

Postcolonial Practice of Ministry

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Dynamics of Interfaith Collaborations in Postcolonial Asia

Prospects and Opportunities

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Contemporary Asia is home to vibrant communities with their ancient cultures, philosophies, and religions. This diversity of communities testifies to Asia's legacy as the birthplace of the ancient great religions of the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism in South Asia, Confucianism and Daoism in East Asia, Zoroastrianism in Central Asia, and Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in West Asia. In the aftermath of the Second World War, decolonization, political independence, and heightened postcolonial consciousness have ushered in not just a resurgence of national pride, but also a revival and growth of traditional religions throughout Asia. The great religions of Asia continue to be deeply embedded and influential at all levels of society across Asia, each practiced and propagated by its many adherents who have brought their ancestral faiths and traditions with them as globalization and ever-widening transnational networks impel them to migrate across the postmodern Asian landscape. India is experiencing a Hindu renaissance. Across the globe, Islam is on the upsurge, making it one of the fastest growing religions in the world. In East and Southeast Asia, Buddhism has gained a new vitality as new Buddhist movements, which first emerged in the early twentieth century, blossomed in the decades after the Second World War. These religious traditions are very much alive and influential throughout Asia, being intertwined within the sociopolitical and cultural fabric of

diverse communities across Asia, and nourishing the present spiritual needs of billions of Asians.

The minority Christian presence across the culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic Asian milieu is challenged by the complex interplay of the forces of postcolonialism, globalization, transnationalism, migration, economic disparities, and political totalitarianism. Confronted with the challenges of rising cultural pride, ethnocentrism, nationalist chauvinism, and religious exclusivism, Asian Christians realize that they are, with few exceptions, minority communities who often experience fear, insecurity, vulnerability, and backlash from their religious majority neighbors for being different from the mainstream. With the exception of the Philippines and Timor-Leste, Asian Christians are not living in a world where Christianity acts as the dominant force that influences and shapes culture, ethics, politics, and society. Instead, the Christian presence in many parts of Asia is characterized by significant minority religious communities in the midst of dominant and resurgent religious majorities who are often very suspicious of them, accusing them of being a threat to "traditional" Asian values. Specifically, Asian Christians have to contend with prejudice, bigotry, chauvinism, and intolerance at the very least, and possibly even experiencing outright harassment and persecution.¹

CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN ASIA

According to the Vietnamese American theologian Peter C. Phan, "It is in Asia that the question of religious pluralism is literally a matter of life and death;" and more importantly, "The future of Asian Christianity hangs in balance depending on how religious pluralism is understood and lived out."² Phan argues, "The report of the demise of Asian religions was premature and vastly exaggerated." Many parts of Asia have witnessed a vigorous revival of Asian religions; therefore, Asian Christians "must come to terms with the fact that they are destined to remain for the foreseeable future a 'small remnant' who must journey with adherents of other religions toward the eschatological kingdom of God."³ He further contends that Asian Christians have to "take their Asianness seriously as the context of their being Christian," and respond to the socioeconomic, political, and religious challenges of the contemporary Asian milieu so that they are able to "live their faith in fidelity to the Gospel and the living Christian tradition, here and now, in Asia,"⁴ thereby enabling "the Churches in Asia [to] become truly of Asia."⁵

If Asian Christians take their Asianness seriously as part of their incarnational and embodied Christian faith as Phan suggests above, then they need to acknowledge that the challenges of religious diversity and pluralism are not problems to be overcome, but distinctive characteristics of

being Asian and Christian. Asian Christians further realize that the Christian Gospel and their Christian faith cannot be presented as otherworldly, ignoring the daily occurrences of suffering, marginalization, pain, and injustices in their sociopolitical milieu.⁶ With its immense religious diversity and plurality, Asia requires a distinctively Asian approach to other religions that acknowledges the fact and reality of religious pluralism in postcolonial Asia not as a dilemma to be eradicated, but as a distinctive characteristic of being Asian and Christian. They know very well that unless they defend religious diversity and pluralism against exclusivist religious chauvinism, there will be no room at all for Christianity on a continent dominated by the great religions of the world. Because Asian Christianity will never dominate Asia to the exclusion and extinction of other religions in the manner of medieval Christendom in Europe, it has to become truly immersed and rooted in the Asian milieu for its survival and growth, as Phan rightly notes.

Moreover, Asian Christians have the daily experiences of being very much "at home" in the pluralistic religious Asian milieu, having been born into and living amid this religious diversity and pluralism. Many of them come from a "mixed" religious background, with extended family members following a variety of religious traditions as a result of interfaith marriages. They live and interact on a daily basis with their family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors from other religious traditions, sharing with them the joys and sufferings as well as blessings and misfortunes of daily living. While many European and North American theologians and church leaders wax lyrical about the practice and achievements of interfaith dialogue in Europe and North America, where the great religions of the world are often viewed as the minority and the exotic "Other" vis-à-vis the dominant position of Christianity, Asian Christians live permanently amid the practitioners of these great religions. And while theologians and church leaders in Europe and North America may invite representatives of these other religions to meet occasionally for dialogue and conversation, Asian Christians engage in a daily dialogue of life witness with these fellow Asian neighbors who are followers of the great religious traditions of Asia.

At the same time, one must also acknowledge the reality that even as Asian Christians interact with fellow Asians who adhere to other religious traditions, those interactions are not always harmonious and peaceful. While Asia is often spoken of as the birthplace of the great religions of the world, including Christianity, many of these world religions are experiencing a resurgence of pride and exclusivist chauvinism in many parts of Asia. Thus, Asian Christians also have firsthand experiences of fanatics and fundamentalists who reject the long history of religious diversity and pluralism in Asia, seeking to impose their vision as normative through coercion and violence, as evident in the simmering Muslim-Christian conflicts in Pakistan and elsewhere, the unwarranted pressure

on Indian Christians to renounce Christianity, Hindu violence against Christians in India, and restrictions placed on Christians' freedom of association are imprinted in the consciousness of these Asian Christians.⁷

INTERFAITH COLLABORATIONS AS PARTICIPATION IN THE *MISSIO DEI*

From a theological perspective, when Asian Christians engage in interfaith collaboration with their Asian neighbors, they are, in reality, participating in the *Missio Dei*, a theological concept that was articulated by the International Missionary Conference in Willengen, Germany, in 1952.⁸ According to the missiologist David Bosch, the "decisive shift toward understanding mission as God's mission," or *Missio Dei*, marked a profound paradigm shift away from earlier understandings of mission as "saving individuals from eternal damnation," "introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West," or even "the expansion of the church."⁹ Bosch explained that the concept of *Missio Dei* emphasizes three key points: (1) mission as belonging, first and foremost, to God rather than the church; (2) mission as preceding from God reconciling the world through the sending of the Son and the Spirit; and (3) God's mission as God's presence and activity as always present in the created order, beyond the Church, with the goal of bringing about God's reign in the world beyond merely the growth of Christianity and the institutional church.¹⁰

Hence, when Asian Christians engage in interfaith collaborations as part of their participation in the *Missio Dei*, they are interested not in an Asian Christian presence that is over and against Asian religions and cultures, but rather a presence that is relational and dialogical, recognizing that they are called neither to conquer the postcolonial Asian world in the name of a triumphant Christ nor build a triumphant Christendom on Asian soil. In this vein, the late Angelo Fernandes, Archbishop Emeritus of Delhi, insisted that Asians of other faiths were not to be regarded as "objects of Christian mission," but as "partners in the Asian community, where there must be mutual witness."¹¹ Archbishop Fernandes explained that the dialogue between the Asian Church and the Asian peoples should be seen as a "manifestation of lived Christianity" with its own integrity that leads toward the Reign of God.¹²

Undergirding Asian Christians' interfaith collaboration with Asians of other religious traditions is the recognition by many Asian Christians that the religious traditions of Asia are neither demonic nor evil, but vehicles of God's salvific encounter with the Asian peoples. This recognition presupposes that other world religions are not Christianity's rivals but potential allies, *collaborating* and *working together* against the real *mutual* enemies of all forms of evil, including attachment to wealth, power, self-

ishness, and exploitation, as well as the social, cultural, and political structures that support them. In doing so, Asian Christians are able to counter the misconception that Christianity is imported from Europe and North America and therefore not properly "Asian."

COMMITMENT AND SERVICE TO LIFE IN ASIA

More importantly, when Asian Christians engage in interfaith collaboration as part of their participation in the *Missio Dei*, they are also making a commitment to serve Asian peoples in the complexities of their daily life experiences. Making a personal commitment to Asian peoples and their life experiences entails more than mere sympathy or occasional encounters with their daily lives, especially when it comes to people who are poor and marginalized. In other words, this personal commitment is not merely *for* the benefit of the Asian peoples, or *about* the Asian peoples, but *together with* Asian peoples and in solidarity with the fullness of their daily life experiences that also encompass the interfaith dimensions of daily living. As the Indian theologian Felix Wilfred explains, "What we are with the people is more important than what we do for them."¹³

Hence, the call to commitment and service to life in Asia as part of Asian Christians' engagement in interfaith collaboration entails their deep immersion and experiential participation in the lives of their Asian neighbors from various religious communities, not as outsiders who drop by sporadically to visit and then leave, but as insiders who remain bound in solidarity and empathy with them. Such a commitment and service to life may be understood from a twofold perspective—namely, an explicit *epistemological* perspective, which allows one to better understand Asian peoples and their life experiences, and more importantly, an underlying *theological* perspective, which recognizes the presence and workings of God in the daily lives of Asian peoples as part of the *Missio Dei*. This underlying theological perspective is deeply rooted in the incarnation, earthly ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, revealing God's solidarity with humanity, especially the poor and marginalized, as well as God's participation in the experiences of pain and suffering in their daily lives.

One could say that the experiences of daily living are the privileged loci where God is to be found and encountered because God has made a deliberate choice to be identified with humanity, especially the poor and marginalized. It is also an acknowledgment of the workings of the Holy Spirit beyond the boundaries of the institutional Church that inspire the deep soteriological underpinnings of Asian religions and philosophies that have inspired multitudes of Asians. In the context of pluri-religious Asia, this is also an acknowledgment that there are many Asians who are inspired by Jesus Christ and his ethical vision for humanity, but choose

for various reasons to remain Hindus, Buddhists, Daoists, or Muslims, and who are otherwise excluded from the dialectical setup of present ecclesial structures. As Felix Wilfred explains:

We have in Asia the phenomenon of a lot [sic] of men and women who are gripped by Jesus, his life and teachings. They are his devotees while they continue to be Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists. What is particularly remarkable is that they can be Hindus, or Buddhists, etc., and devotees of Christ without being syncretistic. Syncretism, they feel, is something which is attributed to them from the outside, while from within, at the level of their consciousness, they experience unity and harmony, and are not assailed by those contradictions and conflicts which may appear to those who look at them from without.¹⁴

HOSPITALITY AND INTERFAITH COLLABORATIONS

Malaysian-born Chinese American theologian Amos Yong has proposed a theological framework for interfaith collaborations that is rooted in interfaith hospitality which fosters *mutuality* and *reciprocity* between Christianity and other religions.¹⁵ While Yong's main focus is Asian Pentecostal Christianity's response to the workings of the Holy Spirit outside of institutional Christianity, I would like to submit that his insights have broader implications for all Christians in general, and Asian Christians in particular. Specifically, Yong constructs what he calls a pneumatological theology of interfaith hospitality that is rooted in *mutuality* and *reciprocity* between Christianity and other religions.¹⁶ He explains that while Christians cannot be responsible for the actions of others, they can and should take responsibility for their own attitudes and actions in a world where religious believers are becoming more hostile and antagonistic toward those who are different from them.¹⁷

Like Archbishop Angelo Fernandes, Yong insists that the "religious others" are more than simply the objects of conversion by Asian Christians. Rather, these "religious others" are the guests, friends, and neighbors of Asian Christians, with both sides extending mutual friendship and reciprocal hospitality. Yong further insists that his pneumatological theology of interfaith encounter "not only allows but also obliges us to cultivate different dispositions toward those in other faiths than those traditionally promoted; not only allows but also requires that we look for dialogical situations and opportunities involving religious others; not only allows but also necessitates our establishing friendships and opening our homes for table fellowship with those of other faiths."¹⁸

Thus, Yong's vision of a pneumatological theology of interfaith hospitality that welcomes believers of other religions in a spirit of friendship and neighborliness undergirds the interfaith collaboration in which Asian Christians engage together with their Asian co-religionists in a

shared spirit of hospitality and solidarity for the betterment of their communities. He also reminds us of the importance of the quintessential Asian trait of *dialogue*, which has the potential to bring about opportunities for two or more parties, with their different worldviews, to enter into each other's horizons, thereby creating deeper levels of understanding and friendship.

THE CHALLENGES OF INTERFAITH COLLABORATION IN MALAYSIA

Contemporary Malaysia is a multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, and multicultural society with a population of 28.3 million, comprising 67.4 percent Malays and other indigenous natives,¹⁹ 24.6 percent Chinese, and 7.3 percent Indians. Around 61.3 percent of the population of Malaysia is Muslim. Malaysian Buddhists comprise the second largest religious community at 19.8 percent. Christians are exclusively non-Malays and comprise around 9.2 percent of the population, followed by Hindus (6.3 percent) and traditional Chinese religions (1.3 percent).²⁰ At the same time, Malaysia is also a socially and politically volatile society divided by an explosive mix of ethnicity and religion. Although article 3(1) of the Malaysian Federal Constitution specifies that Islam is the official religion of Malaysia and the majority of Malaysians are Muslims, the same article 3(1) also permits other religions "to be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation."²¹ Moreover, freedom of religion in Malaysia is guaranteed under article 11(1) of the Malaysian Federal Constitution, which states, "Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it."²² However, article 11(4) of the Malaysian Federal Constitution also empowers the federal and state governments to pass laws against the propagation of non-Muslim religions among the Muslims: "State law and in respect of the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya, federal law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam."²³

Under the British colonial policy of divide and rule, the Malays were given political power while control of trade and economy was given to the Chinese. This political-economic division continued in post-independent Malaysia, engendering much discontent between the Malays and Chinese. Matters came to an explosive clash in the series of violent racial riots, stoked by extremist Malay nationalists against the Chinese community, beginning on May 13, 1969.²⁴ In the aftermath of these riots, the Malaysian government instituted the New Economic Policy (NEP) to promote national reconciliation and bridge the economic inequality between the Malays and the Chinese in an effort to rebuild a shattered civic society. Unfortunately, the NEP also institutionalized communalism, Malay

dominance in nation building, and Malay sovereignty over the other minority communities in all matters political, social, and economic. This resulted in widespread economic inefficiency, corruption scandals, cronyism, and nepotism as a small Malay elite class controlled the political and economic levers of powers to the exclusion of ordinary Malays and people of other races.²⁵ As the tangible economic benefits of the NEP failed to trickle down to the ordinary Malays in rural communities, the Islamic Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) emerged to champion Islamization as the alternative to the cronyism and corruption of the NEP. In response to the popularity of PAS's Islamization platform, the ruling political elite adopted a similar policy of Islamization to blunt PAS's tactics.²⁶

To say that the Malaysian government's heavy-handed program of Islamization has resulted in increased religious tensions between the majority Muslim and other religious minority communities in Malaysia is an understatement. As a religious minority, Malaysian Christians have found themselves in the direct firing line of legislation and programs aimed at giving Islam a privileged position vis-à-vis the other religious faiths in Malaysia. For example, Malaysian Christians are rankled by state legislation that criminalizes apostasy (*takfir*) by Muslims and the actions of Christians who evangelize their faith to Muslims.²⁷ The law against apostasy drew international headlines and condemnation in the case of Lina Joy, who filed a suit before the Malaysian Federal Court to compel the Malaysian National Registration Department to record her change of religion from Islam to Christianity on her identity card after her baptism as a Roman Catholic. On May 30, 2007, her appeal was dismissed by a 2–1 majority, and she and her Christian fiancé were forced to leave Malaysia under threats of violence from Malaysian Muslim activists. More importantly, the Malaysian Federal Court ruling further inflamed interfaith tensions as non-Muslim minorities perceive this to be yet another nail in the coffin for the erosion of religious freedom in Malaysia.²⁸

Another example of conflict between Malaysian Christians and Muslims is the ongoing controversy over the use of the term "Allah" for God by Malaysian Christians. The issue came to the forefront as a result of the 2007 decision of the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs to prohibit the Malaysian Catholic periodical *The Herald* from using the term "Allah" in its Malay language edition. The then-Catholic Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Murphy Pakiam, sought a judicial review of the Home Minister's decision.²⁹ The case wound its way through the Malaysian court system, culminating in the Malaysian Federal Court decision in June 2014 to uphold the 2007 decision of the Malaysian Home Minister and issue a blanket ban against non-Muslims using the term "Allah" under any circumstances.³⁰

In response to the pressure from the Malay Muslim majority, the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism,³¹ Christianity,³² Hinduism,³³

Sikhism,³⁴ and Taoism³⁵ (MCCBCHST) was established in 1983 to promote understanding, mutual respect and cooperation among the different religions in Malaysia, resolve interfaith matters, and make representations to the Malaysian government on religious issues.³⁶ In practice, the MCCBCHST has become an organized channel for interfaith dialogue and engagement between the non-Muslims and the Malaysian government on issues of religious freedom and the impact of encroaching Islamization on the rights of the non-Muslim religious minorities to practice their faith without interference or fear.³⁷

The current Catholic Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Julian Leow, is insistent on interfaith dialogue and collaboration as the way out of the current tensions and impasse between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia. In his first interview after he was chosen as the new Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, he spoke of "looking forward to having inter-religious dialogues and fostering closer ties with Malaysians of various races and faiths," explaining that "once dialogue is shut out, there will be a lot of misrepresentation."³⁸ In his address at his episcopal ordination, Archbishop Leow emphasized, among other things, the need for interfaith dialogue and engagement: "Not only understanding our own faith is important, but to know the faiths of those we live with. Inter-religious dialogue is so crucial in a country like ours. This will dispel misconceptions and create a healthy atmosphere of mutual respect."³⁹ Moreover, Archbishop Leow's commitment to interfaith engagement is also symbolically represented in his coat of arms by a "tree with religious icons," which depicts "the ability to recognize the Divine in every person we encounter [and] to be open to dialogue and to seek the good of the other."⁴⁰

At the grassroots level, a number of younger Malaysians are seizing the initiative to overcome the sectarian religious divide through the formation of Projek Dialog.⁴¹ Under the leadership of two young Malaysian Muslims, cultural and political studies scholar Ahmad Fuad Rahmat and social media activist Yana Rizal, and advised by Malaysian Muslim political commentator and activist Marina Mahathir and Malaysian Christian theologian Sivin Kit, Projek Dialog seeks to leverage social media to provide a platform for Malaysians from all religious traditions to engage in interfaith and intercultural conversations with the goal of promoting better understanding and collaboration among the diverse ethnic and religious communities in Malaysia. Projek Dialog maintains an active social media presence on Facebook⁴² and Twitter⁴³ to promote an ongoing dialogue on interfaith engagements and collaboration. To date, Projek Dialog has sponsored "interfaith walks" that seek to expose Malaysians to various religious communities and their beliefs and traditions through visits to places of worship and participating in prayer and other ritual activities to promote better understanding, harmony and friendship, and national unity.⁴⁴ In collaboration with the London-based human rights

non-governmental organization, Article 19,⁴⁵ Projek Dialog successfully organized a seminar, "Freedom, Religion, and Social Media: Know Your Rights" on August 24, 2014, to explore the issues surrounding freedom of religion and human rights in the era of social media, as well as provide guidance to young Malaysian activists looking to utilize social media for advocacy on issues of religion and human rights without infringing Malaysian law, in particular the Sedition Act.

CONCLUSION

Asian Christians realize that their life experiences are defined by the fact that for over 2,000 years Christianity has been, at best, a minority religion in Asia, a world that is dominated by the world's ancient great religions. Indeed, these Christians ignore the plurality of ancient religions and spiritual traditions that define the Asian milieu at their peril. They have to contend with the challenges of living and prospering in a pluri-religious milieu that has always been defined by the great religions of the world, recognizing that religious pluralism is an inescapable part of the Asian landscape, a part which is not to be confronted and overcome but accepted and celebrated as a definitive aspect of the Asian world. More specifically, Asian Christians, as a religious minority in many parts of Asia, have no choice but to explore new ways of overcoming the antagonism and chauvinism of the religious majority around them that would take into account the complex and tense relational dynamics between Asian Christians as a religious minority vis-à-vis their religious majority neighbors in the pluralistic Asian milieu.

The Asian Church will always be a "little flock" in the sea of diverse Asian religions and cultures in pluralistic Asia for the future. To be truly Asian and at home in the Asian milieu, Asian Christians are challenged to embrace the religious pluralism of postcolonial Asia, while at the same time prophetically challenging and purifying its oppressive and life-denying elements in the name of the Christian Gospel. In the context of the immense pluralistic Asian *Weltanschauung*, Asian Christians as a religious minority are able to witness to the redemptive power of the Christian Gospel by *not* pouring oil on the fires of religious conflict and violence or engaging in competitive proselytism against the practitioners of other religions. On a continent that is being torn apart by violence and conflicts in the name of exclusivist religious fanaticism, Asian Christians are challenged to break the impasse by going beyond the superficiality of quantitative church growth in favor of a qualitative *prophetic* approach that seeks to critique, transform, and heal the brokenness in Asian realities. They do this by the example of their daily living in companionship, empathy, and solidarity with their neighbors across religious boundaries, working, struggling, and suffering as fellow humans on a common quest

for the meaning of life. As religious minority, Asian Christians complain about the majority scapegoating them for social ills and pressurizing them to lose their distinctive ethno-racial or religious features and become fully assimilated in the mainstream of society. They find themselves on the losing end of an "us-versus-them" rhetoric and political manipulations of religious differences by the religious majority that often go down the dangerous path of a power game that politicizes religion and plays off majority and minority communities in the interest of political expediency.

More importantly, the call to witness to the Gospel in pluri-religious Asia through interfaith collaboration goes beyond merely proclaiming abstract doctrines or rational arguments toward rooting the Gospel in the Asian milieu within a framework of hospitality that would enable the Good News to be experienced by the Asian peoples in a spirit of mutuality and relationality. A theology and practice of interfaith collaboration that is rooted and empowered by a spirit of hospitality has the potential to foster thoughtful conversation, attentive listening, mutual dialogue, and mutual collaboration that would witness to the presence of the Reign of God in Asia as part of the *Missio Dei*. Moreover, with the onslaught of migration that is causing great upheavals among different social, ethnic, and religious groups throughout Asia, a theology of hospitality that empowers and undergirds interfaith collaboration is all the more relevant and necessary as an antidote to violence and turbulence, affording opportunities for all Asians, Christians and adherents of Asian religions alike to interact and engage with each other. At the same time, one should also acknowledge the reality that encouraging the majority to move away from reluctant tolerance to mutual trust of, and hospitality toward diverse minority communities is often easier said than done.

Interfaith collaborations represent an opportunity for Asian Christians to promote positive interactions that are grounded in mutual hospitality and mutual relations, breaking down the walls of hostility and division and enabling them to walk together and accompany other Asians in the journey of life in a spirit of love, friendship, and harmony. It seeks to prophetically critique, transform, and heal the brokenness in Asian realities in the name of ushering in God's Reign in Asia. Because Asian Christians participate in the *Missio Dei* to bring about God's reign through their life witness, they are called to contribute to the common good and promote peace, harmony, and the well-being of their racial-ethnic, cultural, and religious communities and societies, even if they do not become institutionally Christian. Without a doubt, dialogue as a source of reconciliation can only arise from genuine relations of mutuality and solidarity between majority and minority communities at the grassroots level. In turn, dialogue could pave the way for conversion, forgiveness, and healing. The common good is promoted at all levels when barriers are broken down, the fires of hatred are quenched, bridges are built between major-

ity and minority communities, and goodwill is promoted at grassroots levels to foster reconciliation and harmony, thereby breaking the vicious cycle of hate, fear, mistrust, and violence.

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NOTES

1. On the implications of Asian Christians as minority communities, see Peter C. Phan and Jonathan Y. Tan, "Interreligious Majority-Minority Dynamics," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 218–40.
2. Peter C. Phan, review of *Introducing Theologies of Religion*, by Paul Knitter, *Horizons* 30 (2003): 117.
3. Peter C. Phan, "Ecclesia in Asia: Challenges for Asian Christianity," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37 (2000): 224.
4. *Ibid.*, 218.
5. *Ibid.*, 219.
6. As Jerome Crowe explained succinctly, "The gospel can only be experienced and communicated in the form of a particular human culture. There is no such thing as a 'pure' gospel, untainted by incorporation into a human culture, because the gospel is not a system of divine truths existing somewhere outside this world and untouched by human feeling, language, and customs but God's self-involvement in the concrete circumstances of a people's history and culture." See Jerome Crowe, *From Jerusalem to Antioch: The Gospel Across Cultures* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 153–54.
7. For a more in-depth discussion, see Phan and Tan, "Interreligious Majority-Minority Dynamics."
8. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 389–93.
9. *Ibid.*, 389–90.
10. *Ibid.*, 389–91.
11. Angelo Fernandes, "Dialogue in the Context of Asian Realities," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 55 (1991): 548.
12. *Ibid.*, 548.
13. Felix Wilfred, "What the Spirit Says to the Churches (Rev 2:7)," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 62 (1998): 132.
14. Felix Wilfred, "Inculturation as a Hermeneutical Question," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 52 (1988): 429.
15. Amos Yong, "The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives toward a Performative Theology of Interreligious Encounter," *Missiology* 35 (2007): 55–73.
16. *Ibid.*, 65.
17. *Ibid.*, 66.
18. *Ibid.*, 66.
19. The Malays and other indigenous natives of Malaysia are collectively classified as "Bumiputeras" by the Malaysian government.
20. The figures cited here are from the 2010 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia. See Department of Statistics, Malaysia, "Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics," www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com

