

From the Editor

The Introductory Issue of *MST Review* was published twenty years ago and carried a Foreword marked by a sense of mission to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and to respond to the challenges of a “post-colonial world and a global village.” Percy Bacani’s programmatic foreword suggested a picture of missionary work/workers being challenged by the emergence of diverse autonomous cultures, complex sovereign societies, and the myriad new built geographies. It assumed that *MST Review* will serve as a venue for authors who will deliver missionary-useful articles that reflect “radical renewal in our theological reflections.” This is also a recognition of the journal’s importance as a means or a resource for pastors-missionaries, in general, and for academician-missionaries in particular. For Bacani, “radical renewal” meant the development of “local theology and a new understanding of mission.” He added: “Maryhill School of Theology launches a theological review to intensify the articulation of the stories of our peoples and the narration of bible stories in a historico-critical way. New metaphors and symbols are needed in bringing to life the various faith experiences of peoples today. As a result of this on-going narration and exchange of people’s life-experiences, we begin to capture the dynamic character of mission.”

The Maryhill School of Theology community saw the birth of *MST Review*, bannered by six articles, all authored by MST professors: four of them are members of religious congregations (two CICM priests [Lode Wostyn and the late Herman Hendrickx] and two women religious [Anicia Co, RVM and Amelia Vasquez, RSCJ]) and the other two are lay scholars (Ferdinand D. Dagmang and Reginald Cruz [who later on would become

a Xavierian religious). The six articles did not focus on a singular theme, but they did address the times and were relevant to missionary work. Another characteristic of the articles is their common adherence to scholarship—the authors were also academicians who had to follow certain standards of research and writing.

The dual expectation for theological/missiological relevance and academic scholarship will become the implicit requirement of *MST Review*. The same requirement is something assumed by the whole community of formators, professors, and students/formandi as they embrace Maryhill School of Theology's task in forming future ministers who, at the same time, will be trained to become professionals or future academic degree holders. *MST Review* thus extends MST's mission to propagate theological relevance and scholarly excellence.

One may indeed suppose that the Introductory Issue of *MST Review* would dictate the character of the subsequent volumes. Throughout its 20 years of existence, *MST Review's* articles exhibited consistency with the demand for relevance and scholarship. However, sometimes the journal accommodated non-scholarly literature. By doing so, it has extended "hospitality" to a variety of writing forms like epistolary literature, historical essay, hortatory declaration, advocacy paper, eulogy, appeal, and short notes that did not conform to the strict technical rules of scholarly writing. Nevertheless, the latter "deviations" did not destroy the whole makeup of the journal's academic standards. They were occasional entries that did not claim standards but offered some relevant FYI that somehow lightened the weight of academic abstractions.

After 20 years, *MST Review* has delivered 155 academic articles written by 70 authors (not counting the non-scholarly entries). About 4,551 pages filled the 33

volumes that were published from 1996 to 2015. Out of the 70 authors, 11 (15.7%) will claim authorship of 79 articles (51% of the total 155 articles published). The 11 authors are MST/former MST professors (Wostyn [11 articles], Guillen [11], Vogels [11], McKeating [8], Cruz [7], Brazal [7], de Bleeker [6], Mooren [5], de Guzman [4], Brannigan [3], Graham [3], and Castillo [3]). The remaining 61 authors will claim the other half of the total number of published articles. This data does not mean that those in the lower 61 list of writers have less scholarly output than the top 11 authors. Some authors from the lower 61 have written a dozen or more articles in other journals (for example, Hendrickx, De Schrijver, Dagmang, Lambrecht, or Mendoza); and some of those in the top 11 list have authored more articles that did not appear in *MST Review* (like Brazal, Mooren, and de Guzman). Quantitative study has to be further clarified by other facts external to the existing data set.

Nevertheless, some insights may not be forthcoming without data sample. Here are a few information that could aid analysis:

- Out of the 155 articles, 153 were written in English and only 2 in Filipino: this preference for English may indicate foreign authorship or lack of facility in the local language or in consideration of a wider readership; there is a need for more authors who write in Filipino;
- 144 articles were written by MST professors or CICM affiliated authors; this could indicate many things: like the limited circulation of *MST Review* resulted in the lack of information about the journal among non-MST authors; *MST Review* may not be a preferred venue by other authors; or the hard-printed nature of the journal cannot reach the many who populate the internet;
- *MST Review* is not listed in any abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature; this could be

another reason why few writers submit their manuscripts to the journal;

- only 11 articles were written by non-MST or non-CICM authors;
- there were 119 articles written by religious or clerics, 36 articles by lay authors: an indication perhaps of the predominance of the religious or clerics in theological or religious matters; or less number of lay authors indicate fewer scholars among the lay;
- 33 issues were distributed to 3 editors—Brannigan [10 issues; 1996-1998 and 2003-2006], Gonzales [5 issues; 1999-2000], and Alinsangan [17 issues; 2007-2016]: the editorship of Dennis Gonzales shows that a theological journal may be handled by non-clerics or non-religious;
- no *MST Review* from 2001-2002: this may reflect the period of the CICM's internal turbulence;
- 18 book reviews were published: an indication of a poor interest in making reviews; or, again, an indication of *MST Review*'s relative absence in the writers' radars;
- of the 155 articles, 89 were published by non-Filipinos, 66 by Filipinos: an indication of the international character of authorship;
- 129 articles were authored by males, only 26 by female authors: more women writers are needed to fill the lack;
- 46 articles were devoted to mission/history/church movements
- 41 articles were Scripture-related studies
- 38 articles delved on Systematic theology
- 16 articles had directions in morals/ethics
- 6 articles were studies on culture
- 5 articles dealt with Christian-Muslim dialogue
- 2 articles were philosophically-oriented

- 1 article focused on spirituality
- a letter (dated August 16, 1999) of a mother implored to an unnamed Monsignor to pray for her and her son who has been abducted by armed men in 1985 (during the reign of the dictator Marcos)
- 2 essays were tributes to the late Herman Hendrickx and Colm McKeating

For the last 20 years, *MST Review* has provided a venue for various opinions or perspectives in theology and missionary relevance. But the predominance of publications by MST or CICM authors may actually suggest a kind of “homogeneity” or “inbreeding” taking over the *MST Review* circle. This may be true if we do not consider these: only a handful of professors are engaged in fulltime work at MST and most of the professors are “visiting” or working “part-time.” In other words, most of the professors come from other schools, whether foreign or local. This would mean that MST professors who contribute to *MST Review* are not necessarily MST-grown and thus not limited to a certain theological orientation. If this is the case, then *MST Review* actually carries a variety of potentially differing approaches or perspectives.

Nevertheless, *MST Review* falls short in its task of wider dissemination and recruitment of a broader pool of contributing authors. We need an ambience where there is a healthy dissemination and exchange of purposes, resources, and approaches dealing with various questions, problems, or issues. The evolving face of Maryhill School of Theology has shown the growth of a multi-cultural populace. More than thirty years ago, when I was still a student of theology at MST, the school had very few students from foreign lands. After some years, students from Indonesia, Africa, Vietnam, and Latin America came in regularly. Today, almost 1/3 of

MST's population is composed of non-Filipinos. What does this complexity pose to academic formation? Professors can no longer ignore the issues or concerns brought in by those coming from other regions of the world. One's expertise in local culture may have to be broadened by the grammar or moral axes of other cultures and societies. Adjustments have to be made: Either the individual professor retools him/herself or collaborate with other professors who bring in other interests with them. Asking individual professors to retool and adjust may be daunting, but collaboration is more achievable. One way of addressing the latter is to enlist a re-designed *MST Review*, that is, by intensifying its recruitment of potential authors and channeling its dissemination procedures through the internet as well as restructuring its administrative apparatus.

Starting with the current issue, *MST Review* will not only be published in print but also disseminated through the Philippine E-Journals, a collection of academic journals that are made accessible through a Web-based platform hosted by C&E Publishing, Inc. Through this, more readers and authors may be reached.

Regarding its administrative apparatus, the *MST Review* will now include an International Advisory Board composed of experts in theology and other fields in the humanities who will bring the much-needed multiple or diverse perspectives and skills to the journal. The members of the Advisory Board may be asked to review some manuscripts or sought for their advice regarding *MST Review's* improvement. Their contributions will help to keep the journal current, relevant, and scholarly. CICM-Maryhill School of Theology is grateful for their willingness to share their time and talent.

A list of the International Advisory Board members is printed in this current issue.

There are two full-length articles and one research notes featured in this current issue. The first is that of Michael G. Layugan: “The Kalinga Peace-Pact Institution *Bodong*: Forging Relationships, Resolving Conflicts and Fostering Peaceful Co-Existence.” It is a study about the Kalinga society’s practice of *Bodong* (peace-pact) and it is brought up for its relevance to conflict resolution and the promotion of peace. Missionaries and cultural anthropologists will find this article very enriching and challenging.

The second article is “From Vatican II to PCP II to BEC Too: Progressive Localization of a New State of Mind to a New State of Affairs” by Ferdinand D. Dagmang. It points out various creative appropriations of some relevant Vatican II teachings for the renewal of the churches in the Philippines. The author presents some of the pathways and directions that the local BECs have taken and how these contributed to the shaping of character of some local churches.

Jojo M. Fung’s research notes, “A Multiple Contextual Perspectives of *Amoris laetitia*,” takes up Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation. It is hoped to serve as a reader’s guide to *Amoris laetitia*. Fung’s piece offers some very helpful ways to reading and interpreting the document.

Ferdinand D. Dagmang