



PREFACE


Ruben C. Mendoza & Emmanuel S. de Guzman

In his reflection on the significance of the Second Vatican Council, Karl Rahner claims that the Council marks the first time that the Church has truly become a world-Church. Since the reforms of the Council, there have been significant shifts from a European-centered approach to ecclesial life and theology to more contextual ecclesial practices and theologies which reflect the efforts of the different local churches to make the Gospel more intelligible, meaningful and relevant to the lives of their peoples. These churches have grown in their appreciation of their own historical and cultural contexts as resources for theologizing.

In the light of the advent of the world-Church, there is the emerging consciousness among the different local churches in Asia that “[i]n spite of the many differences, the peoples of this region of Asia have been bound together by a spiritual affinity and sharing of common moral and spiritual values.” At the same time, these local churches have seen the need to be incarnated in their very own context and have recognized the necessity of being more cognizant of both their own “Asianness” and their Christian identity. This task has been an ongoing project on the part of the local churches and their theologians.

In the Philippine context, various creative attempts have been made in this regard. Daniel Franklin Pilario offers an insightful theological critique of the theological terrain in the country. The crucial question for theologians and their communities in the Philippines in this regard is how to do theology in ever-changing and fluid contexts in ways that will truly enable church to truly listen to the Word of God, to abide in the communion of the church and to be truly at the service of God in the world. In an attempt to exactly do this, last 24-26 October 2014, the *Damdaming Katoliko sa Teolohiya* (DaKaTeo), the Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines, met and gathered in Donsol, Sorsogon for its annual conference that had the theme,

Hapag 12, No. 1 (2015) 5-8





Preface

“Doing Filipino Theology in a Globalized World.” In this issue of *Hapag*, you will find five of the papers that were presented during the conference. They focus on different issues and challenges that arise when one does theology in the diverse contexts.

In **“Doing Research in the Global Village,”** Manuel Victor J. Sapitula, a sociologist by training, shows how the phenomenon of globalization has affected not only how we conceive of our social, political and economic life but also how it has influenced in various ways how we make sense of our religious life. The traditional “field” of an anthropologist’s and sociologist’s study are now more fluid and “has to be understood in more nuanced ways that accounts for text, movement and virtual spaces alongside physical space,” particularly in relation to religious beliefs and practices as they have become “transnationalized.” As religions come to occupy common spaces due to globalization, which may lead to amicable relationships or mistrust of and violence against the religious other, Sapitula argues for the importance of religious literacy and the role of theologians and religious scholars in “crafting spaces for engagement” between peoples of different religious traditions. While social scientists need to attend to the changes in religions and their “religioscapes,” theologians and scholars in religious studies for their part can ground their claims on empirical studies of religions as religions come to embed themselves in spaces not traditionally considered religious.

In **“Doing Filipino Theology amidst Globalized Technocracy,”** Randy J.C. Odchigue critiques what he sees as “an over-arching technocratic rationality that appears to regulate, discipline and mediate negotiations of meanings and values in today’s context.” In this apparently homogenizing rationality, people are judged in terms of their “performativity in a market-driven social system” in which they simply become nameless faces in the system. It is precisely because of the dehumanizing tendencies of the technocratic mindset that theology has a particular role to play. For Odchigue, it is because of the desire to manipulate and control that the discourse on the eschaton attains its relevance. He argues that the “Eucharist is the icon of infinite excess of the eschaton,” the performance of which provides “a praxial critique against a disciplinary technocratic regime that excludes those whose productivities do not ‘measure up’ or are not ‘aligned’ to the set parameters of the global industry.”

An offshoot of globalization in Southeast Asia is the ASEAN Integration project. In **“The ‘ASEAN Integration’: Challenges to Ecclesial and Theological Praxis,”** Emmanuel S. de Guzman discusses several challenges that this regional endeavor presents to the different local churches of the ASEAN members. For him, the ASEAN Integration may serve as a *locus theologicus*, an invitation to develop theologies that are “at once local and regional.” Given the social and economic inequalities among and within the ASEAN, he emphasizes the importance for the local churches to advocate for the protection of the vulnerable sectors of the community. Moreover, in light of the principle of non-interference between the ASEAN members, he raises the question of how the prophetic voice of the church can be articulated and the liberative dimension of the Gospel be proclaimed. Lastly, given the diversity of cultural and religious identities in the region, he explores the importance of interculturality in ecclesial life and in the task of theologizing. Indeed, the Filipino food, *halo-halo*, with all the different flavors and colors of its ingredients serves as an apt metaphor for interculturality.

In his study, **“Jesus as *Mangingisda* in the Shallow Waters of Globalization,”** Levy Lara Lanaria discusses how the image of Jesus as *mangingisda* (fisherman) of a local fishing community reflects the fisherfolk’s “desired situation of positivity” – their *gawasnong panginabuhian* (“freedom in eking out a living”) – salvation in the concrete for the fisherfolk of Barangay Calero, Liloan, Cebu. For Lanaria, “theologizing cannot but frame salvation (fisherfolk’s *gawasnong panginabuhian* ‘freedom in eking out a living’) as a contrast-reality to the elite-bias and exclusionary character of globalization (salvation from).” In this context of globalization viewed with a postcolonial lens, Jesus as *mangingisda* is “the people’s version of the incarnate God.” *Hesus nga Mangingisda* (“Jesus the Fisherman”), *buutan* (“good-natured”) and *isog* (“brave”), “is definitely a prophetic-‘countercultural’ human being who is not afraid to stand up for the poor and the oppressed against any form of imperialism with its ‘power-over’ ideology.”

In the fifth and last article of this issue of *Hapag*, using the *Bukal ng Tipan* Pastoral Center’s participatory process in doing theology, Estela Padilla in **“Edible Theology: Reflections of a Pastoral Center on Doing Theology with German Dioceses,”**



Preface

shows how theologizing is a community enterprise. She discusses how *Bukal* has collaborated with German dioceses in forming basic ecclesial communities. She uses the metaphor of “edible theology” as her way of expounding “a methodology for doing theology in a globalized world via the imagery of cooking, food and eating.” While this “edible theology” was initially “prepared” and “cooked” here in the Philippines, it has proven to be palatable to the German tongue! What *Bukal’s* experience has shown is that “edible theology” is a potentially rich way of doing theology in an intercultural setting – one that can be deeply filling and satisfying.

Doing theology is an ongoing process of listening to the Word of God in constantly changing circumstances. It will always be a challenge for theologians and their communities to do it in ways that are responsive to suffering people’s contexts, critical of oppressive and unjust ideologies and systems, and reflective of the life-giving elements that are at the heart of the Christian faith. This will necessarily demand a rootedness in one’s culture and history and the presence of a discerning heart on the part of theologians. Hopefully, what we offer in this issue of *Hapag* is in keeping with the earnest efforts of other Filipino Christians who in their own circumstances have attempted to theologize at the service of the church and the world. We do acknowledge that there are many other efforts outside DaKaTeo with regard to this crucial task. The articles here can be regarded as our own humble contribution to the discourse on the challenges that face us in this endeavor. By no means are they the last word in our conversation but they are merely the continuation of our common search for the Spirit in this broken world of ours – the same Spirit who binds us together, deepens our understanding of the Word and bids us to be truly at the service of each other.

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