

## **Civil Society and its Emergence in the Modern World** 公民社会与其在当今世界的冒现

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### **Abstract 内容摘要**

This conference seeks to explore the contribution that Christianity has made in history to nation-building and the welfare of society. One of the key concerns today is how we can build civil society in our nations. Many of the most highly developed nations today are those which approximate closest to civil society. These are characterized by an acceptance of democracy, affirmation of fundamental liberties, the rule of law by a strong central state which is nevertheless not oppressively authoritarian, and economic freedom. This paper seeks to argue that civil society in the west did not emerge in a vacuum but out of a specific set of pre-conditions shaped by the Christian heritage of the west. And although elements of what contribute to the emergence of civil society are found in other cultures and traditions, yet civil society as we know it today emerged only in the western tradition and no where else. This suggests that Christianity played a critical and indispensable role. We need therefore to ponder upon what implications this may have for us today.

这会议旨在探讨基督教在历史上对国家建设以及社会福利的贡献。如何在所处的国家中建立一个公民社会是个重要的议题。现今多数高度发展的国家比较相似公民社会的形象，采纳民主、肯定基本的自由、由强势和权力主义的中央政府以非压迫的手段推行法治、也保持经济自由。本文尝试辩证西方基督教的传统是孕育西方公民社会的先决条件。虽然在其他的文化与传统里也有促进公民社会的因素，但是我们今天所认识的公民社会只在西方的传统中出现，这意味着基督教在这进程中有着极重要与不可或缺的地位。我们应该深思这种意识对当代的含义。