

The Theory and Practice of the Development of Healthcare and Epidemic Prevention in the Christian Church since the Middle Ages —On The Contribution of Christianity to China’s Modern Medical and Health undertakings

YU Tao

(College of Philosophy, Nankai University, Tianjin, 300350, China)

Abstract: The “Black Death” in the Middle Ages has become a painful memory of European society that cannot be erased. On the basis of inheriting the medical thought of ancient Greece, the Catholic Church extended its unique concept of epidemic prevention with the concept of Christian theology, and urged the Christian Church (Catholicism and Protestantism) to take medical epidemic prevention and improve the level of public health as an important means to spread the Christian gospel to the world after the religious reform. On one hand, it has expanded the influence and affinity of Christianity in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and on the other hand, it has promoted the development of modern medical and health care all over the world. It has also become a major force in building China’s modern medical and health system, and its influence continues to this day.

Key words: Christian churches, epidemic prevention theory and practice, medical and health care in modern China

Author: YU Tao, Associate Professor, College of Philosophy, Nankai University, Tianjin, 300350, China, Tel:+86-13752348362; Email: towave@nankai.edu.cn

Christianity has a long historical tradition of focusing on social public health care. As the largest social organization in the West, the Catholic Church has always played a leading role in all aspects of social affairs, especially the Catholic Church has had a profound impact on western medical theory and practice in the fight against all previous plagues in the long medieval Europe, with its strong power, abundant wealth, numerous talent elites and absolute authority.

1. Historical Tradition: The theology and epidemic prevention of the Catholic Church in the epidemic of the Black Death in the Middle Ages

Looking back on the history of Europe in the Middle Ages, it is not difficult to find that the Catholic Church in Middle Ages made certain positive contributions to the cause of epidemic prevention in Europe under the control of theological system of the Holy See. At the same time, it is undeniable that the backward idea also brought some negative effects to the European people. In a word, the medieval Catholic theology and the epidemic prevention take the interdependence and integrated development in social practice, which became an inevitable result of the social and historical development in the Middle Ages.

From the middle of the 6th century to the 18th century, the “Black Death” and other plagues spread across the European continent. At this time, a series of disastrous consequences followed, such as political unrest, sharp

population decline, and cultural destruction, and Western European society was in chaos under the rule of the Holy See. In particular, the Black Death (plague, then called Pestilenza⁽¹⁾), which ravaged Europe from 1348 to 1350, left people with tragic memories. Giovanni Boccaccio wrote in *The Decameron*: “And were it not for the fact that I am one of many people who saw it with their own eyes, I would scarcely dare to believe it, let alone commit it to paper, even though I had heard it from a person whose word I could trust.”⁽²⁾ and gave a detailed and vivid description of the tragedy caused by the plague in the first part of *The Decameron*. In the face of the situation that the epidemic patients were left unattended and had no place to live, the Catholic Church made the recognition and response with extensive social impact at that time. Churches at all levels set up hospitals as charitable organizations in various places to guide friars to participate in the work of hospitals, providing nursing services for people in need of help in the plague and daily medical services for patients when necessary; The church also called on people to clean up dirt and to pay attention to environmental sanitation to reduce the pollution and avoid the spread of viruses again. In addition, these church aid agencies quickly became the shelters for the sick and the homeless. The priests not only provided diagnosis and treatment to the patients as much as they could, but also tried their best to help these people.⁽³⁾ These are the positive practices of the church in the face of the plague.

In the process of coping with the “Black Death”, medical theories based on medieval Christian theology gradually formed. Christian medical thought in the Middle Ages mostly inherited from the philosophy and medical theory of ancient Greece and Rome. Medieval doctors with monks and priests as the main body continued to use the “Humorism” balance principle of Hippocrates and Claudius Galenus to diagnose patients. However, with practical needs and the deepening of medical research, medical theories of surgery and pharmacy were innovated to a certain extent. Influenced by Christian theology in the Middle Ages, the church adhered to the idea of “love”, and the clergy firmly believed that visiting and caring for epidemic patients were the requirements of Jesus Christ, and consciously assumed the responsibility of caring for the common people; At the same time, they continued to emphasize the concept of original sin, attributing the death of the patient to his sin, and healing of the patients because of his pious confession; While the practice of surgical treatment was considered to be “diabolic tricks and exotic technology”, excluded from the main medical ideas, and was always difficult to enter the mainstream. Under the unified instruction of the Holy See, the “God-denounce”, proposed by the Church to seek the cause of the “Black Death” from the root, has become the main cognition and prevention theory of the society. For example, William Zouche, the Archbishop of Yorkshire, was the first in Britain to respond to the epidemic. He was influenced by the fact that Pope Clement VI of Avignon clearly regarded the plague as the punishment of God for human sins⁽⁴⁾, and proposed: “There can be no one who does not know, since it is now public knowledge, how great a mortality, pestilence and infection of the air are now threatening various parts of the world, and especially England; and this is surely caused by the sins of men who, while enjoying good times, forget that such things are

(1) In any European language before the 14th or 15th century, the epidemic in the Middle Ages had not been explicitly named “the Black Death”, although the expression “Black Death” was occasionally used to refer to a fatal disease (the word “Black” in the context of Western culture had originally meant “fatal” and “terrible”). At that time, people usually called the terrible pestis epidemic in the 14th century as “Pestilenza”, “great death” or “great disaster”. In English, it was not until the 1750s that the term “Black Death” was used to refer to the great plague caused by the epidemic of pestis. As a medical term, “pestis” appeared later. In 1894, French biologist Nelson first discovered the pathogen of pestis—*Bacillus pestis*, and pestis was known as an infectious disease.

(2) Giovanni Boccaccio. *The Decameron*, Translated by G. H. McWilliam. (London: Penguin Group, 1995), 56.

(3) Frederick F. Cartwright. *A Social History of Medicine*. (London and New York: Longman, 1977). 24.

(4) Henry Knighton. *The Plague According to Henry Knighton*, Horrox trans. and ed., *The Black Death*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 79.

the gifts of the most high giver.”⁽⁵⁾ He also issued edicts that: “And thus, indeed, the realm of England, because of the growing pride and corruption of its subjects, and their numberless sins, has on many occasions stood desolate and afflicted by the burdens of the wars which are exhausting and devouring the wealth of the kingdom, and by many other miseries.”⁽⁶⁾ All the bishops in England agreed with Zoch’s explanation of the plague and followed suit. The Catholic Church’s interpretation of the Black Death became the main cognition of the society at that time, and the prevention and treatment of the “Black Death” in European society was also guided by this understanding.

It was the absolute dominance of the Christian Church in the European society at that time that caused a very strange situation in Europe. On one hand, people showed distrust of medical means, believing that plague was God’s punishment to human beings, and prayer was the only way to seek God’s forgiveness; On the other hand, large-scale prayer activities intensified the spread of the plague. The capricious plague also brought tremendous physical and mental trauma to followers, shaking their morality and the faith to the Catholic Church. At this time, some insiders of the church proposed that the Roman Catholic Church could neither guide the people to obtain God’s forgiveness and salvation, nor avoid its own depravity. Therefore, it would be better to achieve integration with God and get direct inspiration from God through self spirituality, seeking amnesty, and doing Mass regularly. As mentioned in *Cloud of Unknowing*, “but the higher part of contemplation, as it may be had here, hangeth all wholly in this darkness and in this cloud of unknowing; with a loving stirring and a blind beholding unto the naked being of God Himself only.”⁽⁷⁾ In the face of being questioned, the Catholic Church continued to forcefully suppress it. In 1413, Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, believed that people should not only repent to alleviate the plague, but also pray to stop abusive words and eliminate heresy.⁽⁸⁾ This kind of belief query and debate in the face of the “Black Death” directly affected the subsequent religious reform, and had a significant impact on western social history.

It can be seen that the Christian Church in the Middle Ages was in a contradictory psychological state when facing the plague. It not only expected to eliminate the epidemic and stabilize European society, but also maintained the foundation of Belief of Catholic theology. At this time, the idea and practice of Christian public health were still in the embryonic stage, basically maintaining the tradition of theological domination of medicine, and was still far from the expectations on public health.

2. The Road to Practice: the Enlightenment of the Development of Christianity in China since Modern Times on Modern Chinese Medical and Health Undertakings

After the end of the Middle Ages, especially the beginning of the 15th century, the European plague still recurred intermittently. The long-lasting plague and the effectiveness of different measures have made the Catholic Church, with the Holy See at its core, gradually change its attitude towards medical means from contempt to acceptance, and become more mature in prevention and treatment of disease. During later outbreaks of plague, secular and clerical authorities attempted to limit the spread of the disaster with prayers and quarantine regulations. Antiplague measures

(5) William Zouche. *Intercessionary Processions* (1), The Black Death, 111.

(6) D.Wilkins ed.. *The importance of prayer*, The Black Death. 113-114.

(7) *The Cloud of Unknowing*. (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009), 35.

(8) Christopher Harper-Bill, *The English Church and English Religion after the Black Death, The Black Death in England*, eds. M. Ormrod & P. Lindley, (Stamford: Paul Watkins Publishing, 1996), 79-124.

eventually included mandatory reporting of illness, isolation of the sick, burning the bedding of plague victims, closing schools and markets during epidemics, virtual house arrest of off-duty gravediggers, and laws forbidding physicians from leaving infected areas.⁽⁹⁾ This was a big change for the Christian Church. Many Christians believed that the isolation of patients would not reduce the incidence of the plague at the beginning, because the plague was God's punishment for the guilty, and the isolation would do nothing to alleviate God's punishment. The isolation of patients violated the Christian principle of love, and it is considered barbaric to isolate the patients in a space, neglect the care of them, and make them suffer in loneliness. With the advice of doctors, the increased understanding of the plague and its mode of spread made Christian people gradually accept the isolation policy, even support the isolation of people who had been ill, and call on people to do the cleanup. However, the long-term plague inevitably resulted in a series of facts, such as the loss of clergy, the damage of the church's reputation and even corruption. This affected the people's belief in the Catholic Church, encouraged the suspicion within the church, and thus triggered the protests and splits, laying the foundation for the modern religious reform.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther launched the Reformation against the Catholic Church represented by the Holy See. On August 2, 1527, a terrible plague struck Luther's town of Wittenberg. Concerned about the safety of Luther and other university professors, Elector John ordered Luther to go to Jena on August 10 and then to Schlieben, near Wittenberg. However, in the face of epidemic, Luther was indifferent to the order of the elector and the persuasion of his friends. He, with his follower Bugenhagen⁽¹⁰⁾, chose to stay to care for the sick and frightened people. During this period, he wrote an article entitled "Can Man Escape a Deadly Plague?" to comfort the believers suffering from the plague, and discuss with them about the attitude and moral obligation that Christians should hold when facing the plague of themselves or others. In the article, Luther believed that all clergy and public officials should stay unswervingly in the face of the death threat of the epidemic, and they should play their roles and fulfill their responsibilities in the epidemic area. He said, "for when people are dying, they most need a spiritual ministry which strengthens and comforts their consciences by word and sacrament and in faith overcomes death."⁽¹¹⁾ At the same time, the authorities should also stay to ensure that law and order were maintained. In addition, Luther also proposed that Christians should abide by God's laws and orders at all times, fulfill their obligation to care for their fellow citizens, and leaving the people in danger was no different from murderers. If the people in a city were to show themselves bold in their faith when a neighbor's need so demands, and cautious when no emergency exists, and if everyone would help ward off contagion as best he can, then the death toll would indeed be moderate⁽¹²⁾. The reason why God let the plague come was not only to punish human beings and show his strength, but also to test people's will and love. This was a test of personality and spirit, and about how people deal with the "evil". People should understand God's good intentions, "go to the church and listen to the sermon, so that they learned through God's word how to live and how to die"⁽¹³⁾, and thus were truly

(9) Lois N. Magner. *A History of Medicine*, Second edition, (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 166.

(10) Johannes Bugenhagen(1485-1558), also known as Dr. Pomerania by Luther, introduced the religious reform to the Principality of Pomerania and Denmark in the 16th century. One of his major achievements was the establishment of faith-based religious associations in northern Germany and Scandinavia. He was also known as the "Second Apostle of the North". In 1520, Bugenhagen read the preface to Luther's *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, which was his first contact with Luther's works. At first he did not like Luther, but after the in-depth study, he became a supporter of religious reform and moved to Wittenberg.

(11) Martin Luther. *Luther's Works (Lw)*, Vol. 43: Devotional Writings II, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 121.

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 132.

(13) *Ibid.*, p, 134.

redeemed. The Protestants represented by Luther innovated the Christian doctrine and advocated by themselves, which showed their courage, sense of responsibility and compassion when the Black Death was rampant. It also laid a solid ideological foundation for the theological development of Protestantism and the concept of charity, and the anti-epidemic practice and social services have also been improved and developed.

After the religious reform, the Holy See was greatly shocked, which promoted the purification and development of the Catholic Church itself. Under the influence of Protestantism, the reformists in the Catholic Church represented by the Jesuits began to preach in Asia with the worldwide colonial expansion since the end of the 15th century. They found that they must break their “Chinese” traditional world outlook in order to transform the ideological and religious ideas of the residents of the newly conquered territories in Asia.⁽¹⁴⁾ Therefore, China became an important missionary target. The missionaries decided to “do missionary work by practising medicine”, hoping to show the powerful force of Christian faith and ethics through medical knowledge and achievements. At the end of the Ming Dynasty, Catholicism was introduced to China. At the same time, Jesuit missionaries also brought western medical thought and technology into China, and translated the books on western medicine in Chinese and Manchu, such as the Manchu-language book *Si Yang ni Okto i Bithe and Dergici Toktobuha Ge Ti Ciowan Lubithe Dergi Yohi* translated by Jean-Francois Gerbillon, Joachim Bouvet and Dominique Parrenin, which were trusted and favored by Emperor Kangxi.⁽¹⁵⁾ In the middle of the 19th century, the Opium War opened the door of China, and Protestant missionaries of North America also began to set up medical charities, and carried out medical education and publicity in China. They also set up clinics, hospitals and other institutions to provide medical assistance, and established medical schools and western medical journals. For example, Peter Parker of the American Congregational Church established the Medical Missionary Society in Guangzhou in 1835, and opened the Canton Hospital to treat eye diseases and other diseases. In 1847, Dr. Walter Henry Medhurst and Dr. William Lockhart of the London Missionary Society established Yan Chai Hospital in Shanghai⁽¹⁶⁾. In 1860, John Glasgow Kerr, a missionary doctor at Canton Hospital, collected vaccinia to inoculate the Chinese against smallpox. In 1874, British missionaries founded Mission to Lepers, an international Christian organization dedicated to providing services to leprosy patients, and subsequently promoted the establishment of many leprosy pesthouse in China.⁽¹⁷⁾ In the case of the Northeast plague in 1911 and the Shanxi and Suiyuan plague in 1918, many missionaries in China took an active participation in the epidemic prevention, such as the famous Dr. Dugald Christie and Arthur Jackson.⁽¹⁸⁾ These measures not only provided the important help to Chinese people suffering from the epidemic, but also caused the Chinese government to pay attention to the epidemic prevention. The missionary medical service gradually spread throughout the provinces and cities in China. Western medical education also vigorously developed with the compilation of Western Medical Classics and the establishment of medical schools, and numerous local doctors were cultivated.

(14) Cf. 范行准FanXingzhun, 《明季西洋传入之医学》*Mingji xiyang chuanru zhi yixue* [Medicine Introduced from the West in the Ming Dynasty], Vol.9, (上海 Shanghai: 上海人民出版社Shanghai People's Publishing House · 2012).

(15) 赵晓阳Zhao Xiaoyang. 《60年来基督教与近代中国医疗卫生事业研究评述》*60nianlai jidujiao yu jindai zhongguo yiliao weisheng shiye yanjiu zongshu* [A Review of 60 Years of Research on Christianity and Health Care in Modern China], 《兰州学刊》Lanzhou xuekan [Lanzhou Academic Journal], No.12,(2017),11.

(16) Kwang Ching Liu. *American Missionaries in China*, (Boston: Havard University Press, 1966), 104.

(17) List of Leprosaria and Clinics in China, *The Chinese Recorder*, Vol.71, No.7, July (1940), 465-471; &The Leper Quarterly, Vol.14, No.1, (1940),79.

(18) 刘仲明Liu Zhongming. 《盛京施医院创立纪实》*Shengjing shi yiyuan chuangli jishi* [Chronicle of the founding of Shengjing Shi Hospital], 《中华文化史资料文库》*Zhonghua wenhuashi ziliao wenku*[Chinese Cultural History Resource Library], Vol. 16, (北京Beijing : 中国文化历史出版社China Culture and History Press, 1996), 838-839.

It can be seen that the medical and health undertakings launched by Christian medical missionaries in China have brought practical and beneficial effects on Chinese people, played the role of charity and relief, and alleviated the shortage of medicine in China; At the same time, the advanced western medical thought and technology they brought have thoroughly impacted Chinese traditional medicine, profoundly changed the medical structure of China and the medical idea of the Chinese people, cultivated people's public health consciousness, and promoted the establishment of public health. It is worth mentioning that the reformers in China compared Chinese and Western medicine, put forward the idea of "saving the nation by medicine", actively promoted western medical knowledge, and tried to reform Chinese society in this way at the end of the 19th century. This gave "the spread of western medicine into the East" strong political and social significance, shook the traditional social system and backward medical idea, and also trained China's talents to learn the advanced medical theories from the West. Western medicine has changed from a missionary tool attached to religion to a political and social one, and its significance has been far beyond the original assumption of missionaries, which has had a profound influence on the development of China.

In the second half of the 19th century, the public health in the west seriously deteriorated due to the rapid development of social economy brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the increased pollution by industrialization. In the face of this problem, some people in Western Christian churches put forward that the solution to social problems is to "Christianize" the social order, apply teachings of Jesus to the social and economic structure, and reform people's living and working environment. As a result, the rise of Social Gospel Movement⁽¹⁹⁾ in the United States has had an important impact on the overseas missionary work of the church. The cognition of missionaries in China also changed from "being satisfied with educating students and treating patients" to "building a new and healthier China"⁽²⁰⁾. Therefore, based on the need to expand missionary work and care for the society, the Christian community in China began to focus on the development of the national public health campaign. In 1910, the Christian health campaign in China officially began; and in 1916, Young Men's Christian Association, the Public Health Committee of the Chinese Medical Association and the Ministry of Public Health of the Chinese Medical Association jointly established Chinese Association of Health and Education, which gradually promoted the health education campaign nationwide through the speeches for all the people, exhibitions, parades and other activities. As time goes on, it covered the urban health, school health, child health and many other aspects with the participating groups increasing and the field of work deepening.⁽²¹⁾ Such initiatives and actions continued until 1930, after which the Christian Church became more cooperative with the Government in health education; After the founding of the People's Republic of China, most of the former medical institutions of the Church were transferred and merged into national medical institutions, such as Peking Union Medical College Hospital. The health education campaign continued by the Christian Church was an important enlightenment of modern health knowledge and ideas, which showed strong social concern, and at the same time, it has led to the extensive participation of all sectors of society. It has had an important impact on the awakening of public health awareness and the spread of health knowledge, and the focus of Chinese medical practitioners has shifted from

(19) The social gospel movement was a religious movement launched by American Christianity in the second half of the 19th century under the impact of industrialization and urbanization. It criticized the capitalist industrial and commercial ethics, but believed that industrial democracy could be achieved in a gradual way through moral preaching and social improvement, so it was with strong idealism.

(20) Elliott I. Osgood. *A Sanitary Propaganda for China*. The China Medical Journal, 27(4), (1913): 202.

(21) 毛光骅Mao Guanghua, 《基督教在河南省的传播与西方医学的传入》Jidujiao zai henansheng de chuanbo yu xifang yixue de chuanru [Spreading of Christianity and Western Medicine into Henan Province] · 《中华医学杂志》Zhonghua yixue zazhi [National Medical Journal of China, Vol.25, No.4, 1995] · 213-215.

therapeutic medicine to preventive medicine. Through the education of western medicine and the development of health missionary movement, the Christian Church has cultivated a group of intellectual elites and medical talents for China, and further promoted the modernization development of medical and health system in China.

In a word, the Chinese government's ability to carry out public health construction was very limited due to the political and social unrest. As an important religious civil group, Christianity paid early attention to the problems of health service in China. And it carried out various kinds of medical and health activities nationwide to meet the needs of its own development, which promoted the development of Chinese public health service. This trend continued to this day, reflecting Christian historical tradition and doctrinal spirit that integrated the religious benevolence into social charity.

3. The Development in the New Era: the Important Contribution of Chinese National Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement to the Development of Medical and Health Undertakings in the People's Republic of China

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese Christianity entered a new era. In 1954, China's Christian Church(CCC) initially achieved independent development with the establishment of Chinese National Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee(TSPM). Over the past 70 years, Chinese Christianity has actively participated in the medical and health care of the People's Republic of China under the guidance of the "Three-Self" principle, established a very large-scale medical enterprise in China, and made important contributions to the development of China's medical and health undertakings.

At the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's public medical and health care was still in its early phase. China adopted a policy of acceptance and support to the original Christian medical business⁽²²⁾, and incorporated the church medical system into public health, which originally covered church hospitals, clinics, church medicine, education of nurses and midwives, medical research, public health, and translation and publication, etc.. The Christian Church made up for many areas and fields that the government public medical and health failed to reach, and played an important role in building a comprehensive medical and health system in China. For example, from 1939 to 1955, Christians carried out Frontier Service Movement in western Sichuan and Xikang ethnic areas, which received the people living on the frontiers for treatment, made a round of visits and helped the region establish a modern system of public health and epidemic prevention.⁽²³⁾ After the reform and opening up in 1978, China's religious policy was re-established. A large number of Christian churches have been restored and developed in an orderly manner, and many members of the church were reinvested in social and medical charity and other public services, carrying forward the Gospel of religious love. For example, Huzhou Christian Church inherited the tradition of education, medical care, poverty alleviation and disaster relief of Sichuan Christian Church, paid attention to the development of social affairs projects, and established and developed Gospel Kindergarten, Gospel Clinic, Gospel Hospital and other medical institutions. Taking the community medical service station as an example, its single medical service has turned to multifunctional

(22) 李传斌Li Chuanbin, 《条约特权制度下的医疗事业:基督教在华医疗事业研究(1835-1937)》Tiaoyue tequan zhidu xia de yiliao shiye: jidujiao zaihua yiliao shiye yanjiu(1835-1937)[Medical Business under the Treaty Privilege System: on Christian Medical Care in China (1835-1937)], (长沙Changsha:湖南人民出版社Hunan Province People's Press, 2010), 19.

(23) 邓杰Deng Jie, 《基督教与川康民族地区公共卫生事业——以边疆服务运动(1939-1955)为例》[Christianity and Public Health in Sichuan-Xikang Ethnic Areas--An Example of the Frontier Service Movement (1939-1955)], 《社会科学研究》Shehui kexue yanjiu [Social Science Research], No.5, (2012), 208.

development, such as prevention, health care, medical treatment, rehabilitation and others,⁽²⁴⁾ ensuring people's life in an all-round way and spreading the social Gospel; During the "Religious Charity Week" in 2012, Chinese National Christian Three-self Patriotic Movement Committee and China Christian Council carried out activities such as education, free medical treatment and poverty alleviation in Shangqiu, Henan Province, Baoshan, Yunnan Province, and Hefei, Anhui Province, benefiting more than 8,000 people, constantly expanding the field of charity, and improving the level of social services.⁽²⁵⁾ Such healthcare and charity have been the normal activities of the Christian Church in the past 70 years. The establishment of relevant institutions and activities have gradually formed a complete set of systems and norms, which play an important role in maintaining the daily operation of social medical services. In the new era, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement promoted the emergence of Chinese Christianity in a real sense. The Christians and Christian groups joined hands with the people of the motherland, actively participated in social construction, and gave full play to the advantages of Christianity in theory and practical experience in healthcare. Christian medicine is still in the ascendant all over the country, and it has become an important part of the development of healthcare in various places with its profound historical accumulation and rich practical experience. It has a rich and comprehensive theoretical construction and a good interaction with the society, conforms to the development of the times, and gradually moves towards medical modernization, contributing the sustainable strength to the development of China's healthcare.

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic broke out across the country, and the Christian community responded positively to the country's call and quickly devoted itself to the prevention and control of the epidemic. Christian churches and theological seminaries all over the country not only actively got aid, integrated resources and adjusted services by virtue of their extensive social and overseas connections, but also shared the experience of China's epidemic prevention with the world through media; They expressed the good wishes of all countries to jointly fight against the epidemic, and promoted the initiative of building a community with a shared future for mankind. Taking Shanghai Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) as an example, first of all, there was a shortage of anti-epidemic materials at the beginning of the outbreak. Shanghai YMCA and YWCA raised over 300,000 yuan of donations and over 100,000 pieces of anti-epidemic materials⁽²⁶⁾, which were immediately sent to disaster areas such as Hubei and the frontline of epidemic prevention in order to maximize the effectiveness of materials. Secondly, according to the epidemic situation and development, Shanghai YMCA and YWCA adjusted the old services and created new ones on the basis of the past. They paid more attention to the needs in health education, anxiety relief, indoor physical exercises and other aspects. Finally, Shanghai YMCA and YWCA's clear organizational structure and anti-epidemic group ensured the successful communication of information and the orderly operation of the organization; In the anti-epidemic

(24) 陈建明Chen Jianming, 《四川省泸州市基督教会社会服务调研报告——以医疗卫生服务为中心》Sichuansheng luzhoushi jidujiaohui shehui fuwu diaoyanbaogao-yi yiliao weisheng fuwu wei zhongxin[Research Report on Social Services of Christian Church in Luzhou City, Sichuan Province--Focusing on Medical and Health Services], 《宗教学研究》Zongjiaoxue yanjiu [Religious Studies], No.4, (2011), 146.

(25) 傅先伟Fu Xianwei, 《中国基督教三自爱国运动委员会第八届中国基督教协会第六届常务委员会工作报告：凝心聚力·建设一个和谐健康发展的中国教会》Zhongguo jidujiao sanzhi aiguo yundong weiyuanhui dibajie zhongguo jidujiao xiehui diliujie changwuweiyuanhui gongzuobaogao: ningxinjuli, jianshe yige hexie jiankang fazhan de zhongguo jiaohui [Report on the Work of the Sixth Standing Committee of the Eighth Chinese Christian Council of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of China: Gathering our Strength to Build a Harmonious and Healthy Chinese Church.], 《天风》[Tien-feng], No.11, (2013), 10.

(26) 马兆珍Ma Zhaozhen, 《社会服务机构在防疫抗疫中的场域分布与功能发挥——以上海基督教青年会、女青年会为例》Shehui fuwu jigou zai fangyi kangyi zhongde changyu fenbu yu gongnengfahui- yi shanghai jidujiao qingnianhui;nvqingnianhui wei li [Field Distribution and Functioning of Social Service Organizations in Epidemic Prevention and Countermeasures: The Case of Shanghai YMCA and YWCA.], 《中国宗教》Zhongguo zongjiao[China Religion], No.5, (2020), 52.

service, they did not forget to transmit and practise the idea of charity, and the members of the organization and volunteers joined the frontline of the anti-epidemic community side by side, reflecting the dedication and spiritual pursuit of the practitioners of social service institutions. Besides Shanghai YMCA, the Three-Self churches all over the country also kept close contact with Chinese National Christian Three-self Patriotic Movement Committee and China Christian Council. Adhering to the teachings of Christian charity, the churches and the Christians actively donated supplies and raised funds, which totaled 139 million RMB within one month after the outbreak of the epidemic. Some church groups and believers in Shaanxi, Hunan, Zhejiang and other places managed to collect anti-epidemic supplies, and some believers in Fujian, Jiangxi and other places supplied free donation of fresh vegetables and other living materials.⁽²⁷⁾ A little love will create an ocean of love, and the believers and churches actively assume the responsibility of serving the society and make contribution to fighting against the epidemic. As a bridge of communication between churches at home and abroad, through the Overseas Relations Department and the Social Service Department, CCC&TSPM shared with some overseas churches and organizations China's measures and successful experience in fighting against the epidemic, especially the continuous participation of the Christian community in social services and joint anti-epidemic activities in these difficult times, to encourage their confidence in overcoming the virus. In addition, CCC&TSPM has purchased 4,000 KN95 masks, donated to the Uniting Church in Australia, a partner church of Church in China, and provided them to staff and volunteers of its social service agencies. These supplies can help them protect themselves when providing services to the elderly, the disabled, children and other vulnerable groups.^[(28)]

To sum up, the Christian idea of medical charity and social services with “universal love” as the core played a positive role and made vital contributions in history; Today, Christianity has also huge potential and unique call capacity to demonstrate its mission in the world medical and healthcare. In the new era of the importance of a community with a shared future for mankind is increasingly prominent, China's Christian Churches can not only contribute to disaster prevention, epidemic prevention and healthcare in China, but also provide a bond for people all over the world to help one another, resolving conflicts with love and tolerance to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

(27) 本刊编辑部Editorial Office. 《基督教界正积极为坚决打赢疫情防控阻击战增添助力!》*Jidujiaojie zheng jiji wei jianjue daying yiqing fangkong zujizhan zengtian zhuli!* [The Christian Community Is Actively Adding to the Determined Effort to Win the Epidemic Prevention and Control Blockade!], 《天风》[Tien-feng],No.3 ,(2020), 7.

(28) <https://en.ccctspm.org/sernewsinfo/13312>.

中文题目：

**中世纪以来基督教会卫生防疫事业发展的理论与实践
——兼谈基督教对中国近现代医疗卫生事业的贡献**

作者：于涛·副教授·哲学院,南开大学,天津,300350·电话：+86-13752348362·电子邮件：towave@nankai.edu.cn

提要：中世纪的“黑死病”成为欧洲社会难以抹去的痛苦记忆·面对这一瘟疫·天主教会在继承古希腊医学思想的基础上·以基督教神学观念引申出独特的防疫观念·促使宗教改革后基督教会(天主教与新教)将医疗防疫与提升公共卫生水平作为向世界传播基督教福音的重要手段·一方面扩大了基督教在亚非拉等地区的影响力与亲和力·另一方面促进了包括全世界范围近现代医疗卫生事业的发展·也成为构建中国近现代医疗卫生体系的主要力量·其影响延续至今。

关键字：基督教会、防疫理论与实践、中国近现代医疗卫生事业