DOING THEOLOGY IN ASIA: IN THE SERVICE OF LIFE

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Abstrak:

Bagaimana berteologi di Indonesia dalam konteks keprihatinan bangsa dan Gereja Asia? Apa langkah-langkah refleksi iman yang akan lebih membantu Gereja agar lebih mewujud sebagai "garam dan terang" masyarakat? Daripada mendiskusikan ke-Asia-an atau keilmiahannya secara berlebihan, para uskup Asia (FABC) menegaskan bahwa juga teologi perlu menjadi pelayan kehidupan. Maka pada sidang yang pertama tahun 1970, diusulkan pendekatan dialog jujur khususnya dengan kaum miskin dan masyarakat Asia yang multi-budaya serta multi-agama. Teologi tidak berhenti sebagai ajaran kebijaksanaan dan kerohanian atau pun ilmu, melainkan juga refleksi kritis untuk "melayani kehidupan". Hal ini dapat diwujudkan melalui "lingkaran pastoral": *live-in*, analisa sosial, kontemplasi dan perencanaan pastoral, yang mengandaikan familiaritas dengan Kabar Gembira dan tradisi kristiani yang membebaskan.

Keywords:

Asian reality, contextual theology, Asian theology, pastoral cycle

1. Introduction

How do we do theology in Indonesia in view of similar efforts to theologize from the Asian realities? Asia is a continent of diverse ancient cultural heritage with its great religions of the world. Most population of the world as well as young people live on it. Asia hosts approximately 4.3 billion people or about 60% of the world's current human population. Asia has a high growth rate in the modern era. For instance, during the 20th century, Asia's population nearly quadrupled, unfortunately it has been true also for the number of its poor and marginalized. The people of Asia kept a dark memory of being victims of imperialist colonialism, economic exploitation, political oppression as well as military violence. Indonesians are not spared from any of those experience of injustices. *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) highlights some concrete contemporary pastoral concerns such as poverty, population growth, women, migration , rapid change, nuclear power and tourism and a host of additional challenges.[1]

Federation of the Asian Bishop's Conferences (FABC) since its inception in 1970 reminded the Church in Asia to engage in a triple dialogue with the Asian

poor, and with the diverse cultural and religious heritage of the people of Asia which has constituted a resilient Asian identity. Indeed, Asian wisdom of bamboo suggests a hopeful resilience as well as a courage to start anew. A Japanese proverb says "The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists." The concern of the Asian bishops implies a serious rethinking of our pastoral planning as we will be addressing an overwhelming presence of Asian young population. According to United Nations' figures, 62% of the world's 15- to 24-year-olds live in Asia. This means that almost two out of every three people in that age group are in this region.[2] On the other hand, the Asian bishops teaches that evangelization and theology to be done within this context have to keep a single focus which is "for the service of life", of the people within the perspective of whole creation. The triple dialogue is its starting point as well as its *locus theologicus*.

It is important today to understand and celebrate the "Asianess" of Christianity as it opens to the universal world. In fact Jesus was born on Asian soil, yet it should not be viewed as an isolated part of the world or as a privileged continent on its own. On the other hand that needs to be perceived as a kind of entry point to reach to the world as a whole. Then this vision is in the same breath with that of the mission of the early Church (Matthew 28:19-20) and a reminder to take seriously each people starting with the Asian peoples on their land and with their cultures as well as their ancient religious traditions that have opened up their life to the Creator of the universe.

The following article would like to present some thoughts on a theology including its method that would take the challenge of FABC seriously. This should constitute what could be called an Asian theology. Therefore here we shall not be researching on the identity or on what an Asian theology or Asian theologies truly is, but shall be more on a theology as critical reflection on Christian faith, lived and practiced, done within a particular Asian context to respond to its social-cultural-theological challenges.

2. Asian Context

Besides our contemporary experience in a particular Asian context of a certain country where we live and work, insights from the Asian bishops' observation and relevant apostolic exhortations such as *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) and *Ecclesia in Oceania* (2001) by John Paul II, are worth studying to understand Asian realities including churches in Asia. Both documents demonstrated great understandings of our Asian realities and history particularly from the perspective of many years of evangelization. It may seem as of no-progress or a slow process of evangelization. Yet, the encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ did happen, sealed by the blood of the Christian martyrs throughout those centuries. Therefore, the documents rightly urge all Christians to take seriously contemporary Asian concern as they

are reenergized by the Good News of Jesus Christ for the people of Asia (no. 42) and Oceania (no. 18).

Earlier in the 1970, the Asian bishops had formally insisted that all churches in Asia need to take seriously preferential option for the poor and marginalized. That means to incorporate this preferential option into their very understanding of missiology. Liberation of the oppressed and marginalized as well as integral development of the poor are key aspects of the church's mission in Asia.[3] How did we explain this observation and vision?

Except for some economically developed countries such as Japan, South Korea or Singapore, most Asian countries are among the poorest of the earth, worst have been their poorest of the poor. Millions of Asian peoples have been kept, even systematically, on the margins of society economically, socially, politically such as in the case of caste system or various forms of institutionalized discriminations (in terms of race, religion, language or culture). Globalization which brings benefits yet has produced negative effects such as different social evils associated with urbanization, the insecurity and rootlessness caused by migration, human trafficing as well as the degradation of women and children through prostitution and the destruction of traditional cultures as well as its natural environments.

Asian way of life and thinking has been influenced by ancient wisdom and variety of ideologies ranging from democracy, theocracy or even of dictatorship. Communist regimes such as in China, Vietnam and North Korea are quite determining. The world's major religion and religious traditions are also born in Asia such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism, Shintoism and Taoism without mentioning many indigenous or tribal religions. These all need to be considered and engaged positively to understand our Asian reality. The question remains why then the vast majority of Asians are among the poorest of the poor after all? Why those wisdom and ancient human values have not been able to reduce and transform injustice or corruption (manifestation of selfishness) and merciless behavior toward others especially economically and culturally disadvantaged?

Churches in Asia and its mission need to be considered as part of the context above. Their presence have been contributing in something good as suggested and called by the Good News of Jesus Christ. Yet, this would not be so automatically as also suggested by the Gospel which is a call to conversion as well as an on-going self-evangelization. In fact, even after much work of evangelization, only a small minority came to the Christian faith and very few know Christ. In view of the history of the Church particularly in Asia where about 60% of the world's population lives, it could not be denied that the Church had experience various failures in terms of discipleship, commitment to the message of Jesus Christ and

his good news as well as in bringing people especially the poor and marginalized to true life which is Jesus whom the Christian Scripture proclaimed (John 14:6 and John 10:10).

The Synod of Bishops for Asia (1998) explained the importance of collaboration while acknowledging a positive existence of Asian cultures and religions as well as Asian virtues and wisdom. The Synod, first, re-acknowledge the spiritual values of the great religions of Asia such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. Second, the Synod esteems the ethical values in the customs and practices found in the teachings of the great philosophers of Asia, which promote natural virtues and pious devotions to ancestors. Third, they Synod respect the beliefs and religious practices of indigenous/tribal people, whose reverence for all creation manifests their closeness to the Creator. Only after going through this stage of paying deep respect and appreciation of others, the bishops call all for a sharing and working together to improve the quality of life of the peoples of Asia.[4]

3. Challenges And Questions

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila explained well challenges of mission in Asia in the light of the Synod of Bishops for Asia (1998).[5] These are useful to rethink on the contemporary effort of evangelization. First (Christian spirituality) is to learn again from Jesus. This means to allow ourselves to be taught by Jesus and to acknowledge Jesus as the missioner and to be converted to his ways as well as to his missionary ways. This first challenge calls for contemplation and a true humility.[6] There is no need to pretend that we are to save Asia or to think that we are the owner of this mission. Shall we not to learn again Jesus' ways of doing mission: charged by the Spirit of God to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and to set the oppressed free (Luke 4:18). How had the Church been self-serving, self-centered and self-glorifying while forgetting and even undermining the call of the Gospel? In faith, did we truly behold Jesus Christ witnessed by the Gospel? Did our Christian praxis reflect our good understanding of Jesus' call for discipleship narrated in the Gospel?

The second challenge (missiology) is an invitation to continue Jesus' mission to bring Good News to the people of Asia with their particular situation and history. This primarily means to facilitate the encounter of the Spirit-filled mission of Jesus with the realities of Asia. This would include 1) to prolong and make visible the mission of Jesus; 2) to present Jesus and his concern to the Asian people of today; 3) to facilitate kind encounter between Jesus and the people of Asia. One constant pre-understanding here is that Jesus and his mission are still present in its fullness by the Holy Spirit.[7]

The third challenge (Christology) is our faith in Jesus Christ as a unique contribution of Christians in Asia. This recently has been re-emphasized especially in the Synod of Asian Bishops. Tagle explained that in Asia, Catholics can collaborate with other peoples of Asia in the quest for life, for justice or in the promotion of human dignity. Yet, what might be our answer to the people who are asking sincerely deep question about life? As Christians will we give our firm answer which is Jesus Christ? It is known that some theologians and missionaries will first somehow pretend that they are "not Christians" or at the most indifferent ones to be able to relate with others just on the human level. "We share a common humanity, so let the Christian element enter later on".[8] Unfortunately in some occasions this only surprised our non-Christians dialogue partner as they know that we are Christians yet we did not mention Jesus Christ and actually some were expecting that we do speak about the center of our Christian faith and how have we experienced it as fundamentally meaningful with its so unique saving power (in the face of so many Asian religions and soteriologies).

Indeed, how do we present Jesus Christ and what he has brought for our world in a way that will make sense (more understandable and more appealing) to the quest of Asian people for their fuller life?

Luis Antonio Tagle explicated his observation and concern that Asian Catholics tend to be weak in the proclamation of Jesus Christ. One of its common reasons is fear that an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ substitutes a genuine dialogue with other people of different belief. Surely he spoke from the Philippines with its Catholics' majority. On the other hand, he did explained the wisdom of the Asian bishops who showed its paramount means of the proclamation of Jesus Christ which is a proclamation through the Word of God, started with an inquiry of a possible "Asian hermeneutics" or ways of doing exegesis in an Asian manner, attuned to the mentalities of Asian people.[9]

The following challenge is quite universal which is to continue building and witnessing an evangelical community. The fruit of the resurrection of Jesus is a community of hope and love. In the light of resurrection, the disciples of Jesus Christ filled with the gift of Holy Spirit continued spreading the word of God and forming various communities of Jesus. This has not always been successful. In the Scripture itself was indicated that there were problems within the early Christian communities: tensions, misunderstandings, conflicts and separations. The worst would be called heretic which means holding an unorthodox faith and this could point to an unorthodox practice that could eventually contradict the Good News with its evangelical concern. Somehow the Church could not deny the dark side of her history and people observe that history, good or bad, repeats. In early history of Christianity, one of the most impressive post-resurrection Christian communities is identified in the Acts of the Apostles 2 and 4.

The witness of the Acts of Apostles chapter 2: 42-47 reads

> "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The witness of the Acts of Apostles chapter 4: 31-37 reads

> "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind… And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.[10]

Tagle pointed out well that one specific area of mission of the Church in Asia is communion and *communion* in the Church needs to be understood as a way of mission as well or in other word, community-building in itself is a mission for the Church in Asia to accomplish. This goes directly to an understanding of Asian society who has been continuously in search for harmony, within human relationships and with the cosmos. In Asia harmony is given primary value. Again, learning about different communities in the New Testament, a bishop concluded with a question: how do we explain the mystery of the disappearance of some primitives Churches, even which were founded by the Apostles themselves? Why does the Lord allow these Churches to disappear?

Accordingly, Tagle explained another specific mission challenge which is dialogue as the mode of mission and the mode of evangelization for Asia.[11] Tagle reminded us that through the synod of bishops, dialogue became the mode of evangelization of today, for all. This should go along with the preference of peace-making as best manifestation of Jesus' mission of love, service and life for Asia.[12]

In this regard, some other theological questions noted in the preface of the report of the Asian Synod need to be further considered as the sincere dialogue progresses.

1) How to proclaim the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ as savior in Asia in the presence of the Buddha and other religious founders? More radically, can and should this claim about Jesus still be made?

2) What can we say about the Church as the necessary means of salvation in light of other religions which, far from disappearing like darkness before the dazzling light of the Christian faith as past missionaries have

confidently predicted, are as vibrant as ever, many of them older and more vigorous than Christianity itself, and continue to nourish billions of Asian souls among whom Christians are but the tiniest minority?

3) Why is Jesus, who was born in Asia, still regarded by Asians as a stranger despite more than centuries of intense evangelization?

4) Can inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and liberation of the poor and the marginalized be seriously considered intrinsic parts of evangelization? If so, should they replace proclamation?[13]

4. Methodology And Its Premises

In view of those realities and challenges, how has the Church in Asia been responding, pastorally and theologically? What have been the answers to such significant questions? What kind of pastoral and theological methods have been employed? Can Asian continue finding ways of doing exegesis in an Asian manners, attuned to the mentalities of Asian people and at the same time scientific.[14]

At this juncture, it is important to note some premises. In the word of Peter Phan, they are the unity of God's plan of salvation, the salvific significance of the Christ-event and the Church as a necessary instrument of salvation. Phan questioned if God has one plan of salvation for Christians and other plans for adherents of other faiths. How about God's plan for numerous people with "no faith" at all? Soteriologically speaking, how would Christians say about them? Remember, in the light of the Gospel, it has been a fundamental Christian message that Jesus died for all and he is the savior for all. Through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as well as his death crucified and resurrection, God's mysterious plan of salvation for all and God's mysterious ways to accomplish it came to clarity. The Church as the main bearer of the Good News of Jesus Christ is obviously unalterable unless she stops giving her faithful witness deliberately.

Peter phan made an interesting observation that there is a significant progressive development in theologizing from within a pluralistic contexts in Asia. Christian theology as *fides quaerens intellectum* tried to mediate between the Christian creed, cult, code and common human experience and language. Theology has been understood as wisdom (*sapientia*), sacred teaching (*sacra doctrina*).[15] The "turn to the subject" marked the development of classical theologies with new approaches: transcendental, hermeneutical, analytical, correlation and liberation. Contemporary theologies understood pluralism as a constitutive and intrinsic dimension of human knowing since a "subject" is always situated in its socio-cultural-political and economic context. Phan explained that "Asian theologies stand in continuity with those theologies in their emphasis on the embeddedness of Christian faith in socio-political and economic contexts and in privileging the

criterion of adequacy to the contemporary "human experience and language."[16]

The Asian bishops of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) since the beginning introduced the need and importance of triple dialogue in Asia: with the poor, cultural and religious others. In the task of evangelization in Asia, first inculturation has to be taken seriously to make the local Church truly present within the life of the people; secondly dialogue as its essential mode, with the great Asian religions, which brings them into contact with the Gospel, so that the Word in them may come to full flower; thirdly service to the poor as the entry point to unite with them in the struggle for a more human world.[17]

A useful methodology introduced by the FABC is called "pastoral Cycle". It is a four-step method aimed to guide our discernment and interpretation. Therefore it is a theological reflection to help meet our pastoral concern especially in Asia while keeping in mind of the ambiguity of any historical reality as well as human sinfulness.

1) First step is exposure-immersion. This step exposes "theologians" to a concrete situation of the people with whom and for whom they work, particularly the poor and marginalized. This exposure and immersion will generate an experiential knowledge of the poor and a seed of solidarity with the suffering people.

2) Second step is social analysis that includes social, economic, political, cultural and religious systems as well as the signs of the times, the events of history as well as the needs and aspirations of the people. At this point, FABC also has warned of the danger of deception either by ideology or self-interest and of incompleteness.[18]

3) Third step is contemplation. It is an "Integration of social analysis with the religio-cultural reality, discerning not only its negative and enslaving aspects but also its positive, prophetic aspects that can inspire genuine spirituality". Instilled in contemplation, this step will help theologians to discover God's active presence in the society and in the reality of the poor. This should open a way of dialogue with great religions of Asia and the religiosity of the poor and appreciate Asian values similar to the gospel values such as simplicity of life, genuine openness and generous sharing, community consciousness and family loyalty.[19]

4) The fourth step is pastoral planning. The Asian bishops perceive evangelization and human development as two faces of the same coin. Therefore any critical reflection on faith or theology is incomplete without a pastoral action plan which is practical policies, strategies and plans of action in favor of integral human development.[20]

Observing and studying the teaching of FABC on method of doing theology from the Asian realities, Peter Phan concluded that "Doing theology in Asia is much more than an academic enterprise. The starting point is neither Bible nor Christian tradition… Rather, Asian theologians are implicated from the outset in the socio-political, economic, cultural, and religious conditions of their suffering and the oppressed people, with whom they must stand in effective solidarity. Scripture and tradition are read and interpreted from the perspective of this praxis.[21] This conclusion comes with a premise that as Christian and theologian, one has been exposed to the Gospel and immersed in the Christian tradition at least in general. Though it may be lacking of depth, they have been confronted to Jesus Christ, his message as well as Christian values. The method of pastoral cycle with its transforming exposure and immersion should facilitate a form of conversion (self-evangelization) that would inspire one's commitment while executing the pastoral plan.

5. Conclusion

Gaudium et Spes no. 1 of the 2nd Vatican Council spoke about solidarity due to new self-understanding of the Church as part of the modern world and not as a "perfect society" separated from the rest of the world. Liberation theology for several decades has inspired different theological studies from all over the world that aim at liberation, justice and peace-making, in the service of life.

From our experience and observation on doing theology in Asia, particularly as explained above, there are contextual concerns that could be counted as creative contributions in methodology and ecclesiology. Peter Phan made a fine explanation especially in view of doing theology of liberation in Asia.

1) In Asia, religion and poverty are deeply intertwined. Therefore Asian liberation theology does not make use of the social sciences exclusively (e.g. Marxist analysis that sees religion as nothing but the opium of the people) to understand the root causes of Asia's economic and socio-political situation. This must be combined with the introspective methods of the Asian spiritual teachers (a Hindu guru, a Buddhist monk, a Zen roshi, a Confucian sage, a Taoist master, or a Sufi mystic). This should help to understand the reality of "enforced poverty" as well as the so-called "voluntary poverty" in Asia.

2) In Asia, the Christian churches and their theologies operate not from a position of strength but of powerlessness, not from that of the predominant majority but that of a humble minority. This means that Christians and their theologians must be aware that they are not the first ones to speak of liberation and that they cannot do it alone. Because followers of other religions have engaged in liberation, in Asia the

need not only to establish Basic Christian Communities (BCC) but also Basic Human Communities (BHC) in which believers of all religions and non-believers work together in common projects of liberation and human development.

3) In Asia, the most effective way of being Church is through dialogue, a triple dialogue: with the Asian peoples particularly with the poor, with their cultures and religions (FABC). Phan further explained that those must be carried out together, to be truly effective. "Liberation without interreligious dialogue and inculturation is not much more than political and economic activism. Interreligious dialogue without liberation and inculturation runs the risk of religious escapism; and inculturation without liberation and interreligious dialogue leads to cultural elitism and is but skin-deep".[22]

In short, theology in Asia today needs to be in the service of life. It is true for Asia as well as for the whole world.[23] On the other hand, particular context will indicate a different pastoral concern and later determine other relevant pastoral action and approach. The Asian bishops points to four interrelated ways to carry out the triple dialogue above which are by common sharing of life, by common action, by theological exchange and by sharing religious experience.[24] This eventually will determine our way of being Church in Asia.

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Endnotes

1 See James H. Kroeger, "The Asian Churches' Awakening to Mission" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*. New York: Orbis Books, 2002, 190.

2 BBC News in November 7, 2011 further stated that "In terms of total numbers, that meant there were 745 million young adults in Asia in 2010, according to a report by the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs. As a result, a number of countries in the region are experiencing a "youth bulge", where people between the ages of 15-24 make up the largest demographic segment of the population. A look at the median age shows that the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos have some of the youngest people in Asia, with a median age of around 22." *Indonesia* has the world's fourth largest *youth population*, with over 38.4 million *young* women and men between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

3 Peter Phan explains that since the beginning, the FABC founded in 1970, adopted Latin American Churches' preferential option for the poor and repeatedly insisted of its relevance for Churches in Asia as they engage with the reality of the Asian peoples. See Peter C. Phan, "Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J. in Dialogue With Asian Theologians: What Can They Learn From Each Other?" in *Horizons* 32/1 (2005): 67.

4 "Message of the Synod of Bishops for Asia" no. 3 in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 167 and Felix Wilfred, "Asian Christianity and Modernity" in Anthony Rogers, *Asian Consultation on Harmony through Reconciliation. 40th Anniversary of the Pastoral Constitution on Church in the Modern World*. Manila: ALPPS, 2006, 49. Through performance relations, religion establishes its importance for the 'profane' aspects of life.

[5] To celebrate the great Jubilee of the year of 2000, pope John Paul II convoked five continental Special Synods of Bishops: Africa in 1994, America in 1997, Asia in 1998 and in the same year, Oceania and then Europe in 1999. The Synods of Bishops is a permanent institution established by pope Paul VI in 1965 to foster the unity and collaboration of bishops around the world with the Holy See. The Asian Synod brought together for the first time three groups of churches whose major common denomination is their location what is known as Asia: the Near and Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Central Asia and the Far East where Indonesia is located. Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 1.

[6] The Asian bishops such as Luis Antonio Tagle are aware that even now Catholics in Asia are not known for their spiritual wisdom, but more for their social services. Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 218.

[7] Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 215.Tagle explained that the Asian bishops kept on inviting us to take seriously and earnestly what Asia truly is, the reality of its different worlds of today and not only "in a nostalgic fashion" in terms of culture and local wisdom. That should be the contemporary world of the incarnation of the Lord.

[8] Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 217.

[9] Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 218.

[10] Acts 4: 31-37 continues "No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet."

[11] Indeed, a word including God's Word is always pronounced and heard in dialogue, and the dialogue continues as long as the human pilgrimage continues. The Church is always in "syn-odos"-walking together. See Editorial in *Vidyajyoti* 63/12 (1999) about Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) reprinted in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 175.

[12] Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 219-220. Magnis-Suseno, an expert on Indonesia, perceived theological dialogue as good means to come to common values and then to face social problems from a common base. See Franz Magnis-Suseno, "Education for Tolerance among Religious Communities: The Case of Indonesia" in Syed Farid Alatas, etc. (editors), *Asian Interfaith Dialogue: Perspectives on Religion, Education and Social Cohesion*. Singapore: RIMA and the World Bank, 2003, 167.

[13] Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, ix.

[14] Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Challenge of Mission in Asia: A View From the Asian Synod" in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Asian Synod. Texts and Commentaries*, 218-219. The following task would be developing those Asian ways of interpreting texts in dialogue with other reasonable approaches?

[15] Peter C. Phan, "Theologizing in the Context of Cultural and Religious Pluralism: An Asian Perspective" in *Theology Digest* (Summer 2003): 144. In neo-scholasticism, theology is understood as *scientia conclusionum*. The dialogue partner of Christian faith is mainly philosophy.

[16] Peter C. Phan, "Theologizing in the Context of Cultural and Religious Pluralism: An Asian Perspective" in Theology Digest (Summer 2003): 145.

[17] Gaudencio Rosales and C.G. Arévalo (Editors), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Documents from 1970-1995*. New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 1:23 (no. 20) quoted in Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face. Asian American Theology in the Making.* New York: Orbis Books, 2003, 189. The FABC was founded in the wake of the 1970 Asian Bishops' meeting in Manila, Philippines and its influence on the Asian Churches has been quite strong though the documents from their meetings have not been widely-read by the Asian Christians in general whom could benefit for living their Christian faith within the Asian contexts.

[18] Gaudencio Rosales and C.G. Arévalo (Editors), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Documents from 1970-1995*, 231.

[19] Gaudencio Rosales and C.G. Arévalo (Editors), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Documents from 1970-1995*, 232.

[20] The ultimate test of the validity of theological insights is their ability to generate concrete action in favor of justice and liberation. Gaudencio Rosales and C.G. Arévalo (Editors), *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Documents from 1970-1995*, 232.

[21] Peter C. Phan, "Theologizing in the Context of Cultural and Religious Pluralism: An Asian Perspective" in Theology Digest (Summer 2003): 150.

[22] Peter C. Phan, "Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J. in Dialogue With Asian Theologians: What Can They Learn From Each Other?" in *Horizons* 32/1 (2005): 68-70.

[23] Our world is still troubled by deep economic and social inequality. "According to the World Bank $1.25-a-day poverty line (2005 prices), there are still nearly 1.3 billion people living in poverty, although this represents a decline from over 1.9 billion in 1981. However, poverty is not simply a lack of adequate income: it is a multidimensional phenomenon that represents the deprivation of one's ability to live with freedom and dignity with the full potential to achieve one's valued goals in life." See UNDP, *Evaluation of UNDP contribution to Poverty Reduction*. USA: UNDP, 2013, vii at www.undp.org/evaluation.Anup Shah explicates that the poorest 40 percent of the world's population accounts for 5 percent of global income. The richest 20 percent accounts for three-quarters of world income. A conservative estimate for 2010 finds that at least a third of all private financial wealth, and nearly half of all offshore wealth, is now owned by world's richest 91,000 people – just 0.001% of the world's population. See Shah, Anup. "Poverty Facts and Stats."*Global Issues*. 07 Jan. 2013. Web. 07 May. 2013. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>. Accessed in May 6, 2013.

[24] Peter C. Phan, "Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J. in Dialogue With Asian Theologians: What Can They Learn From Each Other?" in *Horizons* 32/1 (2005): 70.

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