

Theology of Christian Art as a Critique and Supplement to Speculative Theology

(An abstract)

Rowena Hoi-yee Liu

Executive Officer

Centre for Assessment Research and Development

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Hong Kong

Can Christian art become theology in itself? How can Christian art criticize and enrich the traditional speculative theologies? These are the two main questions to be focused on in this paper. To answer these, this paper would firstly take a historical glance at the controversies between Eastern and Western churches on issues concerning icon usage. Not only does it unveil reasons for the prolonged neglect of Christian visual art among Western churches, but it also shows how the Orthodox tradition of visual art could enrich the traditions of Western churches. Secondly, a philosophical discussion about truth opens another perspective. It is claimed that the “truth with humanistic nature” can smash the monopoly of “truth with scientific nature” embedded in speculative theology. Thereby art and theology can engage in a meaningful debate. Through the demonstration of the paradigmatic difference between them, the legitimacy of art within Christian theologies is established. In conclusion, our thesis is that a theology of Christian art can serve as a critique and a supplement to speculative theology. This paper

aspires to demonstrate the legitimacy of a theology of Christian art, and to provide an alternative approach to the main-streamed speculative theology.