

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Bridging Tradition and Modernity in the Asian Context

In this issue, we are privileged to present a diverse collection of scholarly articles that delve into significant intersections between religion, ecology, culture, and social communication. These contributions present multifaceted insights and reflections on contemporary concerns and challenges at the local and global level. Reading through the entire issue, one will discover that these articles reflect the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, spirituality and ecology, and culture and technology. They invite us to engage with pressing contemporary issues through new lenses and explore the transformative potential of religious and cultural values along with philosophical insights in shaping sustainable, just, and compassionate societies.

George Canilao Tumbali's "Exploring Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Kalinga Province: Practices, Preservation, and Perspectives" examines the profound connection between the Kalinga community and their natural environment. The paper demonstrates how sustainable resource management and the preservation of traditional knowledge can be carried out amidst the forces of globalization and modernization. It reinforces what many have recognized as the importance of integrating traditional ecological wisdom with modern scientific approaches to address environmental issues effectively. It also calls for the inclusion of TEK in educational curricula to inspire environmental consciousness and collective responsibility.

James Lee D. Wanchakan, in "A Comparative Study of the Peace Concept of Christ in Colossians 1:15-23 and the Peace Pact Concept of Lumawig in Bontoc Mountain Province, Philippines," bridges theological and cultural hermeneutics by comparing the mediatorial peace concept of Christ with the Indigenous peace pact Pechen concept of Lumawig. The study suggests that many Indigenous cultures have approaches for addressing societal conflicts that ought to be considered when devising peacemaking initiatives. This comparative approach underscores the potential of integrating Indigenous justice systems into efforts towards global peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Tuan Viet Cao, in “Eco-spirituality in Papua New Guinea’s Traditional Beliefs and Christian Teachings: A Response to the Contemporary Ecological Crisis,” explores the synergy between Indigenous eco-spiritual beliefs and Christian teachings in the context of Papua New Guinea. The author’s analysis offers valuable insights into how these spiritual perspectives can inspire sustainable environmental practices and policies, fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and the cosmos.

Joefrey M. Almazan and Kurt Wanas Klyde Peningeo’s article, “*Daga mi kataguan mi: Discoursing Laudato Si’*: Toward a More Meaningful Indigenous Theology of Land in the Cordilleras,” raises critical discussions on Indigenous land rights and theology. Drawing on the principles of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, the study advocates for a theology of land that respects Indigenous cultures and promotes dialogue in the face of developmental challenges. The article underscores the profound cultural and existential significance of land for Indigenous communities.

Joernie Mar U. Bistol’s exploration of “The Authenticity of Cultural Ways of Life: A Hermeneutic of the Ifugao Social Practice Gotad” provides a nuanced understanding of cultural authenticity through the lens of hermeneutics. By examining the Ifugao Gotad practice, the study reveals how cultural traditions can be recontextualized to address contemporary challenges while maintaining their transcendent authority and meaning.

Edson Real’s “Cybertheology from a Theoretical Approach: Conceptual Considerations and Proposals” delves into the relatively new and rapidly evolving field of cybertheology. The article analyzes how digital technologies transform faith, pastoral actions, and religious experiences. By proposing cybernetics as an epistemological basis, the article facilitates interdisciplinary dialogue and offers critical perspectives on the ethical and theological dimensions of technology.

Jedu Arcaina’s “The Role of the Catholic Church in the Philippines on Youth Development: A Revisit of Badiou’s Existential Philosophy” examines the Church’s mission in empowering Filipino youth amidst the challenges of globalization. Drawing on Badiou’s existential philosophy, the article highlights the Church’s role in fostering meaningful existence, spirituality, and social justice among young people, promoting transformative development rooted in truth and active citizenship.

Finally, Elvis P. Ballacay Jr., in “Edith Stein’s Phenomenology of Empathy in Parish Ministry,” proposes that Edith Stein’s philosophical insights can help to enhance interpersonal relationships within Catholic

parish ministry. By emphasizing empathy as foundational to intersubjectivity, the study provides a holistic paradigm for fostering understanding and values in parish communities, addressing challenges in pastoral communication and relationships.

Based on these brief introductions, the reader can see that this issue serves as an invitation to dialogue, reflection, and action. The insights offered here blend theory with praxis, enhancing both academic discourse and practical applications in these vital areas. In the global context, the themes explored in this issue underscore the universal relevance of religion and culture as instruments of transformative change. The studies highlight how traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom, Indigenous practices, and theological insights can inform global strategies for sustainable development, conflict resolution, and environmental safeguarding.

By integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary frameworks, these contributions offer possibilities for approaches to address ecological crises and social injustices that transcend national and geographical boundaries. The interdisciplinary nature of these studies echoes the call for more robust and intentional global dialogue and collaborative efforts to harmonize spiritual, cultural, and technological dimensions in addressing humanity's shared challenges. As digital technologies continue to make their impact on culture, redefine religious experiences, and present a challenge for more creative pastoral responses from religious leaders, the reflections on cybertheology provide a critical framework for navigating the ethical and theological implications of our increasingly interconnected world.

As always, the journal prioritizes topics directly related to the Asian religious, cultural, and social milieu. In the Asian context, these articles highlight the region's rich and dynamic cultural and spiritual heritage. The emphasis on Indigenous practices, land theology, and eco-spirituality reflects the lived realities of Asian communities, where religion and culture are intricately—and often inextricably—woven into daily life. The insistence on integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific and theological perspectives addresses the unique challenges faced by Asian societies, such as rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and cultural disintegration.

While Western philosophical and theological frameworks continue to influence Asian scholarship (as reflected in several articles in this issue), Asian scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of engaging with the region's diverse spiritualities and religious traditions to develop

contextually relevant theological and ecological frameworks. Ultimately, this discourse challenges dominant paradigms by re-centering the voices and experiences of the peoples of Asia, proposing a vision of development and theology that is not only sustainable but also deeply interconnected with the spiritual and cultural dimensions of life in the region.

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