategy as Chinese nationalism, it may also be called Chinese patriotism. Kuo names this as a "trinitarian" political theology. Because China, socialism and the Chinese Communist Party's government are put into an inseparable entity that plays the role of god. This Chinese patriotism has more tolerance to religions if those religions integrate Chinese patriotism into their organizational structures and theologies.⁴⁹ Thus, from the perspective of the Chinese government, they request all religious groups to love the state as their first priority instead of God, and not allow any critique or suggestion to the government.

However, the context of Hong Kong is different from Mainland China due to the colonial history so that the state and religion are largely separated. The conflict between the State and the Catholic Church can show what is the different degree of religious autonomy between the Mainland and Hong Kong. From the perspective of Beijing government, Christianity is recognized as a Western invasion that reminds of the historical humiliation and cultural imperialism as a potential threat to the sovereignty. And because the Catholic Church is more progressive in human rights and civil society issues, the Catholic Church became an opponent of the CCP.⁵⁰ In addition, due to the fact that the Vatican has the right to appoint bishops in all Catholic communities while the Chinese government insists this would violate the state sovereignty of China. Thus, the government appointed their own bishops who are patriotic without the Vatican's approval. Afterwards, the Chinese Catholic communities abide by the policy for all religions which is three-self principles of self-finance, self-management, and self-proselytizing. At the same time, they reject any financial help or

⁴⁸ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 25-26.

⁴⁹ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 26.

⁵⁰ Nancy Ng and Andreas Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," in *Journal of Church and State*. Vol. 60, no. 3 (Sept 2017): 387-388.

managerial guidance from any foreign country. With the diplomatic relations rebuilt, China and the Vatican reached a consensus over the appointment of bishops in 2000.

Unlike the situation in Mainland China, the catholic community in Hong Kong does not abide by the three-self principles and highly participates in social issues with some protestant communities.⁵¹ For instance, Bishop Joseph Zen was not assigned by China but the Vatican. During his service from 2002 to 2009, he frequently commented on religious freedom, democracy, social justice in Hong Kong and human rights in China.⁵² However, it is foreseeable that in the future Hong Kong bishops will possibly require a joint appointment by both China and the Vatican.

Besides the religious diversity in Hong Kong, according to Kou's research, a civil religion emerges that is rooted in the Christian 'public theology' of American fundamentalism of the 1980s and consists of Western democratic theory and embraced by some Buddhists.⁵³ This civil religion sees the CCP and pro-China politicians and business leaders as devils. They annually celebrate a holiday on 4th of June to commemorate the Chinese student's deaths in the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989. They have an annual protest on the 1st of July urging for democracy. The majority of the Christian community and religious groups did not share this civil religion in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, the Chinese patriotism with help from the Chinese military and the armed police have intervened in such events. For example, in 2021, the police not only banned the Tiananmen Square commemoration but also stopped some annual masses for the victims of the massacre organized by the Hong Kong Catholics during the gathering. And they claimed the cause for this restriction was Covid-19.⁵⁴ Another example is that the June Fourth Museum was harassed by the Hong Kong

⁵¹ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 38-39.

⁵² Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 39-40.

⁵³ Kuo, *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, 34-35.

⁵⁴ Lilian Cheng, *Tiananmen vigil and Hong Kong's national security law: will chanting the slogan 'end to one-party dictatorship' on June 4 be outlawed?*

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3135969/tiananmen-vigil-and-hong-kongs-national-security-law-will> (accessed 12 June 2021)

government a few days before the 4th of June that resulted in cancelling all events and its closure on the day.⁵⁵

The above illustration shows the perspective of the Chinese government regarding the religion-state relations and divergence practices that exist on the Mainland and Hong Kong. One may notice the separation of religions and state model also applied but in a different way in China. Such one-way separation becomes the state's dominance over religious communities and patriotism is the condition of religious freedom. Though Hong Kong was a British colony this may create a different application when compared with other cities on the Mainland, such discrepancy is being eliminated gradually since the handover.

3.3 Christians Perspective of Church and State Relations

As discussed before, institutional channelling is the model that can be observed in Hong Kong's church and state relations. And small groups are able to avoid the manipulation of institutional channelling. Christians individual participation in socio-political issues and Catholic's resistance intentionally in recent years are causing a changing relationship between church and state. In the following, the church and state relations is presented from a Christian perspective.

According to Nancy Ng and Andreas Fulda (2017) the church and state relations in Hong Kong can be divided into three stages; from 1945 to 1982 is the cooperation relationship as

⁵⁵ Original Chinese Title: 六四 32 年 | 教堂彌撒遭港警驅散 神父批：民間追思被政治化

(Translation: 32nd after Massacre, Police disperse the Mass, Priest Critique: public memorials are politicalized)

<https://tw.appledaily.com/international/20210605/ZLOP656BF5CWFIOWHKUYKPP5RU/> (accessed 12 June 2021).

an institutional channelling; 1984 to 1997 change to political participation, and the final stage the Christian Church taking more and more political involvement since 1997.⁵⁶

The first stage from 1945 to 1982 is during the British colonial period, Hong Kong Churches have a cooperative relationship with the colonial government. This means the churches are not only a part of the society, but the colonial government gave chances to Christian leaders to take the role in the societal institution, so that they may have political participation and direct political action. British colonial administrators believed that only Christianity could resist the infiltration of Communism. In order to reduce the possibility of producing an atheistic proletariat from non-religious or secular primary education, the government contracted 25% of social services to Christian organizations.⁵⁷

In the second stage, when the time was getting closer to the handover around 1984 to 1997, Hong Kong Churches were less integrated into the colonial system. The Catholic Church set up the Catholic Institute for Religion and Society to prepare leaders for socio-political participation. Protestant churches, on the one hand, were focusing solely on evangelistic programs both in Hong Kong and Mainland China. On the other hand, more protestant Christians participate in politics individually as pro-democrat party members or non-party affiliated members of the Legislative Council.⁵⁸

In the third stage, China resumed its sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, tensions between church and state have increased. Despite Beijing reminding Hong Kong citizens that they should cooperate with the HKSAR government, the conflicts between the citizens and government have escalated and become more frequent. The first mass demonstration after the handover happened on the 1st of July, 2003, against the National Security Bill as an Article 23 implemented into the Basic Law. Citizens worried this anti-subversion bill could be abused by the Communist government and prosecute dissidents. Hong Kong Churches were also afraid it would constrain religious liberty in the future. Cardinal Joseph Zen and

⁵⁶ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 380.

⁵⁷ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 383-384.

⁵⁸ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 384-386.

Reverend Chu Yiu Ming from the Baptist Church held an ecumenical prayer meeting regarding this social issue.⁵⁹

For the protestant church, more people are coming to the front line against the government and organizing anti-government activities individually. Benny Tai Yiu Ting is one such example. Tai was a Law Professor at the Hong Kong University and also a Christian, he is one of the leaders who initiated the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) that urged universal suffrage. He mentions the OCLP is a religious activity for him, and is preaching by his participation.⁶⁰ Another prominent example is Joshua Wong Chi Fung, who grew up in a Christian family and was a young activist since he was a student in school. He took a pivotal role in the Umbrella Movement and encouraged many young people's participation. His motivation in political participation is generated from his Christian faith. Which is based on a responsibility to care for the poor, the weak, and the needy, rather than bringing the gospel of salvation to the people.⁶¹

3.4 Conclusion

To summarize, firstly, using McCarthy's idea of institutional channelling, Leung and Chan provide a framework for understanding the state and religions relation. The government indirectly manipulates the churches through institutional channelling, and only small minority organized groups may escape from such manipulation. Secondly, from the perspective of the Chinese government, the churches must be a patriot that agrees and supports China, socialism and the Chinese Communist Party's government. As a consequence, churches are subject to the state authority that does not allow criticizing the government. This enhances the institutional channelling mechanism to restrict the prophetic role of the Church. Nevertheless, more and more Christians take a crucial role in social issues individually. This is a

⁵⁹ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 387-388.

⁶⁰ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 390.

⁶¹ Ng and Fulda, "The Religious Dimension of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement," 394-395.

phenomenon consistent with Leung and Chan's theory that Christians can escape from the institutional channelling and participate in public issues in a small group or individually.

As a remark, one can see the separation of the church and state has different interpretations. The context in America, China and Hong Kong showed a clear separation is only theoretically existing. The separation of religions and states can exist on a constitutional level, but whether in America or China and Hong Kong, they interact with each other on many other levels.

Chapter 4 Christian Life in the Public Sphere in Stanley Hauerwas' Understanding

Stanley Hauerwas is an influential theologian who studies Christian ethics from the North American context. He is well known in the topics of social ethics and political theology. He influences many theologians such as William Cavanaugh, Daniel Bell, who are scholars in political theology. This chapter's aim is to investigate how Hauerwas thinks about the role of the Church in the public sphere. It starts with his thoughts on Christian ethics and focuses on the relationship between the Christian faith and the public sphere later. The second part of this chapter is an articulation of the context that he refers to and his methods.

4.1. The Necessity of Christian Ethics

To start with, the necessity of Christian ethics should be known from Hauerwas's point of view. Two approaches in ethics are commonly used, namely utilitarianism and deontological. The former stresses on consequences that human beings can only be tools that facilitate a good result. The ends can justify the means. The latter emphasizes the action itself that believes actions are intrinsically good or bad. People can generate some moral rules that can apply to all situations. In fact, Hauerwas suggests that these two approaches share some common assumptions despite usually seeming antithetical. Both of them formulate the moral question that only concerns right or wrong, and the decisions are determined by consequences. People holding a utilitarian approach see moral action as determined by consequences and attempts to obtain the best balance of good over evil. People holding a deontological approach think a moral action that is right or wrong determined by the act itself, such as lying is always wrong. They attempt to take the right action and avoid the wrong action eventually. As a result, both approaches suppose moral acts can be abstracted from the agents, no matter who they are, and what is their intention. Using the rule of these approaches can decide the most appropriate action.⁶²

⁶² Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom: a primer in Christian ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 21.

However, Hauerwas claims these approaches are insufficient to account for human primary moral obligations. He, therefore, reorients the starting point of ethics. He neither asks, “what is the right thing to do?” nor “what is the best result?” He starts by asking “who we are?” By doing so, ethics are not depending on the ends to choose which decision should be made within a few options. Rather, it depends on how the person as the moral agency affects others to understand themselves and their relationship to others and God.⁶³ Instead of those non-ontological approaches, he proposes Christian ethics as the third way. Which takes the agency into account to consider their identity and their relationships with God and the world.

4.2. What Is Christian Ethics? How to Live A Christian Life in Public?

These two questions “what is Christian ethics?” and “how to live a Christian life in public?” are inseparable. For Hauerwas, Christian ethics is a theological reflection in service to a community. On the one hand, the church tries to explicate their reflection about Christian belief in practices. On the other hand, the practices are derived from their character which is based on their convictions, including their identity and mission.⁶⁴ Christian ethics is neither an abstract discipline concerning only ideas nor a private matter. Rather, it is a theological and practical activity to express how Christian convictions construe the self and world. For explanation, the following illustration is divided into two parts. The first part is going to answer the question “what makes Christian ethics Christian?” The second part is the characteristic of the Christian ethics which Hauerwas proposes.

First of all, to answer the question “what makes Christian ethics Christian?” The following focuses on the qualifier in Christian ethics. After a period of teaching ethics, Hauerwas wrote an introduction to Christian ethics *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (1983). In this book, he claims the qualifier “Christian” in Christian ethics makes it distinct from other ethics.⁶⁵ He finds two dominant characteristics of recent ethical theories. Firstly, these theories stress freedom. Thus, the nature of ethics is freedom used as a personal choice.

⁶³ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 130.

⁶⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 54.

⁶⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 17.

Secondly, these theories try to separate from the contingencies of histories and communities.⁶⁶ He argues that these foundations of ethics are fragile because there is no such morality that does not require others to suffer for our commitments. And it is reasonable to ask others to share and sacrifice for what people believe to be worthy.⁶⁷ Also, these foundations put religions as a private matter. Particular beliefs do not have a social role. As a result, Christians cannot live out their conviction which is based on truth. And they are not able to become a witness of Jesus Christ in public. This is why he is unsatisfied with recent ethical theories. He proposes an alternative approach namely Christian ethics so that Christians can live out their beliefs in public.

Furthermore, Christian ethics is Christian because it is the essence of the Church. “*The church does not have a social ethic; the church is a social ethic.*”⁶⁸ Here, “*The church is a social ethic*” means the Christian community’s reflection and expression are fundamentally public, there is no Christian ethics that can be abstract from society. When the Church manifests the characters of the kingdom of God, it will help the world to understand itself as the world.⁶⁹ In other words, the world will understand they need redemption only if the Church is the Church. Then, Christian ethics also has a missional aspect by the Church’s faithfulness and sanctification.

Unlike other ethics, Christian ethics is a unique approach because this community has a special calling from God; they have a distinct narrative about God and the divine-human relationship. Also, they have different virtues which they learn from the life of Jesus. Such distinctions of the church do not mean superiority or aim for dominance to the world. Rather, it is because they want to be faithful to God’s story even if it is a radical approach that compares to the world.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 7.

⁶⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 9.

⁶⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 99.

⁶⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 100.

⁷⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 57.

However, these distinctions neither make the church isolated from the world nor urge for a Christian state. Hauerwas insists that Christians should engage in politics. Their task is to reveal the insufficiency of all politics which are based on coercion and falsehood.⁷¹ They are not aiming to make the world a better place. But by the witness of their servanthood, they become an alternative polis to manifest the kingdom of God.

Besides, the church becomes the witness of God when they are a community of virtues. And nonviolence is prominent among these virtues. Since God does not rule the creation through enforcement but through a cross. Then the task of Christians is to imitate God's way, which is a peaceful way. In other words, Christian ethics is a community that confesses Jesus is Lord and willing to become powerless which is in contrast with the world's dominative ways to use power.

4.3. The Relation Between Christian Faith and the Public Sphere

4.3.1 *The Nature of Civil Society*

The above illustration explicitly expresses a distinction between the church and the world. Hauerwas claims the world is not inherently sinful, but their sinful character is about misusing their own free will. Then, the only difference between the church and the world is the difference between agents.⁷² He explains that the human sinful character fundamentally is an attempt to be the creators of history. Such an attempt results in a fear that people will be "nobody" and try to control their lives.⁷³ Then, put this understanding of the sinful character in society, violence is a form of the sinful character expression from society such as coercion or control.

4.3.2 *The Church in Public*

⁷¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 102.

⁷² Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 100-101

⁷³ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 47.

In the book *Resident Aliens* (1989) which Hauerwas co-wrote with William H. Willimon. They point out how different the church and the world are in this book. About the relationship between the church and the world, first, the church has distinct epistemology and has its unique identity and mission. So, they should not follow the world's agenda or attempt to prove their value to the world. Rather, the task of the church is to be the church that is faithful to God and manifest who God is in their life.⁷⁴ Using the image of a colony, they depict that Christians transferred their citizenship to the Kingdom of God after baptism. At the same time, they are resident in the world as aliens. So, Christians live in this world as a colony where they do not belong to, and amidst others as aliens. In doing so, the authors aim to explain how the church can be a faithful community when they are living in a culture that does not follow the truth. In other words, they suggest the church should be an alternative community.

Using the image of the colony, the authors argue that Christians political task is not to transform the world in the first place but is to be the church.⁷⁵ The task of theology is not to make the gospel credible to the modern world but lead the world to Jesus Christ.⁷⁶ To be faithful to this task, they emphasize that the church should have following characteristics. Firstly, they are a confessing church rather than an activist church or conversionist church. A confessing church is a community that recognizes conversion is a long process because it is a life transformation as a new person. As a result, they can offer an alternative polis to the world which is divergent from the social ethic or social structure.⁷⁷ Secondly, Christian life has a narrative nature rather than believing in a set of propositions. For Hauerwas, the bible is the story of the people's journey with God ;⁷⁸ Christian doctrines are only the outline of this story.⁷⁹ Then, Christians should be aware that their story is to become part of the story of God which has been told in the scripture, in Israel and the church continuously.⁸⁰ Third, the

⁷⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens: life in the christian colony: a provocative christian assessment of culture and ministry for people who know that something is wrong* (Nashville: Abingdon Press,1989), 12.

⁷⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 38.

⁷⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 24.

⁷⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 45.

⁷⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 24.

⁷⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 26.

⁸⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 59.

church is a community not because it is better than an individual, but it is formed by Jesus Christ. So, what makes the church as a community is not just the value of togetherness, but they have the same task that is to be faithful to Jesus Christ.⁸¹ Besides the synchronic community, the church also connects with the tradition as a diachronic community.⁸²

4.3.3 *The Role of Christ*

Hauerwas emphasizes Christian ethics is a theology that is grounded in Christology. The message that Jesus proclaimed is the kingdom of God as a present and future reality. At the same time, the standards of the kingdom are being exemplified by his life.⁸³ Jesus finished his task in a non-violence way by becoming a subject to the powers of this world. Then Christians should follow Jesus's way of living, which means giving up their own power as Jesus did. Furthermore, forgiveness and peace are the powerless ways one can see from the resurrection.⁸⁴ The life of Jesus shows that God initiated to rebuild the relationship with the sinful creatures. "*In Christ, God refuses to "stay in his place".*" Thus, the church community should continue Jesus's task. The message that sustains the church is not for itself but for the whole world as Jesus did. The church has significance only as God's means that they can save the world by againsting the world.⁸⁵ Thus, the role of Christ in Christian ethics manifests the standards of the kingdom of God which is non-violence, forgiveness and peace. And Christian ethics is continuing the work of Jesus that manifests these standards in the world.

4.4 Hauerwas' Background and The Related Context

Hauerwas grew up in Texas, the Southern part of the US from a Methodist family. He graduated from Yale Divinity School. He is influential in the protestant's Christian circles in America.⁸⁶ From the analysis of Stefan Paas, both Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder who

⁸¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 77.

⁸² Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 79.

⁸³ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 74.

⁸⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 91.

⁸⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident aliens*, 51.

⁸⁶ R. R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project," *Modern Theology* 28 (Apr 2012): 320.

Hauerwas often referred to, have been inspired by anabaptist theology. These influences cause three characteristics in Hauerwas's writing. Firstly, he declines the union between church and state. Secondly, he rejected an expectation from earthly politics. Thirdly, his theology stresses on the church as a holy and visible community of believers.⁸⁷

Regarding the context that Hauerwas is referring to, he makes an argument to criticize America liberal Christians in his book *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* published in 1988. From his description, American Christians in the past kept a distance from politics. They held a belief that one should not force one's religious views on anyone through public policy.⁸⁸ Such as Martin Luther King Jr. attempted to influence public issues, he must seek through constitutionally means and not in the name of being Christian. Hauerwas noticed a change that American Christians have been integrating Christian belief with democracy since the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ He thinks such integration is problematic because it misleads people to misunderstand that being a Christian means supporting democracy. They misapprehend "*Christianizing*" means advocating "*justice, equality, and sustainability.*"⁹⁰

He agrees with Yoder that name this integration as Constantinianism. It symbolizes the situation when Christianity becomes dominant, then has social and political power to determine the moral discourse, and to direct the behaviour of everyone.⁹¹ He believes this changing attitude from politically inactive to active is due to a fear of a moral vacuum in public life. In order to show how religious discourse related to public life, Christian community in America developed a mediating language that uses Christian belief to respond

⁸⁷ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: An Analysis of the Neo-Anabaptist Contribution to Missional Ecclesiology in the Post-Christendom West," *Ecclesiology* 15 (3) (2019): 287.

⁸⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1988), 175.

⁸⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 174-175.

⁹⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 179.

⁹¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 181.

to political problems.⁹² As a result, “*the primary subject of Christian ethics in America has been America*”.⁹³

From the point of view of Hauerwas, the problem of American Christians is not about whether Christians participate in politics or not. The problem is mixing up the meaning of being a Christian and being democratic. It causes people to lose the true meaning of being a Christian and misread their mission in the world. This integration serves the end that manifests how religion is essential to democracy. He points out the presuppositions and practices of the separation of church and state have generated some challenges to the Christian community. He reminds us that the church is supposed to be the first and foremost faithful to the kingship of Christ.⁹⁴ By this faithfulness, the community can keep a critical distance from perversions of modernity.⁹⁵

Moreover, emphasizing narrative is how Hauerwas avoided the problem of Protestant liberalism. He is aware of the problem of the Social Gospel that misleads a division of the Christian convictions into speech and act. The love and righteousness of God would be incorporated by the liberal political framework of twentieth century American culture. He clarifies, “*The Gospel is not about love, but it is about this man, Jesus of Nazareth*”. (Hauerwas 1981b:115)⁹⁶ Paying attention to the story of Jesus, the density and complex reflection of the narrative can avoid abstracting concepts from Christian beliefs.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, the church should keep a critical distance from the state does not mean they should withdraw from the public sphere. He worries seeing religions as private can cause the

⁹² Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 178.

⁹³ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 177.

⁹⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *In good company: The Church as polis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 199.

⁹⁵ R. R. Reno, “Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project, 324.

⁹⁶ R. R. Reno, “Stanley Hauerwas,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. William T. Cavanaugh and Peter Manley Scott, 306-319. 2nd ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 310-311.

⁹⁷ R. R. Reno, “Stanley Hauerwas,” 310-311.

Christian community who live according to God's story, to be muted. The idea that keeping religions private and subordinate can be traced back to Thomas Jefferson, and promoted by George Will, a political commentator and writer, "*religion is to be perfectly free as long as it is perfectly private -mere belief- but it must bend to the political will (law) as regards conduct.*"⁹⁸ Hauerwas points out that the problem it caused is an assumption that Christian belief can be abstracted from practices and action. Then, religious freedom is found in mere belief without embodiment. It means Christian belief can be confined to interiority and to an asocial sphere.⁹⁹ He clarifies that he is not suggesting a restoration of "the confessional state" but restoring a theoretical commitment to grounding social engagements in the Christological claim that Christ is King.¹⁰⁰ Neither seeking Christian domination in society nor withdrawal from the public sphere, Hauerwas suggests Christian community should engage political and public issues in a way that is faithful to the narrative of God.

4.5 Method

The formulation of Hauerwas' theology is dialectical, which has a skeptical attitude towards liberal protestant. An antithetical relationship between the church and the world constructs Hauerwas' theology. His Christian ethics refuse to prioritize the universal needs and humanity that may lead to the erosion of Christianity and the kingdom of God.¹⁰¹ The church should first be concerned to be faithful rather than relevant to the world. The social engagement of the church should not only satisfy contemporary needs and should not be grounded on a non-Christian foundation. Thus, the presupposition about Christian faith is a counter-cultural understanding that sets Christian faith as a radically alternative to every culture.

⁹⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 200-201.

⁹⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 201.

¹⁰⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 215.

¹⁰¹ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 285.

However, the counter-cultural approach has a tendency to expect the church as a confirmative community. It limits the degree of pluralism and diversity in the church.¹⁰² Putting the church is self-justification that can understand itself without reference to the world. And it can ignore the fact that the church is also a part of the world. Then, the church is an entity whole and isolated from the world. It might ignore any possibility that the self-understanding of the church may be shaped by her interaction with the world.¹⁰³

4.6 Conclusion

In short, Hauerwas promotes Christians as an alternative community while living in this world amidst a culture that disregards the truth. Thus, he emphasizes the distinction between the church and the world so that Christians would not confuse or lose their mission in the world. At the same time, the Christian community should not withdraw from the public sphere. Because their task is to be the witness of God in the public by mimicking God's character, then, the world is reminded that they need redemption. His theology refers to the situation in North America that people mix up the role of being an American democratic and being a Christian. And his thought is influenced mostly by anabaptist tradition.

¹⁰² Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 291.

¹⁰³ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 292.

Chapter 5 Amos Yong's Pentecostal Proposal of Political Theology

Amos Yong is a prominent pentecostal theologian. While he includes Hauerwas's approach in his proposal, he has a unique proposal beyond Hauerwas. Thus, this chapter aims to see how Yong describes the task of the church in the public sphere. After introducing his proposal, the intersection of the Christian faith and the public sphere will be presented. The last part will see how his background and context can influence his political theology.

5.1 The Necessity of a Pentecostal Proposal

Pentecostal is a diverse global community that has various political engagements. However, Yong realizes that they lack a theological or theoretical framework to comprehend this phenomenon. This is his motivation to construct a proposal that can integrate the pentecostal heritages and political engagements in his reflection.¹⁰⁴ He orientates his theology as showing a distinctively pentecostal form of theological reflection.¹⁰⁵ Such a proposal eventually will contribute to the ecumenical church, at the same time, thickening the pentecostal theological reflection.

5.2 What Is Yong's Proposal?

In the Days of Caesar- Pentecostalism and Political Theology published in 2010 is Yong's comprehensive proposal. It is divided into two parts. The first part is descriptive and the second is constructive. Since his proposal is derived from pentecostal's heritage and practices, an overall understanding of pentecostals is necessary. To start with, he corrects the stereotypes of pentecostalism and clarifies the apolitical image that has been assumed. Next, he provides an overview of the politics of pentecostals Christianity, and the development of

¹⁰⁴ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, xvii.

¹⁰⁵ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, xix.

political theology. The first part ends with the diverse pentecostals politics and multiplicity of political theologies that can converge in a fruitful dialogue.

In the second part of this book, Yong constructs a pentecostals political theology which is based on the previous empirical observation in the first part. Yong's proposal can be summarized as "many tongues, many political practices"¹⁰⁶ which is toward a performative and trinitarian theo-political proposal.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, he used the fivefold gospel from pentecostals as the framework. Which means seeing Jesus as savior, sanctifier, Spirit-baptizer, healer, and coming king. This framework can present a pluriform and polyphonic christology, pneumatology, and soteriology.¹⁰⁸

Yong proposes five angles on pentecostal political theology with a dialogue with five sets of theological voices and concluded by five political practices respectively. The first angle is about Jesus Christ as the savior. Pentecostalism has a conversation with political theologies of the demonic. They discuss an understanding of deliverance from cosmic forces of evil. The result is a liturgical theology of cosmopolitical resistance. The second angle is about Jesus as the sanctifier. Pentecostalism discusses with post-Christendom theologians about the church as an alternative polis in the dominant world order. And the result is a sanctified politics of cultural redemption. The third angle is about Jesus as a Spirit-baptizer. Pentecostalism discusses with radical Orthodoxy about a civil society that demands a reconsideration in a postcolonial, post-Western, and post-secular era of globalization. It proposes a prophetic politics of civil society as a result. The fourth angle is about Jesus as a healer. Pentecostalism dialogues with the Catholic social teaching tradition about economics. It concludes a political economy of healing and shalom. And the final angle is about Jesus as a coming king. Pentecostalism has a conversation with Jewish, liberation and green theologies on the topic of history. It suggests an eschatological politics of hope at the end.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 109.

¹⁰⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 113.

¹⁰⁸ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 95.

¹⁰⁹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 111-114.

From the above summary, Yong's proposal is obviously pluralism. It is constructed by his interpretation of the bible, pentecostals perspectives and political theology. Biblically, he provides an exegetical-political reading of Luke-Acts. In the reading in Acts 2, he sees the many tongues of the Spirit that can represent the many cultures of diaspora Judaism. And it can foreshadow many political participations when the church fulfils her mission. Regarding to pentecostals perspectives, there is no uniform but multiplicity political engagements in global pentecostalism. Such pluralism of the pentecostal politics can provide a capacity to be indigenized and vernacularized in different contexts. Likewise, the multiplicity of political theology also allows diversity of Christian politics.¹¹⁰ By these arguments, he provides a theological justification for the diversity of Christian politics. Furthermore, his proposal encourages the churches to have these practices so that they become a witness of the gospel in a politically pluralistic world.¹¹¹

Yong's proposal is also a dialogical approach. On the one hand, Yong uses the five-fold gospel which is taken from pentecostalism as the framework of this proposal. On the other hand, he invites diverse political theologies beyond the pentecostal into a conversation. Thus, the pluralistic proposal blurs the boundaries between different traditions which always become sectarian isolationism.¹¹²

5.3 The Relation Between Christian Faith and the Public Sphere

5.3.1 *Relation Between Christian Life and Public Life*

Yong acknowledges that his view on the relation between Christian faith and the public sphere follows the Reformed tradition. Reformed tradition sees spiritual community and civil governments as a complementary relation. Since the government is ordained by God, then the

¹¹⁰ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 109.

¹¹¹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 111.

¹¹² Daniela C. Augustine, review of Amos Yong: *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009. Review in *Theology Today* 68 (2012): 491.

implication in political theology is that the political leaders should rule according to divine law. People are supposed to live upright, moral and peaceful so that they can manifest God's justice, holiness, and peaceableness.¹¹³

Yong asserts that he is following Kuyper's Reformed theology of common grace.¹¹⁴ He highlights three important points from Kuyper. Firstly, Kuyper follows Reformed theology that believes the political sphere is appointed by divinity. It sees the state as an instrument of common grace. He goes beyond Calvin to locate the sphere of politics in the prelapsarian order of creation. Secondly, Kuyper notices that there are other spheres also created by God in the prelapsarian order that are sovereign apart from the state. It includes first, the social sphere; second is the corporative sphere of universities, guilds, associations; third is the domestic sphere of married life and family; and fourth is communal autonomy. These are the spheres the State cannot impose its law, so that intervention only can happen when interphasic clashes, or against the abuse of power, or coerce all together to bear personal and financial burdens. In fact, these four spheres are ruled only by God.¹¹⁵ The third point is about the sphere of religion that religions may never impose their own vision outside of their domain. It retrieves and defends the traditional Calvinist insistence on the freedom of conscience.¹¹⁶ Kuyper's Reformed theology provides the value of public spheres which are based on creation. He addresses other aspects of public life besides the state and suggests some boundaries between religious spheres and other spheres. Also, no single aspect is more supreme than others since they are all created and ruled by God.

The reason that Yong suggests Kuyper's theology is because it can avoid a monistic vision, which only includes church-controlled or state-controlled societies. It allows a structurally pluralistic social vision. And these social spheres were truly free only under the sovereign rule of God directly. They could organically develop according to their true nature which was

¹¹³ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 66-67.

¹¹⁴ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 83.

¹¹⁵ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 69-70.

¹¹⁶ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 70.

created by God.¹¹⁷ Kuyper's idea is grounded in a perspective that plurality spheres are all created by God, and God is present and active in different spheres.

5.3.2 *The Nature of Public's Power*

If these spheres are created by God in the prelapsarian order, then what happens after humans have fallen? According to Yong, the worldly systems of domination are corrupted by fallen principalities and powers, but they are also redeemable.

Yong agrees with Kuyper that these powers are creations of God ordained for his purpose at first, which is glorifying God.¹¹⁸ Instead of using "spheres" in Kuyper's language, Yong suggests the biblical language of "powers" which are related to the public realm, such as the political, the economic, and the social. Which are created prelapsarian and good in the eyes of God. He articulates three points to explain the powers are fallen and susceptible to demonic manifestations. Firstly, since the demonic is a perversion of the goodness of the creation's orders, thus, the demonic has no ontological reality of its own.¹¹⁹ Secondly, demonic power is dependent upon a certain configuration of the material, institutional, and organizational structures of the powers. But demonic is irreducible to the sum of its constituent parts. Thirdly, when there is a demonic emergence, it performs as a force of destruction, wielding in and through the powers of fallen and disordered. Also, it can expand, it may overreach authority and is seemingly personal and intentional in its destructive capacities.¹²⁰

However, the powers can be redeemed by God. In the rites of exorcism, the powers are not cast out but demonic. Which are the distortions that infest, infect, and permeate the various

¹¹⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 71.

¹¹⁸ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 162.

¹¹⁹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 162.

¹²⁰ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 163.

spheres of human life.¹²¹ Yong reminds that such theology of the powers is an apophatic theology. Because what we know about the demonic is only knowing what it is not.¹²²

In short, he separates the fallen powers and the configuration that the powers are dependent on. So, the political, the economic, and the social spheres are still valuable even if they are susceptible to demonic manifestations.

5.3.3 Multi-dimensions of Salvation

Salvation is usually understood as an individual and one-dimension. If the fallen public systems are redeemable, it implies that salvation is not only for individuals. According to reading in the New Testament mainly in Luke-Acts, Yong explains that salvation has seven dimensions.¹²³ It starts with personal salvation as the first dimension. Individuals encounter and are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ by the Spirit. This dimension will not end in the individual but leads the person to the believing community such as baptism. The second dimension is family salvation. The individuals connect with the salvation of their family. Ecclesial salvation is the third dimension. The Spirit transforms the person to the new creature in Christ and leads the person to a communal way of life. The fourth dimension is material salvation which refers to the embodied nature of human beings. He explains that the Jesus that Luke depicts is diverse from other gospels, which has special attention to the poor, marginalized, and oppressed, and Jesus serves them by material and holistic healing.¹²⁴ The fifth dimension is the social dimension of salvation. This is an extension and complementary to ecclesial salvation. He sees that not only the interpersonal relationships between individuals can be healed but also the fallen and destructive public structures can be redeemed. The socioeconomic and political structure's redemption includes the reconciliation of race, class, and gender according to Luke-Acts and Paul's writing, and the examples of the

¹²¹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 163.

¹²² Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 164.

¹²³ Amos Yong, "The Multidimensionality of Salvation," in *An Amos Yong Reader: The Pentecostal spirit*, ed. Christopher A Stephenson, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2020), 163.

¹²⁴ Amos Yong, "The Multidimensionality of Salvation," 164-165.

contemporary world.¹²⁵ The sixth dimension is cosmic salvation which points to the redemption of all creation. And the seventh dimension is eschatological salvation which refers to the salvation that transforms all creation into the new heavens and new earth.¹²⁶ The outpouring of the Spirit indicates this salvation is experienced now and awaited. In this dimension, Yong agrees with Miroslav Volf that the reconciliation between victims and victimizers will accomplish the forgiveness of all sins, vindicate the oppressed, and bring justice. It is possible because of the works of the Spirit. So, divine grace can manifest in the eschatological redemption of sinners and those sinned against.¹²⁷

5.4 Yong's Background and The Related Context

After giving an overview of Yong pentecostal political theology proposal, it is crucial to be aware of the background and context that are shaping his theology. Personally, Amos Yong is a Malaysian Chinese who migrated to America.¹²⁸ Using a sociological term, he has a hybrid identity. Such identity consists of his Chinese descent; growing up in Malaysia and America; and married to a Mexican American woman. This complex cultural background leads him to be sensitive to cultural diversity, marginalize people, interreligious dialogue, and the globalizing world.

Regarding Yong's theological context, L. William Oliverio, Jr. perceives Yong's theology is responding to the problems of late modernity.¹²⁹ Agreeing with sociologist James Davison Hunter, Oliverio claims the most challenging from the late modernity to the contemporary church are the pluralism and dissolution of meaning. In the days of modernity, a majority

¹²⁵ Amos Yong, "The Multidimensionality of Salvation," 166.

¹²⁶ Amos Yong, "The Multidimensionality of Salvation," 167.

¹²⁷ Amos Yong, "The Multidimensionality of Salvation," 168.

¹²⁸ Amos Yong, "Evangelical Theology in the Twenty-First Century- Hybrid Soundings from the Asian American Pent-Evangelical Diaspora," in *An Amos Yong Reader: The Pentecostal spirit*, ed. Christopher A Stephenson. (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2020), 272-273.

¹²⁹ L. William Oliverio, Jr, "The One and the Many: Amos Yong and the Pluralism and Dissolution of Late Modernity," in *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, ed. Vondey, Wolfgang, and William Martin, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 46.

culture conjoined with religious faiths. A culture could separate its adherents against the claims of other cultures by their correlated world views. However, increasing awareness of the plurality of cultures and beliefs in late modernity diminish the social support to Christians.¹³⁰ Eventually, believing in God becomes optional but not axiomatic.¹³¹ Also, the dissolution of meaning is an interrelated problem of late modernity. The “*covenant between signified and signifier, word and world is broken.*”¹³² People have no confidence in what the words signified to. Then, Yong’s theology engages with pluralism, at the same time, looking for a theological and theoretical framework. So that Christian community can insist on what is true in the pluralistic world and in the encounter with God in empirical realities.

5.5 Method

The pentecostal heritage is both the background and resource of Yong’s theology. Since the Charismatic Movement occurred in many North American universities in the 1960s, discussions in the academic world began to arise. This discussion is about the relationship between the Spirit-filled life and charismatic experience. It caused a group of professional intellectuals to engage in formal academics.¹³³ Wolfgang Vondey and Martin William Mittelstadt categorized Yong as a Pentecostal scholar. They think Yong can represent a new generation that has begun to reconsider existing doctrines in a systematic fashion. Indeed, this new generation proposes a pentecostal theology that goes beyond the traditional historical, biblical, and internal theological conversations. Instead, they reconstruct a theology that is closer to the contemporary context, and in an interdisciplinary, and integrative manner.¹³⁴

Vondey and Mittelstadt analyze Yong’s theology that has three interweaving dimensions. That is pneumatology, pentecostalism, and renewal. The pneumatology permeates all of Yong’s writings. It provides a horizon that sees everything from the Spirit’s perspective. As a

¹³⁰ L. William Oliverio, Jr, “The One and the Many,” 49.

¹³¹ L. William Oliverio, Jr, “The One and the Many,” 50.

¹³² L. William Oliverio, Jr, “The One and the Many,” 50.

¹³³ Wolfgang Vondey and William Martin Mittelstadt, “Introduction,” 4.

¹³⁴ Wolfgang Vondey and William Martin Mittelstadt, “Introduction,” 8.

result, such pneumatology is open to defining what is meant by “spirit” and the subsequent implications. The pentecostal dimension provides theological trajectories. It refers to his theology as grounded biblically, to be located confessionally within the pentecostal experience of the Spirit and guided by the theme of Jesus Christ.¹³⁵ Lastly, the renewal dimension is a prophetic element that allows both pentecostal and pneumatological frameworks to be critiqued.¹³⁶

5.6 Conclusion

In short, God can be glorified outside the Church since God created different spheres besides the Church. It includes that the state is appointed by God to share common grace. Also, the gospel is able to transform not only on an individual dimension but also a public life dimension. So, the fallen power is redeemable. With the works of the Holy Spirit, the church can participate in this process. Then, the Church’s action in the world is to partake in the sanctification from the Holy Spirit. Yong’s theology is a bottom-up approach that starts doing theology from experience. He is seeking corresponding biblical and traditional resources for a theological foundation. Such approaches provide a reconsideration of the theology of politics. It concerns the relevance of the contemporary context. Besides, the hybrid identity and concern about the challenges from late modernity are shaping his proposal. Which is open to diversity, at the same time, seeking a dialogue between traditions on a theological framework.

¹³⁵ Wolfgang Vondey and William Martin Mittelstadt, “Introduction,” 14.

¹³⁶ Wolfgang Vondey and William Martin Mittelstadt, “Introduction,” 18.

Chapter 6 Comparison, Evaluation and Conclusion

After an introduction of Stanley Hauerwas and Yong's theology, and investigating their backgrounds, the contexts they are referring to and their methodologies, it becomes clear, that there are similarities and differences. Both of them have been influential theologians since the end of the twentieth century. Hauerwas was born in Texas and his theological reflection focuses mainly on the US situation and is influenced by Mennonite communities and traditions. Although Amos Yong grew up in the US, as a Malaysian Chinese he has a complex cultural background and his pentecostal tradition is at home in a diverse and global community. Thus, it is reasonable to assume his background shapes his theology that targets audiences from global pentecostals and the ecumenical church.

In order to evaluate their thoughts by articulating their potential implications in the Hong Kong situation, the first step is to compare their thoughts in terms of the contexts of their proposal and their consequences and methodologies. But it is impossible to compare every difference between them here. Rather, in a contextual theology perspective, more important is to analyze how they interpret the challenge to the church from the context and the relation between the Christian faith and other cultures. And some differences of their methods are also compared. The final part is evaluation according to the relevancy of two approaches by applying to the Hong Kong context.

6.1 A Comparison Between Hauerwas' and Yong's Proposals

6.1.1 Interpreting the Challenge to The Church

Hauerwas interprets the challenge of the US-context to the church as liberalism. In a liberal society, the government needs to be neutral with regard to the variety of ideas of the good life

that citizens endorse and respect. By doing so, governments treat citizens with equal respect and concern.¹³⁷

Roland Pierik and Wibren van der Burg categorize the constitutional practice in the US as exclusive neutrality which is distinct from inclusive neutrality. The idea of exclusive neutrality suggests that the state can treat citizens equally only if the state completely disregards religions and cultural differences. It supposes making citizens more virtuous is not the duty of the government. Consequently, political decision-making can avoid controversial views of the good life which are based on different religions and cultures.¹³⁸ Using Hauerwas's language, exclusive neutrality does not allow decision-making with regard to any narrative. As opposed to exclusive neutrality, inclusive neutrality accepts citizens to express and organize themselves in the public sphere according to their religions or cultures. And the government is also allowed to support religious or cultural activities. Thus, inclusive neutrality seeks to respect no single but all relevant narratives in the decision-making process. However, inclusive neutrality requires that the majority attempt to accommodate the views of the minority religion and culture with a democratic attitude.¹³⁹

Exclusive neutrality liberalism believes society can be organized without one common truthful narrative, that freedom and rationality are independent of narrative.¹⁴⁰ In contrast, for Christians, there is only one truthful narrative that forms the self-understanding of Christians. This narrative enables them to negotiate the dangers of this existence, trusting in God's promise of redemption and rejecting violence as a form of unbelief.¹⁴¹ Without the story of God, the church is not the church because it becomes non-distinguishable from other communities. Besides, inclusive neutrality liberalism organized society with regard to all narratives but not one common truthful narrative. It can lead to domesticating or neutralizing

¹³⁷ Roland Pierik and Wibren van der Burg, 'What Is Neutrality?' in *An International Journal of Jurisprudence and Philosophy of Law*, V.27 No.4 (Dec 2014), 496.

¹³⁸ Roland Pierik and Wibren van der Burg, 'What Is Neutrality?', 498-499.

¹³⁹ Roland Pierik and Wibren van der Burg, 'What Is Neutrality?', 500.

¹⁴⁰ William Werpehowski, "TALKING THE WALK AND WALKING THE TALK-Stanley Hauerwas's Contribution to Theological Ethics. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, v40 n2 (June 2012), 234.

¹⁴¹ William Werpehowski, "TALKING THE WALK AND WALKING THE TALK", 234.

the impact of Christian faith on political life in order to respect all worldviews in society.¹⁴² As a result, religions become private and the Christian community, who has a different narrative from the state, is being muted by neutralization. The problem for Christians then, is how can they live out their faith in public without accommodating the truth claim when religions are neutralized in society.

However, criticizing liberal society is not the primary concern of Hauerwas's project. His major concern is to avoid the confusion of the church as a church. So that Christians can say "no" to the state when the state governs in the name of freedom of the individual. Facing the challenge of liberalism, Hauerwas thinks that Constantinism is a temptation that creates confusion between the role of the church as the church and its appropriate role of public engagement.¹⁴³ This confusion generates a civil religion that attempts to enable religion not for the good of religion but for the creation of the citizen.¹⁴⁴ It is problematic when Christians make Christianity relevant to non-Christians in order to enhance a general acceptance of the Christian faith but water down their characteristics as a faith community. Thus, he neither supports a Constantinism that promotes Christianizing the social order, attempting to dominate in the public sphere by Christian belief. Nor he suggests accommodating their Christian faith in public so that it fits into the liberal society's vision or being accepted by non-Christians.

Oliverio interprets Yong's theology as a response to late modernity as discussed before. Amos Yong mentions that global churches are facing the challenges raised by reactions to modernity, modern science, and the diversity of religions in the era of globalization.¹⁴⁵ The challenge of the church is how to claim the particularity of Christian faith amidst other faiths

¹⁴² Stanley Hauerwas, 'Church Matters: On Faith and Politics' in *Approaching the End: Eschatological Reflection on Church, Politics and Life*, (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2014), 70.

¹⁴³ John B. Thomson, *The Ecclesiology of Stanley Hauerwas: A Christian Theology of Liberation*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 188.

¹⁴⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, 'Church Matters: On Faith and Politics', 69.

¹⁴⁵ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 237.

and how to tackle the question from universal claims to theological tradition.¹⁴⁶ According to Oliverio, the central problem of late modernity is pluralism and dissolution in globalization. In a multiple cultures' world, global urbanization and new communication methods emerge that cause a continuity of contact between cultures.¹⁴⁷ Then the request of equality to every culture affects their attendant religious faiths also. As a result, specific religious faiths dissolve in pluralist faiths and cultures in order to respect the other.

One can see both Hauerwas and Yong' theologies facing the challenge of pluralism that makes Christian faith neutralized and privatized in the public sphere and religious diversity. Their difference is that Hauerwas believes the Christians in America influenced by some liberalism will lead the church to misunderstand their mission, to make the world a better place but forgetting the church should be the church in the first place. In other words, the identity of the church is independent of any needs from the world. For Yong, the most consideration is how can the church respond to the needs of the world and how to know God by how the Holy Spirit works in the world. That is to say, the challenge to the church is how to renew the theology so that the church can understand and cooperate with the works of the Spirit.

6.1.2 The Relation Between Christian Faith and Other Cultures

Paas explains that neo-anabaptist theologians including Hauerwas, who put the church as a counter-cultural community, provide three contributions. First, they reject the union between church and state that could mislead the church to misunderstand their real task in the world.¹⁴⁸ Secondly, they emphasize Christians should not expect too much from the earthly politics. Although political power is created and sustained by God, it does not have a future in the kingdom of God. Neo-anabaptists articulate a pessimistic attitude towards earthly political power because this power is temporal and inevitably demised at the end. Thus, the task of the church is being a witness to the new 'politics' of God's eschatological order by

¹⁴⁶ L. William Oliverio, Jr, "The One and the Many," 46.

¹⁴⁷ L. William Oliverio, Jr, "The One and the Many," 49.

¹⁴⁸ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 287.

what they can see from the life of Jesus.¹⁴⁹ Thirdly, they emphasize the church as a holy and visible community of believers. The church will achieve its task not through political or cultural control but by being itself and by being an alternative community which is shaped by Christian belief.¹⁵⁰

Yong's theology provides three tasks for a church that is facing the challenge from the relation between cultures and religions. Firstly, in order to know exactly what the challenge is, Christian theology must learn to speak the various languages such as science and other religions. Secondly, in order to critically interact with these ideologies, the understanding of these various languages should reach a sophisticated level so that they can be recognized by their advocates. Thirdly, Christian faith and these languages need to be appropriately translated to each other so that they can respond to each other.¹⁵¹ Thus, Christian belief and other cultures are translatable for Yong.

Using "many tongues, many political practices" as his thesis title, Yong provides a pluralistic proposal. In the pentecostal event, people use their own languages to glorify God, at the same time, many tongues also open the door for different cultures to witness the gospel.¹⁵² Then, diverse cultures can be used to manifest the glory of God. However, it does not mean every human culture should be accepted unconditionally. In his proposal, one of the aspects of the gospel is Jesus Christ as the sanctifier who sanctified politics of cultural redemption. Which implies culture could be corrupted and waiting for redemption if some of their elements may not be compatible with the message of Jesus Christ.

Thus, Yong's proposal is embracing cultural diversity with a critical attitude while Hauerwas has a pessimistic view on human culture seeing the Christian belief as counter-culture. This

¹⁴⁹ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 288.

¹⁵⁰ Stefan Paas, "The Counter-Cultural Church: 289.

¹⁵¹ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 201.

¹⁵² Dodson, Jacob D. 'Divine Hospitality and Human Diversity: Amos Yong and Foundations of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.' In *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, ed. Vondey, Wolfgang, and William Martin, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 126-127.

understanding of the relation between Christian faith and cultures also influences their communicative attitude in their theologies. Yong's proposal is more dialogical because different cultures are able to manifest the message of the gospel. Hauerwas's proposal is more monologuing because the story of God is super-cultural, which means untranslatable to any culture.

6.1.3 Method

6.1.3.1 The Priority Between Theological Truth and Experience

Both Hauerwas and Yong start their theological reflections from the observation of reality. Nevertheless, they have different priorities between cognition and experience. Compared with Yong, Hauerwas's theology has less room for change in order to maintain its faithfulness to the Christian faith. Hauerwas insists the church should be loyal to the Christian story which gives one critical distance from perversions of modernity.¹⁵³ Reno points out that instead of sticking with a particular tradition, Hauerwas advocates confession and church-based theologies. To avoid being lost amidst others faith in the modern world, the church should be loyal to the distinctive languages and practices of the Christian faith.¹⁵⁴

For Yong, his notion of a pentecostalism's approach to political theology is to find theological and theoretical foundation for diverse practices which already existed. This means that he starts the reflection from the experience towards reconstructing and renewing theology. He describes that "*Theology is a second-order activity of reflecting on experience, is informed by life in the Spirit.*"¹⁵⁵ This means that theological knowledge is derived from experience.

¹⁵³ R. R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project", 324.

¹⁵⁴ R. R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas and the Liberal Protestant Project", 325.

¹⁵⁵ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 92.

In short, Hauerwas puts sources of theological knowledge such as the bible and doctrine as the story of God, Christ and the identity of the Church as the priority that should guide the understanding of experience and practices of Christians. Unlike Hauerwas, Yong puts experience as the priority that allows empirical knowledge to shape the theological interpretation of the bible, tradition and doctrine. One may criticize the lack of flexibility of Hauerwas's theology or seek theological justification of experience of Yong's idea. But the priority on theological resources is mostly determined by their positionality.

6.1.3.2 *Hermeneutical Method*

For Hauerwas, the bible is a story of people's journey with their God, doctrines are the outline of the story; liturgy is a critical way to help us listen and live the story of God.¹⁵⁶ The narrative in Hauerwas's idea is a crucial category of the knowledge of the self that is also our knowledge of God.¹⁵⁷ God revealed himself narratively in the history of Israel and in the life of Jesus, the scripture tells the whole covenantal story with Israel, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the ongoing history of the church as the recapitulation of that life.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the church knows who they are only if they place themselves within God's story.¹⁵⁹ This understanding of narrative follows Lindbeck's understanding. Which sees narrative as a vehicle for a "cultural-linguistic" approach to Christian doctrine, providing an alternative to both propositional object language and expressive talk of religious experience.¹⁶⁰

Yong names the pentecostal hermeneutic "this-is-that" approach. It is an analogical method by which Christians correlate the interpretation and the contemporary world.¹⁶¹ And it is

¹⁵⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 24.

¹⁵⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 26.

¹⁵⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 28-29.

¹⁵⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The peaceable kingdom*, 27.

¹⁶⁰ Herman Paul, "Stanley Hauerwas: Against Secularization in the Church." in *Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie* 59, no. 2, (2013): 12-33.

¹⁶¹ Wolfgang Vondey and William Martin Mittelstadt, "Introduction", 11.

assumed that the Holy Spirit who is present and active today will guide the reading.¹⁶² This hermeneutical method, starting from the Spirit's works, provides two levels of diversity of the canonical scripture, the pluralism of the scriptures and plurality of interpretations of the scriptures.¹⁶³ Also, he chooses Luke-Acts as the main biblical resources for generating a creative hermeneutical approach for contemporary Christian beliefs within and practices amidst the political issue.¹⁶⁴

6.1.3.3 *Christocentric and Trinitarian*

Some scholars critique Hauerwas's approach as ecclesiocentric rather than Christocentric because he emphasizes a lot on Christian community. Since Hauerwas never pretended to be a systematic theologian and was disinclined to make systematic theology, Victoria Lorrimar reminds us we should treat him fairly.¹⁶⁵ Even though Hauerwas mentions the church more than Christ in his writing, he believes that the church is an ongoing work of Christ in the world.¹⁶⁶ Also, the church embodies the mediation of God that is Christ. He puts it even stronger that the church not only points to salvation, but it is itself constitutive of salvation. Lorrimar clarifies what Hauerwas means is the salvation which was brought by Christ cannot be known apart from the church.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Lorrimar argues that Hauerwas ecclesiocentric approach is premised on Christology.

¹⁶² Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 92.

¹⁶³ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 94.

¹⁶⁴ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 99.

¹⁶⁵ Victoria Lorrimar, "Church and Christ in the Work of Stanley Hauerwas" *Ecclesiology*, 11 (2015), 325.

¹⁶⁶ Victoria Lorrimar, "Church and Christ in the Work of Stanley Hauerwas", 319.

¹⁶⁷ Victoria Lorrimar, "Church and Christ in the Work of Stanley Hauerwas", 321.

Instead of Christocentric, Yong's proposal not only focuses on pneumatology but also stresses more on the Trinity. According to Christopher A. Stephenson, characteristics of Yong's pneumatology include relationality, rationality, and dynamism of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁸

That is a combination of the Irenaean model and Augustinian model.¹⁶⁹ The former model suggests the Spirit and Word as the two hands of God that leads to the notion of the coinherence between the divine persons. The later model suggests the Spirit as the bond of love between Father and Son, which affirms a reciprocity and interrelationality of the divine persons. It avoids any degree of ontological subordination or division among them. The Spirit is not only related to the Father and the Son, but also mediated Jesus' incarnate life and ministry; a believer's relationship with God, and finally the community of the church.¹⁷⁰ For Steven M. Studebaker, the Spirit is the second source that enables human beings to know how to live in this world since the Spirit is the mediating key for communicating the Word and the creatures of the world by illuminating the meaning of the revelation in Christ to human comprehension.¹⁷¹ Also, the Spirit is the power or source of life in three aspects. Firstly, the Spirit gives life to creation and nurtures and sustains it. Secondly, the Spirit endows the created order with a responsive capacity as a dynamic fecundity so that they can share in the community of the body of Christ. Thirdly, the Spirit gives life to renew all of creation.¹⁷² In Yong's proposal, one can see the unique role of the Spirit and also how three persons interact in the trinity.

6.2 Evaluation

¹⁶⁸ Stephenson, Christopher A. 'Reality, Knowledge, and Life in Community: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Hermeneutics in the Work of Amos Yong.' In *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, ed. Vondey, Wolfgang, and William Martin. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 83.

¹⁶⁹ Stephenson, Christopher A. 'Reality, Knowledge, and Life in Community', 86-87.

¹⁷⁰ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Toward a Pneumatological Trinitarian Theology: Amos Yong, the Spirit, and the Trinity. In *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, ed. Vondey, Wolfgang, and William Martin. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 83-84.

¹⁷¹ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Toward a Pneumatological Trinitarian Theology: Amos Yong, the Spirit, and the Trinity, 85.

¹⁷² Steven M. Studebaker, 'Toward a Pneumatological Trinitarian Theology: Amos Yong, the Spirit, and the Trinity, 85.

From above comparison, one can observe the difference that Hauerwas and Yong address the challenge to the church in relation to public engagement, how to relate Christian faith and other cultures, and how they use some of the theological resources. As a matter of fact, both approaches are faithful to the narrative of Jesus Christ and Christian community in different ways. In this last section, the focus is to evaluate the relevance of the two approaches to Hong Kong context. Applying Hauerwas and Yong' approaches in Hong Kong, in order to decide which approach is more fruitful to Hong Kong churches. One can argue Yong' approach is more helpful to Hong Kong churches to reconsider the attitude of public engagement. It is because Yong's approach provides more benefits to Hong Kong churches and his approach can include Hauerwas approach but not vice versa.

6.2.1 Application of Hauerwas' Approach in the Hong Kong Context

Hauerwas' approach is helpful in the Hong Kong situation because officially churches cannot provide a prophetic voice to criticize the government. According to chapter three, Hong Kong churches are trapped by institutional channelling, so they are not able to critique the injustice of the government. Besides the individual Christian participation, Hauerwas' theology can remind the churches to take up the mission in the public sphere as an alternative community.

It is true that Hauerwas emphasizing the particularity of Christian community in the public sphere is always seen as sectarian as a result. His idea of alternative community is easily mistaken as a withdrawal from the public sphere and apolitical attitude to the public sphere.

However, there is some downside of his approach. That Hauerwas emphasizes the particularity of the Christian community in the public sphere is always seen as sectarian. His idea of alternative community is easily mistaken as a withdrawal from the public sphere and apolitical attitude to the public sphere.

From the first chapter, there are different interpretations of the 'separation of state and church' from America and China's perspectives. The question for the Hong Kong churches is

it necessary to emphasize such separation from a theological perspective. One could argue that Hong Kong churches should not emphasize the separation of state and church in the Hong Kong context for two reasons. Firstly, Christians are a minority in Hong Kong society, there is a low possibility that people will expect Christians to dominate the public sphere or political issues. Hong Kong is not like America in that at least some people think it is founded as a Christian state. Christianity is seen as a western worldview and a foreign religion for a Chinese society despite the fact that Hong Kong was colonized by the British for many years. Besides, religions are seen as a private choice of belief. Even if one day the Christian population becomes a majority, in a diverse religious society, Christians would be seen as a community on par with other religions. Furthermore, Taoism morality is still deeply rooted in Hong Kong-Chinese society. That means Christian belief is not the only perspective to provide ethical principles for this multi-cultural and liberal society.

The second reason to argue that separation of church and state is unnecessary, that overemphasizing the separation of church and state will cause an apolitical attitude that misleads the church to fail to accomplish its mission in society. Despite Hauerwas never meant the church should not participate in politics, when he claims the task of the church is to be the church, at least public engagement will become less important than other practices because they look more religious or unique in Christianity. However, public engagement is also being a witness of the gospel in society; additionally, caring for the poor and speaking out for injustice is the mission of Christian community. Living out the eschatological hope in the public sphere can both be a character of the Christian community and a response to the needs of the world. Thus, it is hard to separate the character of the Christian community as the church and their mission in the world.

One may argue that there is a possible danger that Christian values, which seem highly connected to democracy, might misunderstand the task of the church as Hauerwas reminds. Indeed, it is a reminder from Hauerwas that Hong Kong churches should be cautious. However, Christianity is not the only religion that supports democracy. Many atheists support without any religious notions. Although the Buddhist efforts were minimal compared to the Christian participation, a lot of individual Buddhist practitioners participated in the Umbrella Movement without representing specific organizations or schools. They made a Buddhist

symbol at the protest sites; volunteered as first-aid workers.¹⁷³ And expressed the notion of participation as ‘good’ Buddhists.¹⁷⁴ Also, Hong Kong Christians are holding different political positions. Christians who support democracy are not necessarily understood as integrating Christian belief with democracy. It may also be understood as “democracy is a better choice than Communism” or “democracy is useful as an alternative for Communism”.

6.2.2 Application of Yong’s Approach in the Hong Kong Context

A. Pluralism approach can escape institutional channelling

Yong’s pluralism approach is practical in the Hong Kong situation because both Hong Kong churches and individual Christians should take up the mission in the public sphere. Chapter three discussed the observation from a sociological perspective that officially churches are trapped by institutional channelling. While the churches cannot critique the government if it is doing injustice, many Christians participate in social issues individually. In fact, many Christians participate in diverse practices besides charity work, such as concern for the injustice of the landscape; promote Hong Kong’s culture to maintain their specific hybrid identity; support small business against the monopoly from big business groups, etc. Such individual participation is not grounded on the Christian faith as a motivation most likely. Therefore, Amos Yong’s proposal can accept both official churches and individual Christians practices which already exist in society. It can also help the Hong Kong official churches find creative ways to engage the public sphere when some ways are not applicable.

B. Pluralism approach allow inter-cultural dialogue

¹⁷³ Mariske Westendorp, *Salvation and Rights in Hong Kong*, In C. Kuo (Ed.), *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies* (397-421). (Religion and Society in Asia; Vol. 3, 2017), 407.

¹⁷⁴ Mariske Westendorp, *Salvation and Rights in Hong Kong*, 400-401.

Yong's pluralism approach can allow an inter-cultural dialogue between Christian faith and other worldviews. Hong Kong is a multi-cultural society where Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism are categorized as religions and philosophies which are embedded in traditional Chinese culture. They provide ethical standards to society. Also, communist party believes in atheism and science. Thus, it is inappropriate to hold a counter-culture attitude when a society seeks harmonious coexistence and peaceful communication between different worldviews. Then Yong's pluralistic approach can give more room for intercultural dialogue in a multicultural society, at the same time, not dissolve the particularity of Christian belief in the midst of other faiths.

C. Renew the church teaching by a contextualize theological reflection

From the statistics mentioned in chapter one, there is an urge from the congregation that the teaching of church is not enough to help them discern the dilemmas of society. So, one of the needs of Hong Kong churches is to renew the church teaching on political theology according to the contemporary situation. There are two reasons being the obstacle of the renewal. Firstly, Hong Kong churches lack the awareness they have the responsibility to contextualize theology by their reflection. In fact, Western missionaries shared the gospel in Hong Kong, planted churches and provided theological education in the past. But Hong Kong churches are able enough to take over the job of indigenizing and to do theological reflection regarding local context themselves. Hauerwas and Yong are both seeking a theological approach to respond to a specific context. In chapter one, a study on the comparison between Hong Kong and Taiwan shows that without the emergency of losing human rights, the churches in Taiwan are less concerned about political issues than Hong Kong. This implies the context of society would influence the church's practices besides theological knowledge. Then, how to interpret the challenge of the church in Hong Kong's specific context is also a crucial step to develop a faithful and relevant theology to renew the church's teaching.

Second, lacking theological reflection about public engagement in the past because setting theological knowledge as a priority than practice. The traditional way of practicing theology in the evangelical mainstream is to see what the bible says, with the help of doctrinal teaching

and church tradition. For many Christians, faithfulness to traditional teaching usually seemed the priority other than relevance. However, biblical interpretation, doctrine and tradition are all contextualized. This means context can shape theological knowledge as well. Yong's proposal allows us to start with the practices that are already there and to find a theological framework for comprehension which may broaden our theological knowledge.

D. Theological knowledge derived from practice and experience

If Hong Kong Christians say they feel connected to God and others by social engagement, what is implicated for their way of doing theology? The traditional way to do theology in the Western world is using theological knowledge from doctrine, bible and tradition to comprehend experience. However, if people can know God when they practice Christian beliefs in daily life and in the public sphere, this means we can recognize an experiential knowledge of God from the present work of the Holy Spirit. Then Christians can know God through practice and towards a renewal of our understanding of the doctrine and the bible. Yong's proposal can provide a flexibility that renews our cognitive understanding of the gospel by the experiential knowledge from practice.

E. Renew the understanding in pneumatology

Pneumatology is one of the aspects the church's teaching could renew as follows. Regarding salvation, Hauerwas thought the world will know they need redemption only if the church is being the church. However, if salvation can be known only through the church, then does the Holy Spirit work beyond the church? It is true that with the help of the Holy Spirit, the church is a witness of the life of Christ as a whole, not only his incarnation, sacrifice and resurrection but his whole life manifests the kingdom of God. However, who is the agency of salvation in the world? If we see the church as the agency or even itself as the salvation, it has a tendency to domesticate the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

At this point, Yong's approach can avoid this domestication and renew the understanding of the Holy Spirit in the world. However, Yong's pneumatology also has limitations. Studebaker points out two limitations of the Trinitarian models in Yong's theology. First, in the model of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and Son, the Spirit is not an active agent. So, referring to personhood, the Spirit does not have a personal agency equivalent with the Father and Son. The problem is seeing the Spirit as mutual love, the Spirit cannot be recognized as a personal agency.¹⁷⁵ Second, using the mutual love model will create the problem of seeing the Spirit not a person compared to the Father and the Son. The personal identity and status of the Spirit in traditional Western trinitarian theology will remain ambiguous.¹⁷⁶ In addition, how to discern the present work of the Holy Spirit is waiting to be discussed in Yong's proposal.

6.3 Conclusion

According to chapter two, Hong Kong churches are increasingly discussing political and social issues. Some Christians think the official churches' responses to the social issues are not in line with the thoughts of individual believers. One of the reasons for the incongruity between official churches and individual believers can be found in chapter three. That is the official churches are trapped in the institutional channelling that cannot criticize the government's unjust policies. Individual Christians and small organizations are more capable of escaping from the institutional channelling mechanism.

Stanley Hauerwas's idea of Christian ethics was investigated in chapter four. It reminds the Christian communities to have a specific role in the world. When the church lives according to the story of God, she mimics God's character. Such characters shown by the church will remind the world of the fact that they need redemption. On the one hand, the church should not withdraw from the public sphere so that she can be the witness of God to the world. On

¹⁷⁵ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Toward a Pneumatological Trinitarian Theology: Amos Yong, the Spirit, and the Trinity, 89.

¹⁷⁶ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Toward a Pneumatological Trinitarian Theology: Amos Yong, the Spirit, and the Trinity, 89.

the other hand, the church engages the public sphere in its distinctive way. She should not mix up her mission with other communities, who do not regard themselves to one truthful narrative.

Amos Yong builds up a pentecostal theology on the understanding of common grace. He sees the state as an instrument of common grace and the social sphere is one of the spheres created by God in the prelapsarian order. Although demonic power perverts the creation's orders of the public sphere, powers in public including political, economic and social are redeemable. For Yong, salvation is multidimensional that can transform not only individuals but also the fallen public powers.

The ideas of Hauerwas and Amos are compared and evaluated in this chapter. To conclude, one can integrate the advantages of Hauerwas and Yong by adopting Yong's proposal. Hauerwas's thought can remind Hong Kong churches that they have a unique mission in the public sphere no matter how hard to achieve. They should be the witness of God in the public sphere by manifesting God's characters and not withdrawing from the public sphere. Yong's approach is also relevant to the Hong Kong context. Since the function of the official churches in society is limited by institutional channelling and, the political environment would become more complex under a hybrid regime. Yong's approach provides more space to create other ways of engaging and accepting diverse social engagements which already exist. And it gives more room for cooperation between churches and organizations.

Also, this approach is helpful to construct a theology that reflects on experience and practice and, renew the Hong Kong church's teaching, and rethink theological knowledge such as pneumatology. However, Hauerwas's approach holds a counter-culture attitude that might exclude Yong's approach, while Yong's pluralistic approach already includes Hauerwas's idea. Then, adopting Yong's proposal can retain the advantages of both proposals.

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Original in Chinese: 李樹甘 · 《香港基督徒心理狀態、信仰生命及社會參與研究
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