

## Lecture Series Public Theology: An International and Intercontextual Assessment

*Task sheet: Lap Yan Kung \* Religious Leaders: Public Appearance and Leadership*

This lecture is available free of charge as comprehensive video file (mp4) or as audio file (mp3) with accompanying slides in pdf-format.

This task sheet contains:

1. Three questions for group discussion
2. Three suggested titles for further reading
3. A timeline to match audio file and pdf slide presentation
4. A list of references for the lecture

### 1. Three questions for group discussion:

1. The word Buddha means “enlightened”. In Christian concept, enlightened can be understood as conversion. Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), a Canadian Jesuit priest, explains that conversion is involved three dimensions, namely, intellectual (turning to truth), moral (turning to goodness) and religious (turning to love). Religious leaders, in this lecture, are not defined by their religious status, but by their public function, that is, being the conscience of community. This is very similar to the work of John the Baptist.

Do you think that being the conscience of community is one of the important criteria of evaluating what religious leaders are? Can you identify a figure of such a religious leader in your context?

2. Social capital is about bonding, bridging and linking, and this is important for developing civil society and social change. Theologically, this is related to an ecumenical spirit. Christian leaders have a responsibility to enhance and practise the ecumenical spirit because it is the Christian call to ministry (2 Cor 5:18). Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi,

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

Can you identify, describe and evaluate how an ecumenical spirit shapes religious leaders' practice in your context in creating and enhancing social capital?

3. Many governments are inclined to absorb religious leaders into their structure (formal or informal) in order that they can become government's supporters and allies. Due to the hierarchical religious structure, religious leaders are more inclined to political conservatism. Therefore, the laity always has a responsibility to challenge religious leaders to be more faithful to God. In return, religious leaders have to encourage and protect the laity movement.

What suggestions and recommendations would you as the laity make to religious leaders in your context so that they are more equipped to be faithful to God's mission?

## 2. Three suggested titles for further reading

1. Callahan, Sharon Henderson ed. *Religious Leadership: A Reference Handbook*. Vol. 2. London: Sage, 2013.
2. Groody, Daniel G. *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007.
3. Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. eds. *Cloud of Witnesses*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005.

## 3. A timeline to match audio file and pdf slide-presentation

Slide	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Time	1'46	1'56	2'43	6'02	10'55	14'13	16'19	20'22	24'26	25'35

## 4. References

Bass, S. Jonathan. *Blessed are the Peacemakers: Martin Luther King, Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders and the Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Baton Rouge, La., Louisiana State University Press, 2001.

Callahan, Sharon Henderson ed. *Religious Leadership: A Reference Handbook*. Vol. 2. London: Sage, 2013.

Groody, Daniel G. *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007.

Odak, Stipe. *Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Role of Religious Leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Cham, Springer International, 2020.

Sandal, Nukhet A. *Religious Leaders and Conflict Transformation: Northern Ireland and Beyond*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Sisk, Timothy D. ed. *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict and Peacemaking*. Washington, DC., Georgetown University Press, 2011.

Wallis, Jim and Hollyday, Joyce. eds. *Cloud of Witnesses*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005.

