

**The Political Essence of Sacramental Life:
To Reconstruct the Public Role of Churches in Hong Kong from the Perspective of
Sacrament** (*Abstract*)

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The theme of this paper is to re-examine the roles of the Church in Hong Kong from the political and public perspectives by employing the sacramental tradition.

The author argued that God uses the sacraments as a significant and visible tool to bless peoples in this world. Jesus Christ is the Primordial Sacrament. As the body of Christ, the Church is the Fundamental Sacrament. It has to continue the mission of Jesus Christ and to express God's blessing and grace to the peoples.

The Church executes two important sacraments. They are Baptism and Eucharist. Based on the political implications of these sacraments, the Church should not restrict her concerns only to the area of religious affairs. The Church has to go beyond the existing structures and values, to re-examine critically the current norms and to act out the vision of the Kingdom of God with courage in the society.

The political and public aspects of the sacraments are highlighted in this paper. The transforming social values are demonstrated. For the Sacrament of Baptism, it brings up the concept and spirit of equality. An equal relationship with a new identity is manifested in the Christian community. Baptism facilitates the transformation of communal relationship based on equality. As a result, baptism is not only a sign of liberation from sin at the individual level, it also implies a clear theological guide for the Church to extinguish any sins of inequality and oppression. Clearly, it is the mission for the Church to live out the nature of Baptism in terms of proclaiming and practicing equality and freedom in the society.

For the Sacrament of Eucharist, it is a concrete action initiated by Jesus Christ to break the segregation of people and radically advocate a new vision of social inclusion for people from different walks of life. Jesus Christ at his time acted with courage and risked his life to challenge the social norms of 'honor and shame' and the 'brokered system' which reinforced oppression and exclusion of disadvantaged people. Liberation of people from oppression and exclusion is subversive action initiated by Jesus Christ and is articulated with the Eucharist.

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A Sacrament, then, is an invaluable spiritual resource for the Christian community, and for her roles in social transformation in the political aspect. The act of Christ in the Eucharist transforms not only life at the individual level, but also social structure and values. Social justice is an important theme of the sacraments. The transformation includes upholding human dignity, liberating mankind and the world towards inclusion, equality and justice. As Jesus Christ was identified with the poor and the disadvantaged, the Church should maintain a critical stance in oppressing unjust social structures and values. The Church is called by God to serve the poor, to transform instead of conform to the world structures and values, to build the Kingdom of God based on love and justice. Therefore, the participation of the Church in the political and public arena is inevitable and significant.