

Editorial

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Editorial Foreword

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The present issue of *Madang: Journal of Contextual Theology* brings together nine scholarly contributions that explore the dynamic and evolving horizons of contextual theology in Asia. The essays gathered here emerge from diverse theological locations, yet they share a common perspective: Christian theology cannot remain detached from the historical realities, cultural memories, and lived experiences of communities struggling for dignity, justice, and meaning.

A distinctive feature of this issue is its intentional engagement with the interconnected traditions of Korean Minjung theology, Indian Dalit theology, and Adivasi-Tribal theology. Although these theological movements arose from different socio-political contexts, they are united by a common concern for the marginalized and by their insistence that theology must be articulated from the underside of history. Each emerged as a critical response to forms of domination—whether colonial, economic, political, cultural, or caste-based—and sought to recover the agency and theological subjectivity of those whose voices had long been silenced.

In particular, this issue has the privilege of publishing three representative papers selected from the International Seminar on Dalit-Tribal-Adivasi and Minjung Theological Discourse under the theme, “Developing Contextual Theologies: Challenges and Prospects in Dalit-Adivasi-Tribal and Minjung Theologies,” jointly organized by the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College and the Korean Society of Minjung Theology. The seminar was held from 4–6 February 2026 at SCEPTRE, Kolkata, India, and marked a significant moment of theological exchange and solidarity between Korean and Indian contextual theological traditions.

Among the many stimulating presentations delivered at the seminar, this volume publishes three carefully selected essays that respectively represent Minjung theology, Dalit theology, and Adivasi-Tribal theology. The first, Hiheon Kim’s “Two Waves of Korean Theology: Its Confluence and Divergence in Minjung Theology,” provides a historical and constructive examination of Korean contextual theology by tracing the interaction between indigenization theology and Minjung theology. Kim demonstrates how these two theological currents emerged in response to the limitations of Western theological paradigms and how their creative convergence has shaped contemporary Korean theology. More importantly, the essay challenges Minjung theology to move beyond its earlier forms of resistance toward an ecological and planetary horizon capable of addressing neoliberal inequality, post-truth fragmentation, and the Anthropocene crisis.

The second selected essay, Samuel Mall’s “The ‘Hopelessness of Hope’ and the ‘Hope of Hopelessness’: Reimagining Dalit Eschatology,” offers a bold rethinking of Christian hope from the perspective of Dalit communities. Critically engaging dominant theological conceptions

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of eschatology, Mall argues that traditional future-oriented notions of hope often function to postpone justice and inadvertently sustain structures of oppression in the present. Drawing upon the experiences of Dalit suffering and resistance, he proposes an eschatology grounded in present-tense praxis and radical solidarity. In doing so, the article exemplifies the continuing vitality and creativity of Dalit theology in confronting caste discrimination, religious nationalism, and global neoliberal forces.

The third essay, S. Hayong's "Developing Contextual Theologies: Challenges and Prospects in Dalit-Adivasi-Tribal and Minjung Theologies," represents the growing discourse of Adivasi-Tribal theology. Hayong highlights the opportunities afforded by the postmodern turn and the emergence of liberation theologies for indigenous communities whose histories and voices have often been ignored or marginalized. His work underscores the necessity of theological reflection rooted in indigenous experiences, memories, and worldviews and argues for the development of contextual theological frameworks that enable tribal communities to articulate their identities and aspirations in both ecclesial and public spheres.

Taken together, these three essays testify to the rich possibilities that emerge when contextual theological traditions encounter one another across national and cultural boundaries. The Kolkata seminar demonstrated that Minjung, Dalit, and Adivasi-Tribal theologies are not isolated theological enterprises but dialogical and mutually enriching discourses. Each possesses distinctive historical experiences and conceptual resources, yet all are engaged in the common task of articulating liberative and contextually grounded theological visions in an increasingly fractured world.

The remaining six essays in this issue further broaden the horizon of contextual theological inquiry. They address themes ranging from Indian Christian spirituality and comparative theology to ecological reconstruction, postcolonial biblical interpretation, indigenous Christology, the reconfiguration of Minjung subjectivity, and methodological innovations in contemporary tribal theology.

Anish K. Joy's "Christ as Satguru" explores the possibilities of interpreting Christ through the Hindu Guru-Shishya tradition and argues for an Indian Christian spirituality that is culturally resonant and spiritually transformative while remaining faithful to the uniqueness of Christ. By engaging comparative theology and Minjung theology, the article demonstrates how Christian discipleship may be imaginatively rearticulated within India's religiously plural context.

Sukhun Huh's "Eco-theological Reconstruction of Minjung Theology in the Anthropocene Era" addresses one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary theology: the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene. The article critically engages new materialist philosophies and proposes an ecological reconstruction of Minjung theology grounded in the existential reality of *han* and the ethical responsiveness generated by the event of suffering. In doing so, it seeks to recover Minjung subjectivity without reverting to anthropocentric assumptions, offering an alternative theological framework of responsibility, solidarity, and interconnectedness.

Hye Kyung Park's "Rahab in Joshua 2 and Korean Bible Women" employs postcolonial theory, particularly the insights of Homi Bhabha, to reread the biblical figure of Rahab and the historical experiences of Korean Bible Women. The essay illuminates the ambivalent and creative negotiations undertaken by indigenous women in contexts shaped by missionary expansion and cultural transformation and demonstrates the fruitfulness of intercultural and postcolonial biblical interpretation.

Sunyoung Cho's "The Korean Face of Jesus" investigates Kim Ki-chang's celebrated series *The Life of Jesus* as an early and profound expression of Korean indigenization theology. Through a careful analysis of the artistic, historical, and theological dimensions of Kim's work, the essay argues that the series constituted a "theology with a brush" that anticipated later developments in Korean contextual theology and rooted Christology within Korea's cultural and religious imagination.

Hyunchul Kang's "From the Priest of Han to the Priest of Friendship" reconsiders one of the central motifs of Minjung theology—the dialectic of *han* and *dan*—through the lens of Hannah Arendt's concept of the "conscious pariah." The essay proposes a transition from the figure of the Priest of Han toward the Priest of Friendship, emphasizing listening, empathy, and the restoration of marginalized voices through solidarity and friendship rather than through the potentially violent mediation of representation.

Finally, Christian Rankhaibou Reintah's "Methodological Expansion in Tribal Theology: Toward a Transcontextual Methodology for Contemporary Tribal Realities in Northeast India" examines the challenges posed by the rapidly changing realities of contemporary tribal communities in Northeast India. Recognizing the transformative effects of migration, urbanization, globalization, and hybrid identities, the essay argues for a methodological expansion of tribal theology rather than a rejection of its foundational insights. By proposing "Transcontextual Theology" as a framework for engaging multiple and interacting contexts, the article points toward new possibilities for indigenous theological reflection in an increasingly interconnected world.

Collectively, the nine essays in this issue affirm the lasting significance of contextual theology as both a critical and constructive endeavor. They show that theology truly comes alive when it listens to the cries of suffering communities, engages in dialogue with local cultures and histories, and dares to imagine new possibilities for justice, reconciliation, and ecological coexistence. In an age marked by widening inequalities, ecological devastation, and deep social fragmentation, these essays bear witness to the continuing need for theological reflection—one rooted in the lived experiences of ordinary people and oriented toward the flourishing of all creation.

It is our hope that this volume will encourage further scholarly engagement among Minjung, Dalit, and Adivasi-Tribal theologians and inspire renewed conversations across contextual theological traditions worldwide.

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Editor-in-chief