
Intercultural Theology in the Multicultural Context of World Christianity: Issues, Insights, and Interactions¹

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Andrew Walls, Philips Jenkins, and other scholars of World Christianity acutely observe that the center of Christianity has shifted from the Global North to the Global South.² Although this shift is seen to have happened, America remains the center for world Christian theological education and migration. Therefore, students, refugees, and other people from the Global South come to America as pilgrims with their distinctive forms of political repression, ethnic marginalities, communal identities, and religio-cultural insights. Walls therefore calls Christianity a pilgrimage religion, which is wandering around the world without ceasing to indigenize at each homing culture.³ The aim of this article is to examine how the twin forces of 1) the shift of Christianity to the Global South as a world religion beyond the West and 2) the coming of Southern Christians to the North as pilgrims is generating the intercultural renaissance of World Christianity.

For many years, Southern Christians have been on the receiving side with Northern Christians on the giving side of theological insights. But as we are in the dawn of World Christianity, I argue that theology is to be understood as the intercultural “team game with the global players, and the referees are no longer the Global North theologians,”⁴ nor Global South Christians. Rather God

As a country of immigration, America is the world’s most multicultural nation in terms of religio-cultural and ethnic-linguistic diversity. Diverse people from the Global North and the Global South live in the same towns as the citizens, go to the same and different churches as the pilgrims, and study at the same institutions as learners.

is the only referee. Both the Global South and North theologians are to play theology under God’s direction by sharing their mutual issues and insights in the very process of interactions.

Multiculturality as the source for intercultural theology

The world is religiously pluralistic, culturally diverse and economically globalized. North America is a good example of a multicultural world. In her book *A New Religious America*, Diana Eck observes that America has become “the world’s most religiously diverse nation” (her book’s subtitle).⁵ As a country of immigration, America is the world’s most multicultural nation in terms of religio-cultural and ethnic-linguistic diversity. Diverse people

5. Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a Christian Country Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the “World Without End” conference at Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky, on January 27, 2017.

2. Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002), 84. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), xi–xiii.

3. Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement In Christian History: Studies in Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996), 53–54.

4. I draw upon insights from Christopher J.H. Wright’s endorsement in Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). Wright argues that “western academy is no longer a referee.”

from the Global North and the Global South live in the same towns as the citizens, go to the same and different churches as the pilgrims, and study at the same institutions as learners. As Alvin Padilla writes:

Learning to live well in the diverse culture of North America is no longer an option, but a necessity. The U.S. census estimates that in 2050 that proportion of the whites in the population will be only 53%. Our children will live and serve in a society in which their classmates, neighbors, fellow disciples of Christ will be equally divided whites and people of color. As new people move into our neighborhoods, the communities undoubtedly will change. The change could be haphazard and filled with misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and even violence, or the change could permit all to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves for the better.⁶

This poses a theological question of how multiculturalism and interculturalism are different from and related to each other.⁷ I would argue that multiculturalism recognizes the description of diverse cultures as God's greatest gifts to the world, whereas interculturalism emphasizes the prescriptive and methodological nature of how to interact with one another.⁸ In looking at multiculturalism as the source for intercultural theologies, Mark Cartledge and David Cheetham rightly argue that the word "inter," does not just refer to the exchanges of insights *between* two groups. It refers to an engagement with different expressions of theology both *between* and *betwixt* different groups.⁹ If they are right, we can think of intercultural theology as two-ways and multiple ways of interactions and *between* and *betwixt* people from different cultures.¹⁰ Intercultural theology is a result of how we see multiculturalism as "God's circumstantial will."¹¹ This reminds us to combine God's creation narrative with a Pentecost narrative. If creation narrative recognizes God as the creator of diverse cultures, Pentecost narrative (Acts 2:1-21) helps us understand how God affirms diversity as his greatest gift to the world.¹²

Based on this theological ground, I next address three forms of interculturalism in the multicultural context of three communities—church, society and academy.¹³ First, looking at the church

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as the global body of Christ, intercultural theology must recognize the importance of diverse expressions of God. Being baptized into one Christ and one faith (Eph 4:5), we become one body of Christ. But becoming one body of Christ does not mean becoming the same in all ways or uniformity. As Paul reminds us, we are one body of Christ with different gifts and ministries (1 Cor 12:5–31). Paul encourages the multicultural Christians to be united with one another by celebrating the different tongues for Christ. John also talks about the importance of glorying one Christ with different tongues, gifts, and languages (Rev 5:9; 7:9).¹⁴

The second form of intercultural community is society. Unlike the church, society is a larger community in which not only Christians, but also other faiths live. While the first form of community is Christ-body-based (1 Cor 12:27), the latter form of community is God's-image-based (Gen 1:27). No one comes into this world without cultural gifts. God created us to be equal with different gifts. Thus, Asian religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, play a role in cultivating Christian faith and developing intercultural theologies. I am not promoting a pluralistic theology of religions, which denies the unique role of Christ in the Trinity as both divine and human and in the economy of salvation. Rather, I am proposing an "embrasive theology of religions," which overcomes the "pluralistic, exclusive and inclusive theologies of religions."¹⁵ An embrasive theology of religions embodies the Christ who reaches out to us by embracing, not by destroying our human identity (Matt 5:17, John 1:14) and the Spirit who embraces people by speaking to them in their native languages (Acts 2:8).

An embrasive theology of religions allows us to engage the cultural "other" and to embrace their cultural otherness as God's gift to the world. Asian religions should not be seen as the mere occasion for conversion, but as neighbors to whom the moral insights and cultural gifts must be both given and received for a mutual transformation in a deeper knowledge of God (1 Cor 13:9) and in a thicker identity of ourselves.¹⁶ Intercultural hermeneutics

6. Arvin Padilla, "A New Kind of Theological School: Contextualized Theological Education Models," in *African Journal*, 2.2. (November 2012): 5–6.

7. Geoffrey Brahm Levey, "Interculturalism vs. Multiculturalism: A Distinction Without Difference?" in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 33.2. (April 2012): 217–224.

8. *Ibid.*, 217.

9. Mark J. Cartledge and David Cheetham, *Intercultural Theology: Approaches and Themes* (London: SCM Press, 2011), 2.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Leslie D. Weatherhead, *The Will of God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 27–47.

12. Amos Yong, "Toward A Trinitarian Theology of Religions: A Pentecostal-Evangelical and Missiological Elaboration," in *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, 40.4. (October 2016): 294–306.

13. I drew upon insights from David Tracy, "Three Kinds of

Publicness in Public Theology," in *International Journal of Public Theology*, 8/3. (2014): 330–334.

14. *Ibid.*, 299.

15. For a "threefold typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism," see Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism* (London: SCM, 1983), 10–105.

16. Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003), especially

emphasize that the intercultural and symbolic meanings of the gospel must be sought out between Christians and people of other faiths without compromise.¹⁷

Third, there is the need of intercultural disciplines in the academy. Southern students have been on the receiving side for many years with Northern Christians on the giving side. Here we need to address the liberation of theology. Liberation of theology is different from liberation theology. The latter tends to do with socio-political liberation, whereas the former tends to do with the erudite liberation. The idea of the erudite liberation of theology was developed by a Brazilian theologian Paulo Freire through his seminal book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.¹⁸ According to Freire, the pedagogy of the oppressed uses a hermeneutics of suspicion that reacts against “education from above,” which represents the interest of the powerful or the centrist. In theological institutions, some Global North theologians are not interested in “education from below” represented by marginal students from the Global South. They simply transfer their knowledge to students without learning insights from them. What is more painful is that students from the Global South go home with Western knowledge that is not practically relevant to their grassroots situations.

As Freire suggests, education has to start with the grassroots. It must take into account the contextual situation for theological articulation. Letting the marginal students speak in their own voices is the way to do liberating education within Western erudite theology. Liberation of education is not simply to be brought down to the marginal students, but to be initiated by the students themselves.¹⁹ I am not suggesting a student-centered theology. In order for intercultural liberation of theology to take place, I am rather suggesting subject-centered theology. Northern teachers and Southern students must interact with each other as subjects in a hospitable classroom. But since Southern students have been on the receiving side for many years, it is imperative for the Northern theologians to let students speak, to “reveal their hidden gifts, to affirm their cultural insights”²⁰ and to guide them methodologically.

Otherness, hospitality and border-crossing

In Western Christian traditions, the ‘other’ until the sixteenth century was ‘pagan,’ ‘unenlightened’ during the age of Enlightenment, ‘primitive’ in the nineteenth century, and ‘different’ in the twentieth century.²¹ Otherness,” the simple fact of being different

chapter 1, “The Experience of Migration as Source of Intercultural Theology in the United States.” See also Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practice and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2008).

17. Henning Wrogemann, *Intercultural Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2016), 31–34.

18. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Myra Bergman Ramos trans. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).

19. *Ibid.*, 39.

20. Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 61–64.

21. Noted in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Does the Trinity Belong in a Theology of Religions? One Angling in the Rubicon and the Identity of God,” in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*:

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challenges our intercultural interpretation of Gal 3:28. In this text, Paul says, “There are no longer Jews or Greeks (*no otherness of ethnicity*), no longer slave or free (*no otherness of class*); no longer male and female (*no otherness of sexism*).”²² But otherness, such as Asian-ness and American-ness remain. Then how should we Christians interpret Gal 3:28 through the lens of intercultural theologies?

Scholars read this text through two lenses. One is a social egalitarian reading and the other is a soteriological reading.²³ Paul’s intent is to see salvation as a right relation with God and with creatures. When God reconciles us into divine communion by destroying the wall of hostility (Eph 2:14–22), God does not destroy our differences but transforms them as oneness in Christ. Thus, otherness can be seen not as the dividing line between us and them, but as the identity-marker between us and them. What we need is to re-define salvation as a relational aspect of hospitality to the other. S. Mark Heim has helpfully combined a relational aspect of salvation with the identity of God as relational being.²⁴

Understanding salvation as a relational aspect of hospitality, our acceptance of the other is not optional but imperative for embodying the Triune God who is in relation to the world through Christ by the power of the Spirit (economic Trinity) without ceas-

Theological Essays on Culture and Religion (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 41–71. See Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

22. The italics are mine.

23. See Douglas A. Campbell, “Reconciliation in Paul: The Gospel of Negation and Transcendence in Galatians 3:28,” in Colin E. Gunton, ed., *The Theology of Reconciliation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 39–65. See also Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 213.

24. S. Mark Heim, *The Depths of Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 49.

ing to be transcendent God (immanent Trinity).²⁵ The relational images of the Trinity and the relational aspect of salvation as communion with other creatures demand our hospitality to the other across the borders. Jesus' incarnational act of border-crossing is a model. Two Asian scholars, Peter Phan²⁶ and Lalsangkima Pachuau²⁷ emphasize that the mission of God is deeply rooted in Jesus' act of border-crossing of reconciliation between heaven and earth, and divinity and humanity. Furthermore, I would argue that as Jesus becomes neighbor to us by crossing heaven-earth border, so our mission task is to become neighbors to the other by extending hospitality to them in a multicultural world.²⁸

Just as Jesus becomes a neighborly human without ceasing to be divine, Asian Christians choose to become neighbors to others, such as Americans, Africans, and Latin Americans without ceasing to maintain their Asian identities. If so, a theology of hospitality must produce at least three mission practices in a multicultural context.

First, hospitality opens up a free space where people of different cultures can enter, where strangers or enemies might be transformed into friends or neighbors. The focus is on a Christian invitation of the other into our hospitable community.²⁹ We must re-think mission not only as reaching out to the other in their community but also as receiving the other into our community. This twofold move of the church's hospitable mission embodies the economic trinitarian mission, which reaches out to us in Christ by the Spirit (John 3:16) and the immanent trinitarian mission, which reconciles us to the inner communion of love (2 Cor 5:18–20). If we confine mission to the act of reaching out, we are saying that only missionaries who are reaching out to the other in the far and foreign countries are participating in God's mission, and the rest of Christians are not. To say that the whole church is called to participate differently in God's mission, we must re-think the mission of the church from a twofold perspective of reaching out and receiving in.

Second, in terms of hospitality Christian mission involves not only the willingness to interact with strangers of different cultures, but also the risk of being vulnerable to and with them.³⁰ Thomas Ogletree is right when he says, "my readiness to welcome the other into my world is balanced by my readiness to enter the world of the other."³¹ Hospitality is a good idea but a risky practice. We must take seriously the dangers involved in opening oneself to

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strangers, while maintaining the moral necessity of hospitality to them. Just as Jesus Christ's coming into the world is costly, so our entering into the world of the other may also be costly.³² As Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us, following Christ in a real world as faithful disciples must be costly (Matt 16:24).³³

Third, hospitality involves a set of mutual relationships between hosts and guests; Christian mission involves us both as guests and hosts. Here I refer to my experience of studying in the U.S. In the context of theological institutions, Global North Christians are the analogies of the hosts, while Global South Christians are the guests. But when the Global North Christians come to the Global South, they in turn are to be the guests with the Global South Christians as the hosts in return. In either case, the church's hospitality to the guests is based on the realization that "Jesus is present in our guests and that, our guests become our hosts through Christ because Christ was once a guest and is now a host who invites everyone to join in His inclusive kingdom."³⁴

Amos Yong is right to say: "Christian mission means nothing more or less than participating in the hospitality of God."³⁵ As we participate in the hospitality of God, our mutual relationship with one another is imperative. The hosts are not the mere subjects for giving food. The guests are also to be seen as the providers of food. From an Asian social perspective, the guests are the mere objects for food. Asian cultures see hospitality as a one-way contribution, in which the hosts are always on the giving side. By contrast, Global North cultures see hospitality as a two-way contribution whereby the hosts and guests each contribute their resources. In this regard, I suggest that Asian Christians should learn from Global North Christians about hospitality as mutual relationship and as exchange of intercultural insights and resources for nourishment. On the other hand, the Global North Christians should also learn from Asians about the relational and communal identity of humans for overcoming their individualistic understanding.

25. Ibid., 125–126.

26. Peter C. Phan, "Crossing the Borders: A Spirituality for Mission in our Times from an Asian Perspective," *SEDOS Bulletin*, 35 (2003): 8–19.

27. Lalsangkima Pachuau, "Missiology in a Pluralistic World: The Place of Mission Study in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 89. (2000): 540–545.

28. Kosuke Koyama, "Extend Hospitality to Strangers: A Missiology of Theologica Crucis," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 20. 3. (1993), 165–176.

29. Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 132.

30. Ibid.

31. Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Strangers: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 4.

32. Ibid. See also Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 23.

33. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 41–56, 86–93.

34. Amy Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Source on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 51.

35. Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 131.

Marginality, majority, and liberation

Intercultural theology should also address the socio-political and racial issues of marginality, majority, and liberation. My intent is to explore two different examples of mission and to connect them in the context of marginality. One is the mission of Jesus and the other is the mission of the Good Samaritan. While the mission of Jesus is a movement from the center to the margin, the mission of the Good Samaritan is a movement from the margin to the center. Although Jesus and the Samaritan have different points of departure for mission, they have a common goal, that is, the gospel of liberation.

First, Jesus comes not as humanity in general, but as one marginalized from the center (heaven) to the marginal world.³⁶ Jesus' identity as a center-person is demonstrated in Peter's answer to the question of Jesus: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied: "The Messiah—who comes from heaven to the earth" (Mark 8:29). Jesus' mission is a movement from the center to the margin in terms of being identified with the marginal people and in terms of being crucified at the outside of Jerusalem (Heb 13:12). In his book, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*, Jung Young Lee helpfully defines the marginal Jesus as a paradigm of the marginal Asians in the U.S.³⁷ Lee contextualizes Jesus' incarnation as a divine immigration into the foreign world. This echoes God's call of Abraham as an immigrant in a foreign land (Gen 12).

Abraham and the Asian migrant Christians are analogous in their pilgrimage relationship with God. Just as Abraham built an altar to worship God (Gen 12:7; 13:4), so Asian migrant Christians build some churches to worship God. In short, Abrahamic and Christocentric migration and marginalization share analogous identities for some Global South migrant Christians in general and Asian migrant Christians in particular.³⁸

Next, I would like to address two different kinds of "gospel of liberation." The first is erudite liberation or what Juan Luis Segundo calls the "*liberation of theology*."³⁹ Liberation of theology attempts to liberate global South theologies from Western theology. In order to liberate theology, Global North and South scholars ought to see one another as conversation-partners and co-learners. In the past, Western theologians are the referees and other theologians are the mere objects for transmitting knowledge. However, in an age of World Christianity, the referees are, as Christopher Wright correctly argues, "no longer Western theologians."⁴⁰ It is imperative for us to see only God as the referee and "theology as

36. Robert S. Heaney, "Prospects and Problems for Evangelical Postcolonialism," in Kay Higuera Smith, Kayachitra Lalitha and L. Daniel Hawk, eds., *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2014), 29–44.

37. Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 83.

38. Ibid., 110–111. See also, Phan, *Christianity with Asian Face*, 3–25.

39. Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology*, John Drury, trans. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: 1976), 4–5.

40. See Wright's endorsement in Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*.

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an intercultural team game with the global players."⁴¹

The second is *theology of liberation* or *liberation theology*. This is a socio-political liberation. In response to this liberation, Gustavo Gutiérrez proposes a twofold way of speaking Christ: "One is meditative language and the other is prophetic language."⁴² Meditative language acknowledges the biblical image of God's preferential option for the margins, whereas the prophetic language resists the centrist powers who keep them in the unjust situation. According to Gutierrez, Christ opts for those on the margin, not because they are morally superior but because Christ is fundamentally compassionate to the margins—the least, the last, and the lost in the world of human injustice (Matt 25).

In addition, let us consider the mission of the Good Samaritan as an embodiment of the liberating mission of Jesus. Scholars read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) through two different lenses. Some read it through the lens of the Samaritan and the result is to employ the Samaritan as a model of the compassionate church. Some read it through the lens of the victim and the result is to employ the victim as the paradigm of the oppressed.⁴³ I find both hermeneutics relevant for the gospel of liberation. First, reading from the perspective of the Samaritan, I see two seminal themes for the purpose of intercultural theology. One is his willingness to cross the border and to become a neighborly liberator for the marginal victim. Many scholars admit that no one knows the exact identity of the wounded victim in the parable. This demands our compassionate act of border-crossing by extending healing to the wounded other regardless of whom it is.

In considering the second seminal theme, look at the Samaritan's willingness to break the boundary for healing the marginal victim, which challenges the centrist and majority people for their hesitation to break the borders of race, ethnicity, and religiosity. In the parable, we see how the centrist religious leaders, such as the Levite and the Priest, refused to cross the borders and become neighborly healers for the wounded victim. They refused to move from their centrist positions to the marginalized situations. This

41. Ibid.

42. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987), 94.

43. Yong Yeon-Hwang, "The Person Attacked by the Robbers is Christ, An Exploration of Subjectivity from the Perspective of Minjung Theology," in Yung Suk Kim and Jin-Ho Kim, eds., *Reading Minjung Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Selected Writings by Ahn Byung-Mu and Modern Critical Responses* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 215–231.

As we embody the Samaritan and Jesus, the church's mission must be grounded in a twofold sense of orthopathy (heart) and orthopraxy (hand). God's mission begins with compassion (heart) and it flows to God's economic action of healing (hand).

contrasts the mission of Jesus. As participating in Christ's preferential option for the margins in a world of injustice, our task is to cross the borders and to extend our compassion to those who experience marginality. Joel Green is right in saying "neighborly love that knows no boundaries practiced by [the] Samaritan is a model for the contemporary church."⁴⁴ A Samaritan is an embodiment of the merciful Christ. As we embody the Samaritan and Jesus, the church's mission must be grounded in a twofold sense of orthopathy (heart) and orthopraxy (hand). God's mission begins with compassion (heart) and it flows to God's economic action of healing (hand).

In addition, reading from the perspective of the wounded victim, our task is not to treat marginal people as the objects who receive charitable works from the rich but to treat them as the subjects who receive empowerment from us. By empowering the margins, they would come to voice to speak against their centrist oppressors and to name their structural power as sin. The ultimate goal of the margins' active voice speaking to their centrist oppressors is the mutual benefit that I would call "inclusive and inter-liberation." By this, I mean liberation theology is not only for the oppressed but also for the oppressors. Both groups need to be liberated. The oppressed need to be liberated from the sin of socio-political domination by the centrists, whereas the oppressors also need to be liberated from their oppressive sin. According to Jürgen Moltmann, "liberation of the oppressors is psychological liberation and liberation of the oppressed is socio-political liberation."⁴⁵ In line with Moltmann, I contend that God is interested in mutual and inter-liberation of both the oppressed and oppressors.⁴⁶

If "God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rains on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt 5:45), God's prophetic act of resisting against the oppressors must be

beneficial both for the oppressed minority and the oppressive majority.⁴⁷ The question we must ask is: liberation for what? Liberation theologians focus exclusively on liberation *from*, yet they never pause to ask: liberation *for* what? The ultimate goal of liberation is *for* building a reconciled and beloved community in which the oppressed will live side by side with the oppressors, rather than to nurture the exclusive visions of winners and losers that promote hatred. This relates to the prophet Isaiah's apocalyptic vision: the wolf and lamb shall lie down (Isa 11:6). The lamb symbolizes the oppressed and the wolf represents the oppressors.⁴⁸

Conclusion

It is true that the center of Christianity has shifted to the Global South. But it is wrong to assume that Christianity is the religion of the Global South only. To put it simply, the term "World Christianity" does not exclusively belong to the Global South. From a typographical perspective, we could argue that Christianity is not just the religion of one, two, or three regions. It is a universal and world religion.⁴⁹ In describing Christianity as a universal or world religion, I do not prioritize South Christianity over North Christianity nor do I classify theology in the South as better than theology in the North. My proposal is to see intercultural theology as the result of the collaborative works between and betwixt Global North and Global South Christians. I suggested that they take the issues of multiculturalism, hospitality, otherness, marginality, majority, and liberation seriously in the threefold context of church, academy, and society.

As we live in a multicultural world, a monolithic notion of intracultural theology (theology done within one's own single stream of dominant tradition) and of cross-cultural theology (theology done by crossing different cultures without interactions) are no longer acceptable. What we need is intercultural theology: theology done through the theological, biblical, and cultural exchange of different insights. The future of World Christianity depends not only on the power of God's cosmic work but also on the cooperative interactions between and betwixt global Christians from the North, South, West, and East. May our conversations on the issues of World Christianity continue as methodological guides for doing intercultural modes of global and local theologies!

44. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 426.

45. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 419–494.

46. Along these lines, see David Thang Moe, "Sin and Suffering: The Hermeneutics of Liberation Theology," in *Asia Journal of Theology*, 30.2. (October 2016): 208–225.

47. *Ibid.*, 223.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion: An Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 1.