

THE MANY FACES OF
JESUS CHRIST

Intercultural Christology

Revised Edition

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ORBIS  BOOKS
Maryknoll, New York 10545

INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION

After twenty years, my first question is, of course, whether it makes sense to republish this book as is or whether it needs revision. Since the publication of the German original (1999) and the translation for the English-speaking world (2001),¹ however, it is not so much the theologians presented and their reception that have changed,² but rather the contexts themselves. The oeuvre of the “grand old men” portrayed here was already available at the time of the first publication. They had made their contribution, and even if some of them published something afterward,³ this no longer has any effect on the overall picture. However, the second question remains whether their theology still fits into the present time or the respective context. The credo

¹ Translations into Dutch (2012) and Indonesian (2014) followed.

² The monographic literature since then is very manageable and, despite occasional variation in detail, remains within the field of discourse marked out here. It can be roughly categorized into studies on individual theologians, Christological models, images or titles, and continents. A rough review of the articles published in journals and anthologies does not change this assessment. I mention here: Wilhelm Richebächer, *Religionswechsel und Christologie. Christliche Theologie in Ostafrika vor dem Hintergrund religiöser Syntheseprozesse*, Neuendettelsau 2003 and Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa. Voices of Contemporary African Christology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2004, which focus on regional specifics within Subsaharan Africa and look at reception in the churches. For Asia, Michael Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2006, and John Parratt, *The Other Jesus. Christology in Asian Perspective*, Frankfurt a. M. etc. 2012 provide overviews along the lines of familiar models. Two new English-language textbook series are distinguished by their evangelical or ecumenical orientation (cf. on these categories Volker Küster, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, Göttingen 2011, § 1). In *Jesus without Borders. Christology in the Majority World*, Gene L. Green et al. (eds.), Grand Rapids 2014 published in the *Majority World Theology Series* by Eerdmans, evangelical authors write; *African Theology on the Way. Current Conversations*, Diane B. Stinton (ed.), Philadelphia 2015 and *Asian Theology on the Way. Christianity, Culture and Context*, Peniel Rajkumar (ed.), Philadelphia 2015, both *International Study Guides* published by Fortress Press are aimed at a liberal, ecumenically minded audience.

³ Cf., e.g., C. S. Song, *The Believing Heart. An Invitation to Story Theology*, Minneapolis 1999; id., *In the Beginning were Stories, Not Texts. Story Theology*, Cambridge, UK 2012.

of the contextualization project is that a contextual theology must change when the context changes.⁴ I have shown how this applies to the exemplary case of South Korean Minjung theology, which I have permanently accompanied with my research since a study visit in Seoul in 1987–1988.⁵

A Look Back

At the same time, in retrospect, the book itself proves to be a product of its time. In my dissertation *Theologie im Kontext. Zugleich ein Versuch über die Minjung Theologie* (1995), I had turned to the local, but with my third book *Die vielen Gesichter Jesu Christi. Christologie interkulturell* (1999), the pendulum swung in the direction of the global. This movement can be observed in parallel in the writings of my late Catholic colleague Robert Schreier. His *Constructing Local Theologies* (1985) was, at the time I began my doctoral work, one of the few theoretical reflections on the subject matter available to me. Instead of focusing entirely on Minjung theology and its exponents in the Korean context, as I had originally planned, I then decided to contribute to the theory of contextual theology myself. At that time, I came to the conclusion that we must necessarily place an intercultural theology alongside the contextual theologies, which mediates “between” the different contextual concepts. In this respect, it is important to take a step toward its further development by focusing on the case of Christology.

In the meantime, I have further expanded these considerations theoretically and materially with my book *Einführung in die interkulturelle Theologie* (2011). Contrary to my original conviction that the “query” of other dogmatic topoi would have little chance of success, I have thereby in the third part attempted to collate how the fabric of the generative

⁴ A successful example from the circle of my protagonists is Allan Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience. African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics*, Stellenbosch 2005; cf. id. and Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Radical Reconciliation. Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2012 (see chapter 10).

⁵ Cf. Volker Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion. Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, Leiden 2010; id. and Jin-Kwan Kwon (eds.), *Minjung Theology Today. Contextual and Intercultural Perspectives*, Leipzig 2018; id., Another Child of Conflict—Korean Minjung Theology and the Cold War in Asia, in: Philip L. Wickeri (ed.), *Unfinished History. Christianity and the Cold War in East Asia*, Leipzig 2016, 249–73; id., Eine Protestantische Theologie der Passion. Minjung-Theologie heute, in: *Wort und Antwort* 60, 2019, 156–62.

themes of Christian faith has changed under the influence of contextual theologies.

In 1997, Schreiter published his own reaction to the new awakened universalism, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*.⁶ In retrospect, the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) appears to us as the symbolic manifestation of an epochal turning point, which Schreiter characterized as the end of the bipolar world order, the spread of neoliberal consumer capitalism made possible by it, and the simultaneous compression of the world through the new communication technologies. My own experience sheds light on this. When I lived in Seoul for a year in 1987–1988—still at the time of the military dictatorship—to study Minjung theology in its own context, I was little prepared for the constant questions about German reunification. I found that Korean Christians, to my great surprise, prayed for the reunification of their divided country in almost every church service. My answer at the time was that I considered the reunification of Germany in my generation to be out of the question. Not only was this met with incomprehension, but it was also proved wrong by history only a year later.

The exploitation of young female Korean workers in the textile industry, from which German clothing discounters also profited, was one of the triggers of the theological discourse of resistance. In the meantime, South Korea, which has long since become a leading industrial nation, outsources production to low-wage countries in Southeast Asia, while benefiting from a growing number of migrant workers with temporary residence permits for the so-called 3D-jobs (dirty, dangerous, and demanding).

Communication with my family and, after my return, with my friends in Korea, was still extremely strenuous at that time; letters took at least two weeks; so, if I answered quickly, I had to wait a month for a response in each case. Telephone calls were expensive, and even a fax machine was not readily available. Today, we rely on fast e-mail communication, and we use zoom, social media, or discount dialing codes to make phone calls to the Third World more cheaply than making calls in our own village at a local landline rate.

The third question finally was whether the intercultural theological developments in Christology should be added in the form of new

⁶ Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity. Theology between the Global and the Local*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1997; cf. Volker Küster, Von der lokalen Theologie zur neuen Katholizität. Robert J. Schreiter's Suche nach einer Theologie zwischen dem Lokalen und dem Globalen, in: *Evangelische Theologie* 63, 2003, 362–74.

chapters. In the end, I decided to hold up a mirror to the grand old men with the help of the Christology of Third World women and their diaspora (chapter 13). Otherwise, I have left the body of the book as it is, except for minor editorial adjustments and additions to the literature in the notes. It certainly comes across today as more theological-historical, making it clear that Africa, Asia, and Latin America not only have their own church history “in the continents,”⁷ but that in developing their own theological dynamics, they also contribute to the global theological discourse.⁸ Indeed, they have produced “global theological flows” such as liberation theologies.⁹ The book retains its validity as a snapshot and compendium of the first generation of contextual theologians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The generational change I mentioned in the introduction to the first edition can be seen most strikingly in regard to the women of the second generation. The third and already fourth generation of contextual theologians are much more difficult to distinguish and categorize.¹⁰ On the one hand, there is the work of cosmopolitan intellectuals, such as Kwok Pui-Lan or R. S. Sugirtharajah, who, in the tradition of C. S. Song and Kosuke Koyama, pursue a postcolonial theology in the academic institutions of the North Atlantic hemisphere. On the other hand, there are a large number of internationally little-known global theologians who enjoyed parts of their education in the West but in some cases already in South-South exchange. Even if they write in English, their works are mostly published by local or regional journals and publishers.

The neoconservative myth of the end of liberation theologies and with them of contextual theologies as a whole¹¹ has led, at least in Europe, to

⁷ On the discussion in mission historiography, cf. Volker Küster, German Writings on the History of Mission: A Review of Some Recent Publications in the Light of General Trends, in: *Exchange* 40, 2011, 369–73; here: Karl Müller and Werner Ustorf (eds.), *Einleitung in die Missionsgeschichte. Tradition, Situation und Dynamik des Christentums*, Stuttgart 1995.

⁸ Johann Baptist Metz, Im Aufbruch zu einer kulturell polyzentrischen Weltkirche, in: Franz-Xaver Kaufmann and Johann Baptist Metz, *Zukunftsfähigkeit. Suchbewegungen im Christentum*, Freiburg im Br. 1987, 93–123, speaks of a “culturally polycentric world church.”

⁹ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 15f.

¹⁰ A similar point can be made about the distinction between different waves in feminist theology.

¹¹ After the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the “second world,” the plausibility of the term “third world” was also called into question. In analogy to “the end of

their elimination from theological curricula. Since the mid-1990s, hardly anything has been translated into German, Dutch, or French. In the United States, the situation seems more diverse at first glance, but on closer inspection, the discourses turn out to be highly segregated. Kwok Pui-Lan and Jörg Rieger argue that this is deliberately exploited by the system of neoliberal capitalism to divide the opposition, and they call for a “deep solidarity” that can endure diversity.¹² Against the trend of global interconnectedness and real-time communication flows, the project of intercultural theology also threatens to fall into provincialism and confessional retribalization, to the detriment of the global narrative and interpretive community of the Christian faith.

Thus, it remains for me to clarify in this introduction how the field of discourse has changed methodologically and in terms of content since then. I will do this under the headings of Other Perspectives, Places, Genders, and Forms, and I will also relate this to my own biography as a researcher, for my engagement with contextual and intercultural theology has, after all, continued over the past twenty years.

Other Perspectives

As we have said, the contexts have changed. This is most evident in the field of liberation theologies. Both the military dictatorships in the countries of Latin America, as well as in South Korea, and the apartheid regime in South Africa have been replaced by young democracies. At the same time, the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. While Indian Dalit and Japanese Burakumin theology continue to denounce existing grievances and therefore function according to old mechanisms, in South Africa, black theologians flanked by white ones turn to the new generative themes of reconciliation,

history” (Francis Fukuyama) leftist theorists like Ulrich Menzel, *Das Ende der Dritten Welt und das Scheitern der großen Theorie*, Frankfurt a.M. 1992 postulated “the end of the Third World.” However, I consider “Third World” as a strategic term, as the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) might have seen it similarly, which continues to use this self-designation. The structures of the Cold War still have an effect today. As an alternative I sometimes use the somewhat opaque term “Global South.”

¹² Cf. Joerg Rieger and Kwok Pui-Lan, *Occupy Religion. Theology of the Multitude*, Lanham etc. 2013, 69 and 87; reviewed by Volker Küster, Kwok Pui-Lan, *Globalization, Gender and Peacebuilding: The Future of Interfaith Dialogue*, Joerg Rieger and Kwok Pui-Lan, *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude*, in: *Exchange* 46, 2017, 317–19.

reconstruction, and reparation. Liberation theology in Latin America has certainly become more differentiated globally, but it is hardly received internationally. In South Korea, on the other hand, the new theological point of departure has been a long time coming.¹³

In post-apartheid South Africa, the protagonists of black theology have succeeded in transforming it and continuing its relevance. This was certainly supported by the fact that some of them, such as Frank Chikane, assumed political responsibility in the new government, while Desmond Tutu was appointed chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) by President Nelson Mandela. This commission was supposed to find a third way between a tribunal and general amnesty. Amnesty was to be granted to those who confessed to their deeds. Sharp criticism of the TRC came from within its own ranks. Allan Boesak, who, with Tutu, was one of the fathers of the South African variant of black theology, speaks of “an almost calculated kind of emotional blackmail.”

If you did not forgive your torturer, you were made to feel as if there was something wrong with you. [...] There is a place for rightful anger. [...] So far, only forgiveness by the victims has been truly realized. All the other elements without which reconciliation cannot be genuine—restitution, reparation, restoration, justice—are left to languish on the ash heap of the stories, told, listened to, not acted upon, and forgotten.¹⁴

Tutu himself, as TRC chairman, was continually impressed by the victims’ will to forgive. “The most forgiving people I have ever come across are people who have suffered—it is as if suffering has ripped them open into empathy. I am talking about wounded healers.”¹⁵ At the same time, he was outraged by the lack of remorse shown by those responsible for their actions.¹⁶ Tutu also shares Boesak’s critical view of the results of the TRC process in many respects.¹⁷ Nevertheless, he argues differently than Boesak: “If the victim

¹³ Cf. Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion*; id. and Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*.

¹⁴ Allan A. Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, 195–98; cf. 173, 175, and 185; Volker Küster, *God/Terror. Ethics and Aesthetics in Contexts of Conflict and Reconciliation*, Sheffield 2021, 76–78.

¹⁵ Tutu quoted in Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull*, London etc. 1999, 24.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 239. Antjie Krog repeatedly expresses her shame about this imbalance in her book.

¹⁷ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, London etc. 1999, 58, 138, 184–89.

could forgive only when the culprit confessed, then the victim would be locked into the culprit's whim, locked into victimhood, whatever her own attitude or intention."¹⁸

This view is confirmed again and again by the statements of those affected. It therefore makes sense to speak of self-reconciliation or self-acceptance, since it has already been expressed in the slogan "Black is beautiful." The psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon, one of the fathers of postcolonial critique, had referred back to the work of Sigmund Freud in speaking of the victims having internalized the perspective of the oppressors.¹⁹ This foreign determination in self-perception must first be overcome in self-acceptance, reconciliation with oneself.²⁰ But how can the category of self-reconciliation I have introduced be understood from a Christological vantage point? The suffering presence of God in Jesus Christ, the narrative that God took shape in poverty and oppression, recognizes that human beings have a dignity before God and their fellow human beings that is contrafactual to their life circumstances. Not "dying for" but "dying with" thus becomes the message of salvation. The overall focus of liberation theologies has shifted toward justice and the intersectionality of different forms of oppression such as the classical triad of race, class, gender.²¹

Globalization is often wrongly perceived as a mere socioeconomic and political phenomenon. Despite postcolonial critiques and empire theories, liberation theologians find it hard enough to defy the "new complexity (*neue Unübersichtlichkeit*)" (Jürgen Habermas). The strategy of global consumer capitalism to create a hyperculture through "Coca-colonization" and "McDonaldization" in which products can be marketed even more easily did not work out. Cultures and religions have turned out to be discourses of resistance, which, however, often tip over into fundamentalist extremes. In this respect, the theologies of inculturation and dialogue, which are oriented toward exchange and dialogue, must also be

¹⁸ Tutu, *No Future*, 220.

¹⁹ Cf. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York 1967 [French 1952]; id., *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York 1963 [French 1961].

²⁰ Similar early on Allan Aubrey Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence. A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1977, 92f. Cf. James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, New York 1969, 19f. For Latin America, cf. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York 1970 [Spanish 1968] and his concept of *conscientization*.

²¹ The concept of intersectionality was introduced into the discourse by the Afro-American lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw.

differentiated in order to locate the Christian faith in the cultural-religious pluralism that has become even more complex.²²

September 11, 2001, briefly brought the theologies of dialogue into the center of attention. Even if dialogue would be overburdened as the solution or even a means of preventing interreligious conflicts, today it can only be thought of in the context of fundamentalism and terror.²³ In the Catholic sphere, there have been a number of attempts to bridge the gap between contextual theologies and the church with the help of inculturation as a “pastoral strategy,” in the spirit of the liturgical reform of Vatican II.²⁴ In Latin America, inculturation theology was thereby merged with liberation theology; in Asia and Africa, the ties were tightened with dialogue theology. However, a satisfactory answer to the changed cultural-religious framework has yet to be found.

The transformation processes outlined above have at least three structural consequences for contextual theologies:²⁵

- *From monoculture to hybridity.*

The concept of culture is much more differentiated today than it was in the early days of contextual theologies. Cultures are complex entities that are in permanent interaction with each other and encompass various subcultures. Nevertheless, distinct cultural identities still exist; we are only increasingly aware of their hybridity. Instead of indulging in the domination of Western modernity, we need to acknowledge the current plurality of modernities. Korean, Japanese, or Chinese expressions of modernity process local influences just as much as Brazilian or Ghanaian modernity, to name just a few examples.

- *From localization to deterritorialization.*

With global migration flows, diaspora has become a way of life for many. Originally closely associated with the Jewish people scattered throughout the world, the term now refers to migrant communities in general.

²² Cf. Mika Vähäkangas, *Contextuality, Plurality and Truth. Theology in World Christianities*, Eugene, Oregon 2020.

²³ Cf. Küster, *Einführung*, § 5; id., *God/Terror*.

²⁴ Diego Irarrázaval, *Inculturation. New Dawn of the Church in Latin America*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2000, 5; cf. Küster, *Einführung*, 91.

²⁵ Cf. Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 26f.

- *From community-centeredness to multiple affiliation.*

Liberation theologies were originally often theological movements representing the interests of a community. Inculturation and dialogue theologies, in contrast, are the thought structures of individuals, which nevertheless remain related to a Christian community and its respective cultural-religious environment. Due to migration and the hybridization of our life worlds, people today often belong to different communities. Intercultural and interreligious marriages, for example, are increasingly common.²⁶ With which community does such a young couple belong; with which will their children identify? In South Korea, which twenty years ago was still one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world, about 10% of marriages today are international.²⁷ In traditional settler and immigrant societies like the United States, this has long been commonplace. The countries of Western Europe have also become multi-cultural societies since the 1950s due to their colonial heritage and labor migration.

After feminism and cultural studies, postcolonial criticism has been another universalist-oriented theory to enter the discourse of contextualization. Just as contextual theology was once postcolonial theology *avant la lettre*, intercultural theology has anticipated the discourses of intersectionality that are only slowly seeping into theology. In this respect, contextual and intercultural theology are becoming more and more interwoven. The trend clearly points from contextualization to glocalization.²⁸

Other Places

The work of James Cone, proponent of North American diaspora theologies, was already prominently represented in the first edition. This boundary crossing between Third World theologies and the North Atlantic theo-

²⁶ Cf. Virgilio Elizondo, *The Future is Mestizo. Life Where Cultures Meet*, rev. ed. Boulder, Colorado 2000.

²⁷ Cf. Joo-Mee Hur, Theological Reflections on Migrant Married Women in South Korea, in: *Towards Theology of Justice for Life in Peace* (Minjung-Dalit Theological Dialogue), Bangalore 2012, 275–83; id., Embarking on a Theological Journey with Literature—A Confluence of Two Stories of Migrant Brides, in: *Minjung Theology Today*, 127–44.

²⁸ Cf. Volker Küster, From Contextualization to Glocalization. Intercultural Theology and Postcolonial Critique, in: *Exchange* 45, 2016, 203–26; id., *Einführung*, § 2.

logical world seemed inevitable because of the overlap in content of black theology in the United States and South Africa. It was necessary to clarify any dependency relationships. Cone himself had already addressed his diaspora situation and “double identity” as a black U.S. citizen and descendant of African slaves at the 1977 Pan-African Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) conference in Accra, Ghana.²⁹ Conversely, Allan Boesak, one of the central figures of South African Black Theology, has dealt intensively with Cone’s theological thought in his Kampen dissertation. Cone’s student Dwight Hopkins has then gone the other way, “Back to Africa.”³⁰ Hopkins chooses culture and politics as the two foci of his investigation, which traces past encounters and analyzes interviews with key representatives of the two movements in the United States and South Africa. He also concludes that, on closer inspection, South Africa’s black theology emerges as a related but thoroughly distinct movement.³¹

Alongside James Cone, Virgilio Elizondo and George Tinker were also involved early on in EATWOT’s work as contextual theologians from the United States, although their diaspora status was long disputed. However, for Hispanic or Latinx theologians, as they like to call themselves today, of both Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, Elizondo was able to clarify early on that they had been colonized twice, first by the Spanish in the sixteenth century and then a second time by the United States in the nineteenth century. They did not immigrate, but the United States moved its borders and pocketed them. Already in *Galilean Journey*, Elizondo has also made an independent contribution to Christology.³² Jesus is a frontiersman, possibly the son of a soldier of the Roman occupation force, as he later has speculated.³³ Thus, as in other contextual Christologies, Jesus becomes a

²⁹ Cf. James Cone, A Black American Perspective on the Future of African Theology, in: *African Theology en Route*, Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (eds.), Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1979, 176–86, 178.

³⁰ Dwight Hopkins, *Black Theology USA and South Africa*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1989; cf. the doctoral dissertation of his fellow student Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology. Inculturation and Liberation*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1993 also written under the supervision of James Cone.

³¹ Cf. Hopkins, *Black Theology*, 2.

³² Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey. The Mexican-American Promise*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2000 [1983]. The description of Galilee as a borderland is similarly found in Minjung theology (see chapter 11).

³³ Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizio*, 77–79; id., *A God of Incredible Surprises. Jesus of Galilee*, Lanham 2003, 21–31.

representative of one's own identity, in this case the *mestizaje*. In the theological frame of reference of diaspora theologies an exemplary work can be the book of the Korean-American theologian Jung-Young Lee who, similar to Elizondo, describes Jesus as a marginalized man.³⁴

The determinants of Jesus's marginality, class, economic, political, social, and ethnic orientations made him the marginal person *par excellence*, so the stories of incarnation ought to be interpreted from the perspective of marginality.³⁵

That even Tink Tinker, representing indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, was excluded by EATWOT as a U.S. citizen, although the indigenous ancestors narrowly escaped genocide at the hands of white conquerors and demanded recognition as nations in their own right, highlights a blind spot in the perceptions of the first generation of contextual theologians. Neither indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities nor women were initially in the picture. Native American theology, then, vacillates between Christian faith and a return to traditional religion. There are approaches to incorporate Jesus Christ as Trickster, who is subversive and transcends boundaries, or Corn Mother, who gives life up in self-sacrifice.³⁶ Overall, however, it is the doctrine of God rather than Christology that is more appropriate as a link between the two religious frames of reference. The argument is, then, as in African and Asian theologies, that God is present from the beginning in the creation and thus always in the respective context; what is newly added from "outside," mostly in the course of the colonial project of the West, is then the message of Jesus Christ. The image of the cosmic Christ again transcends this view, because it also anticipates Jesus Christ as always present.

Diaspora theologies are related to their countries of origin in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to varying degrees, but at the same time, they

³⁴ Cf. in cultural sociology the work on the *marginal man* by Robert Ezra Park, Human Migration and the Marginal Man, in: *American Journal of Sociology* 33, 1928, 881–93 and his student Everett V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man. A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York 1961 [1937].

³⁵ Lee, *Marginality*, 79; cf. 97.

³⁶ Cf. George E. "Tink" Tinker, *American Indian Liberation. A Theology of Sovereignty*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2008, 84–111; id., et al., *A Native American Theology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2001, 62–84 and 113–25.

develop their own field of discourse, which is a desideratum of research. This is a gap that I hope to fill soon with an introduction to the contextual theologies of the United States. Because the intersection with the Christologies of the Global South is most distinct in black theology, diaspora theologies are thus adequately represented here by the inclusion of James Cone.

Other Genders

Initially the most burning question for me in delimiting my reference group was whether to include a chapter on women's Christology or not. In the end, I refrained from doing so, pointing out that the first generation of contextual theology was indeed still "a men's world" and that women had to struggle for their place. This was mainly due to the conviction that at the time of writing, the theology of women from the Global South had already outstripped men in its creativity and productivity and that a separate monograph would have been needed to do justice to this wealth. In the meantime, womanist and *mujerista* or Latinx theologies have established themselves in the diaspora.

The women from the countries of the Global South and their diaspora have meanwhile found their own way between Western feminist theology of white women and the contextual theologies of their compatriots.³⁷ They are not so much concerned with the soteriological question of Western feminists as to whether a male redeemer can redeem women, but for them Jesus is a man in solidarity with women as the "oppressed of the oppressed." This is now further elaborated in the newly added chapter 13. Here I put the accent on the question of similarities and differences. The Christology of the grand old men thus appears in the mirror of a young self-confident generation of female theologians. A further issue I have been struggling with in this contrasting juxtaposition is inclusive language regarding God-talk. For me God is non-gendered, beyond binary conceptions. In the discourse worlds that I am exploring here however, the first generation certainly is referring to male conceptions of God, without even reflecting this. This is challenged by

³⁷ Many of the early works show a skepticism toward the designation "feminist." As a consequence, theology of women, womanist, or *mujerista* theology was used. Intercultural feminist theology could conceptually express diversity in the return of younger writers to feminism as a strategic term. Cf. Kwok Pui-Lan, *Feminist Theology as Intercultural Discourse*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, Cambridge 2002, 23–39; *Feminist Intercultural Theology. Latina Explorations for a Just World*, María Pilar Aquino and María José-Rosado-Nuñez (eds.), Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2007.

the second generation women theologians. After some consideration I did not change the last remaining male references hidden in the translation as a reminder that this is an unfinished agenda.

The scholarly reappraisal and reception in Western academic discourse that I called for at the time has, with exceptions, remained a desideratum, as it has with their male colleagues.³⁸ After the feminist awakening in the West and the awakening of women theologians in the Global South, the discussion is now even more differentiated by LGBTQIA+ theologies. Similar to diaspora theologies, Christology is for them a generative theme among others. However, the many faces of Jesus Christ are often still hidden in the penumbra of identity discourses.

³⁸ It is all the more gratifying that through the presentation of the Gutenberg Research Award to Kwok Pui-Lan (2015), the Gutenberg Teaching Award to Musa Dube (2017), and an honorary theological doctorate to Elsa Támez (2019), Johannes Gutenberg University and the Department of Theology, have been able to do quite a bit to recognize these theologians and their work in recent years. Good introductions to the various discourses are Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Cleveland, Ohio 2001; Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, Cleveland Ohio 2000; a corresponding Latin American volume by Elsa Támez unfortunately did not materialize, but cf. id., *Against Machismo*, Oak Park, IL 1987; *Las Mujeres Toman la Palabra: En Diálogo con Teólogos de la Liberación Hablan Sobre la Mujer*, editado con M. J. Rosado Nuñez, Editorial DEI, San José de Costa Rica 1989; id. (ed.), *Through Her Eyes. Women's Theology from Latin America*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 1989. Further, Virginia Fabella, *Beyond Bonding. A Third World Women's Theological Journey*, Manila 1993. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, the journal *In God's Image* and the Women's Resource Center in Asia, the "*Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana (RIBLA)*" in Latin America, and the EATWOT Women's Commission are important intersections of women's theology. With regard to the reception in German-speaking theology besides Strahm, *Vom Rand in die Mitte*, Manuela Kalsky, *Christaphanien. Die Re-Vision der Christologie aus der Sicht von Frauen in unterschiedlichen Kulturen*, Gütersloh 2000, which provides an intercultural comparison between Western feminist Christology has to be mentioned (Rosemary Radford-Reuther and Isabel Carter Heyward) and African (Mercy Amba Oduyoye), Asian (Virginia Fabella and Chung Hyun-Kyung) and womanist Christology; recent overviews include Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, *The Jesus of Asian Women*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2006; Martha T. Frederiks and Martien E. Brinkman, *Images of Jesus. Contributions of African and Asian Women to the Christological Debate (1982–2007)*, in: *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 19, 2009, 13–33; Elisabeth A. Johnson (ed.), *The Strength of Her Witness. Jesus Christ in the Global Voices of Women*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2016 compiles once again the material of the last decades.

Other Forms

The Christian art of Africa, Asia, and Latin America focuses essentially on the image of Christ; Mary, the mother of Jesus; and representations of the life of Jesus.³⁹ In the iconographic crossover between different religious symbol systems in which the artists, rarely female artists, are at home, independent Christologies emerge, which often open up deep dimensions of intercultural-religious interactions for which words are inadequate. I have provided examples of this in the book through five contextual representations of Christ and have since pursued it further in many essays and a monograph on Christian art in Indonesia, my second field research focus in Asia after South Korea.⁴⁰ A large-scale compendium on Christian art in intercultural perspective is to follow. The recent trend of glocalizing this art has resulted in images being exhibited in secular galleries and becoming part of the global art world. This goes beyond the classical contextualization paradigm. Although the goal is no longer an ecclesiastical art, the artworks do contribute to a renewal of religious iconography.

A Look Ahead

Is the initial premise of my book that Jesus's question, "Who do you say that I am?" must be answered anew by every generation in every context still valid? Or are the possibilities played out at some point? One of my central theses was that generative themes are differently weighted and subjected to rereading depending on the context. In situations of poverty and oppression, the theology of the cross unfolds with new relevance. At the same time, however, the emphasis shifts from "dying for" to "dying with." In hamartiology, concepts of "structural sin" and "sinned againstness" are introduced without questioning the "sinfulness" of the individual. In present soteriology, the suffering presence of God in Jesus Christ becomes the acceptance of the poor and oppressed, even counterfactually to their circumstances. This identification creates resonant space for the cry for justice.

In the postcolonial twilight Jesus appears as an ancestor, *avatar*, *bodhisattva*, or *guru*. Culturally and religiously alien teachers and media-

³⁹ Cf. Volker Küster, Christian Art in Asia. Yesterday and Today, in: *The Christian Story: Five Asian Artists Today*, Museum of Biblical Art, New York and London 2007, 28–43; id., Visual Arts in World Christianity, in: *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*, London 2016, 368–85.

⁴⁰ Cf. Volker Küster, *Zwischen Pancasila und Fundamentalismus. Christliche Kunst in Indonesien*, Leipzig 2016.

tors become transparent for the Christian message of salvation. The accent is then rather on the *Christus victor* and a *theologia gloriae*. The return of the white representations of Jesus of the nineteenth century in the Pentecostal churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—today often as cheap mass reproductions from China—makes him appear in contrast as a colonial “revenant.” Is this a transitory stage, after which, similarly to the evangelical Lausanne movement, the contextualization debate must be conducted anew?⁴¹ Or does the “dangerous memory” permanently fade in favor of the prosperity gospel?

In that case, the image of Jesus inevitably becomes the trademark of a religion dedicated to global consumer capitalism. In the West, this hybrid stereotype, an orientaling image of Jesus the Jew with the face of a white man, is still present despite ongoing secularization. But Christology seems to have long since faded in favor of a liquid theism. What remains is the man Jesus, who is still the subject of various films and books of varying quality, but most of which are produced outside of ecclesiastical contexts or even theological seminaries. The question “Who do you say that I am?” apparently threatens to fade away without the contextual pressure and biographical involvement with which the first generation of contextual theologians presented here set about their work of Christological deconstructions and reconstructions. The contextual theologies would then enter an age of epigones that has long paralyzed Western academic theology.

In this respect, the book has lost none of its theological relevance even after twenty years. Contexts have changed, but questions of social justice in its intersectionality of race, class, and gender, as well as the challenges of cultural-religious pluralism, have become more acute and are now disrupting North Atlantic societies. Neither denominational self-immunization strategies and theological regress of the traditional church and theological establishment nor the dance around the golden calf of the followers of the prosperity gospel of the “next Christendom” (Philip Jenkins) are suitable answers to this.

Kwok Pui-Lan and Jörg Rieger have put their finger in an open wound with their manifesto “Occupy Religion!”⁴² The liberating potential of reli-

⁴¹ The Western spokesmen of the Lausanne movement, Peter Beyerhaus and Billy Graham, thought that, by leaving the World Council of Churches in protest against what they saw as secular and syncretistic tendencies, they had left the contextualization discussion behind. Evangelicals from the Third World, however, objected to this; poverty, cultural diversity, and religious pluralism are issues that even the Lausanne movement could not permanently avoid (cf. Küster, *Einführung*, § 1).

⁴² Cf. Rieger and Kwok, *Occupy Religion*.

gions must be reclaimed and freed from the clutches of neoliberal consumer capitalism. The dangerous memory of Jesus's suffering and his identification with the victims of history as well as the presence of the Risen Christ in cultures, also in the encounter with the wisdom of other religions, are the field of discourse of Christological speech in the twenty-first century. The first and second generation of contextual theologians portrayed here has not only prepared the way for this, but is still ahead of us as an *avant-garde* in many ways.