



Editorial introduction

In this inaugural issue of *Budyong*, SATMI offers to the discursive theological table these various reflections as an attempt to grasp Divine sense and meaning via a way of doing theology that takes serious consideration of contemporary human experience. These intuitions, theological and missiological, offer not a monolithic but a pluriform articulation of the encounters with that man-God from Nazareth.

The first four articles may be considered as a plea for contextual fidelity to human experience in the doing of theology. “No experience of the divine occurs in a vacuum”¹ as God meets humanity and humanity meets God in all of the latter’s situatedness, historicity, and temporality—in the ‘here and now’ of concrete men, women, and children who navigate this troubled and troubling world.

Ferderiz Cantiller explores in “Incarnating the Good News in the Multilingual and Multicultural Context of Vietnam” the role of language in the missional life of the Church as a way to unveil the faith-life struggles of various ethnic groups in renegotiating their cultural and religious identities. This paper takes serious notice of what inculturation entails in Vietnam’s complex situation.

¹Orlando O. Espin, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism*, with a foreword by Roberto S. Goizueta (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 93.

In “When the Chinese Met Jesus,” Terence Wee revisits the encounter between Christianity and Chinese history and culture as he discovers various missiological possibilities towards a more contextual narration of the Gospel. In the process, the author makes Christological explorations allowing for a fruitful re-imagining of the Christological landscape.

Danilo S. Agustin Jr. appropriates Louis-Marie Chauvet’s Symbolic Gift-Exchange as a theological frame in his attempt at inculturation: the contextual dialogue between the Judaeo-Christian tradition and the Pgaz K’nyauz’s faith-belief and practices, in his article “Symbolic Gift-Exchange as Church Inculturative Mission among the Pgaz K’nyauz in Northern Thailand”. The author examines the Jesus Christ event as a kenotic-incarnate presence to uncover a liberational and inculturative missionary practice.

The article “Washing of the Feet: A Proposed Missiological Paradigm in Doing Mission with the Exiled Myanmar Migrants in Ranong, Thailand” by Niño Memorial is an exploration of the exilic existence of Myanmar migrants as they live in the in-between world of their homeland and their present home. He then expounds on the possible contours of Marist missionary practices in addressing both their sociopolitical and religious concerns through the biblical experience of the Jewish diaspora.

In the remapping of our theological and missiological imaginary, the last two articles are studies on theological aesthetics via film and music. Here, the authors creatively examine these forms to unveil their revelatory character not only as means / media but also as the very location of divine interventions towards the emphatic enunciation of both the aesthetics and the ethical. In this way, theological aesthetics is not elevated to aesthetization in order to anesthetize the pains and sufferings in the world. On the contrary, what is revealed is its liberationist potential.

Rico John Bilangel's "The Sacrament Potential of Music: Musical Experience Towards an Expanded Understanding of the Sacrament" proposes a more dynamic relationship between music and sacrament. On the one hand, he highlights the sacramentality of music and on the other hand, the (w)holistic expansion of our understanding of what constitutes sacrament. As they engage in a tense yet fruitful encounter, the sacramental heart is touched by music so that in that risky behavior of the heart the essence of the life of the sacraments is re-configured.

In the article, "Revelation in Movies: Theology of Film in Thailand," Prud Thiphong's wager involves the consideration of cinema not only for leisure and entertainment but more importantly, as "narrative in its most delinquent form".² By enhancing its revelatory character, Thai society is given the space to have glimpses of its own life-struggles towards a deeper collective reflexivity and redemption. In this way, the spark of the Divine heart beat can also be discerned through the liberative potentials of film.

All these theological and missiological narratives in their variegated forms are truly *budyong*: wind-blown, spirit-inspired murmurings to herald and celebrate the Divine presence in us. In other words, they are diverse and plural explorations that God, only the living God is able to incarnate in the world, which in turn calls us to be missionaries enacting the Divine mission: to be in this world... but not of this world.

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²Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall, vol. 1 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), 130. Originally published as *L'invention du quotidien*, vol. 1, Arts de faire (1974).