



Dr Jayeel Cornelio

Associate Professor and
Director of the Development Studies Program
Ateneo de Manila University

Jayeel Cornelio is a visiting professor at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is on leave from the Ateneo de Manila University where he is the Director of the Development Studies Program. A sociologist of religion, he is the author of *Being Catholic in the Contemporary Philippines: Young People Reinterpreting Religions* (2016) and the associate editor of the journal *Social Sciences and Missions* (Brill).

Christianity and Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines

Abstract

During his campaign, Rodrigo Duterte set himself apart from other presidential candidates by focusing on criminality and illegal drugs in the Philippines. Almost two years since he was elected, the War on Drugs remains to be the centerpiece of his presidency. To date more than 2500 have been killed during operations conducted by law-enforcement agencies. Although the War on Drugs remains generally accepted by the public, some sectors including human rights activists and church groups have initiated campaigns against it. This talk will present some initial findings from an on-going research on religious responses to the War on Drugs. It presents the spectrum of theological and practical responses by different Christian groups in Payatas, an urban poor community where at least 37 have been killed. The spectrum is broad, with some churches like the community's Catholic parish actively documenting and supporting left-behind families. Other churches have veered away from any direct engagement, opting to simply 'pray for the community'. At least one Protestant leader has suggested that the War on Drugs is God's means of administering justice and 'teaching the country a lesson'. These religious responses point to the different ways in which Christian groups understand their role as public institutions with spiritual, social, and political consequences.

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4:00-5:30pm**

B5-417, AC1

Yeung Kin Man Academic Building

All are welcome

Enquiries: please email to searc@cityu.edu.hk

