1 Doing situated theology

Introductory remarks about the history, method, and diversity of contextual theology

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The contextual nature of the theological process

The notion of “contextual theology” has a long history, beginning with its gradual introduction in the “Fund for Theological Education”.¹ The term gained prominence through both the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne Movement adopting it in the 1970s.² Theologians in Africa and Asia were already interested in how cultural contexts affected the interpretation of Christianity, and the term “contextuality” was deemed a fitting metaphor for that enterprise.³ The practice of contextualising theology has much older roots; for example, theologians in India in the early 20th century developed in their projects a specific awareness of the significance of culture. There has of course for a long time, one might say from the beginning, been an awareness that Christian faith must be expressed in ways intelligible to specific contexts, as Robert J. Schreiter states in his extensive historical mapping.⁴ In general, most of the history of mission is characterised by an intense awareness of how Christian beliefs, ethics, and practices interact with non-Christian cultures. In the past decades, contextual theology has developed significantly in both depth and scope, and the term is, as Angie Pears aptly states, “an evasive and fluid term to which a number of meanings, some contrasting, could and do attach themselves”.⁵

While some regard contextual theology as a paradigm for theology in general, others prefer to regard it as a more particular mode of contextualising God-talk with regard to different themes. While theologians nowadays seem to agree to an unproblematic consensus that “all theology is contextual”,⁶ at least to some degree, it seems to be highly controversial to discuss in what sense and to what extent this is the case. A clear definition of contextual theology is still lacking, while at the same time we can find several operational clarifications. Conceivably, this undetermined and open situation of a diversity of understandings might also play a central role in stimulating and developing further thinking about *doing situated theology*. One of Schreiter’s pioneering works creatively investigated how what he called “local theologies” are constructed,⁷ but as “local” has more and more turned into a contrasting term to “global”, it might be more obvious to talk

about different modes of situatedness. Our intention here is neither to strive for a crystal-clear definition on the one hand nor to defog the approach on the other. Pears' definition will serve in this work as a solid basis: she regards contextual theology as referring to "that theology which *explicitly* places the recognition of the contextual nature of theology at the forefront of the theological process".⁸ The impact of the context on the understanding of and reflection on who God is, and how he/she acts, is a given in such an approach, even if one accepts that not all theologies explicitly signify this. Again following Pears, the editors and authors of this book do not simply regard all theology as contextual in an epistemological way, but focus on those modes of doing theology that place and celebrate the context at the centre of the praxis of theology.

Of course, the emergence of contextual theology also has its own historical context. It is closely interwoven with globalisation in general and Christian theology's globalisation in particular, and the geographical shift of Christians from the so-called West to the South that has taken place since the late 19th century and led to a majority of Christians being in the Global South since the 1980s. Contextual theology's own context of emergence is characterised by ecumenical, trans-confessional and translocal social and cultural processes, and in comparison with earlier approaches such as liberation theology and political theology – of course likewise contextually aware – explicit contextual theology is not only nurtured by an intense exchange with theories from philosophy and social sciences, but includes a constructive and self-critical awareness of theories of culture. The difference between political and liberation theologies on the one hand and contextual theology on the other is, of course, a matter of definition. While the former are characterised by a high level of awareness of the political contexts of doing theology, later processes of contextualising theology have developed a broader interaction with cultural studies and, to some degree, also with geography. In particular, a high degree of awareness of the significance of gender, postcolonial, and environmental dimensions deepens earlier approaches to political theology. Schreiter aptly describes two different types of contextual theology: a) that which is driven by the search for identity (such as Asian, African, Korean, and other approaches), and b) that which is related to demands for social change (such as Latin American liberation theology).⁹ Cultural contexts and interpretations of how God acts affect each other in a variety of ways that one can describe using the model of a reciprocal "circle of function".¹⁰ While contexts affect the theological process in one way, expressions of faith affect the context in another qualitative way. One of the intentions behind this book is to explore how the "tradition" of political liberation theology can meet and enrich younger approaches of contextual theology.

While classical Christian dogmatic thinking served as a rational system of order for separate, distinct "loci", contextual theology represents a shift in

which reflection on God and experience with him/her is directly and indissolubly linked with praxis. Theology takes place as *doing theology* within contexts. God acts in the Here and Now. Even if, as promised previously, we will not expend energy here on deepening the epistemological controversy about what theology “is”, the reader should keep in mind that the older classical paradigm for systematic theology is still at work and wields a rather dominant influence that should not be underestimated.

More recently, both the challenge to interact as a Christian believer with other religious traditions¹¹ and the challenge to respond to the inter- and transcultural processes of globalisation¹² have offered significant impulses towards deepening and developing contextual theologies further. Here we should especially emphasise the processes of increasing migration and global mobility,¹³ and the climate-and-environmental-change related transformation¹⁴ of both local and nomadic theologies from people on the move. Both appear as central driving forces that will accelerate the change of theology today and tomorrow. Contextual theology seems to be becoming more transcultural, transreligious, green, and mobile.

In spite of all the creative developments in the field of contextual theology, many still seem to limit it exclusively to the field of missiology. In this way, contextual theology is regarded only as a method of dialoguing with theories about culture. Thus, for example, the *Oxford Handbook in Systematic Theology* defines theology as Christian teaching and Christian claims about God and reality, and the explication of Christian doctrine.¹⁵ The editors of this influential work sadly examine the significance of cultural contexts only in their section on “Conversations”, wherein they consider important theoretical interlocutors for theology, such as, for example, natural science. Theology thus still remains primarily a kind of scholastic practice wherein enlightened theologians serve as interpreters of God’s revelation, which at best they can debate with others in different conversations. The explicit profession of the theologian appears as more important than the perception and interpretation of God him/herself in context. Dogmatic theology remains profoundly apologetic, while contextual theology operates in a less apologetic, more constructive manner.¹⁶ Contextual theology, by contrast, encounters the living God in the diversity of the Here and Now, and approaches experiences of him/her with open senses, minds, and bodies. All who are experiencing God at work are potential theologians. Tradition is, on this view, a tool that offers a large deposit of words, images, and practices, but it is not an end in itself.

Contextual, constructive, or world theology?

Recently, it has also been possible to follow the development of different interrelated approaches such as “constructive theology”, “global Christianity”, or “World Christianity”, and “lived theology”,¹⁷ which mainly emerge in the fields of missiology, systematic theology, and ecumenical theology.

Sometimes, these concepts overlap and converge with the approach of contextual theology; sometimes, they tend to drain its provocative power.

A significant criterion for differentiating between, for example, contextual and constructive theology seems to lie in the valuation of how suffering, violence, and the struggle for social and environmental justice affects the interpretation of God's work. While representatives of constructive theology underline the significance of both tradition and the context, they tend to lend an intrinsic value to tradition, such that the expression of faith is made dependent on the understanding of some kind of internal doctrinal nucleus of truth. The expression of this truth must take place in context, but it remains entirely unclear to what degree the context, wherein God acts, is affecting and also transforming tradition.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, for example, characterises constructive theology as "an integrative discipline that continuously searches for a coherent, balanced understanding of Christian truth and faith in light of Christian tradition (biblical and historical) and in the context of historical and contemporary thought, cultures, and living faiths".¹⁸ It is hereby obvious how one gives tradition the superior position over the situation in which God acts. To regard the activity of deliberate constructive imagination as a significant human skill and a necessary element of doing theology, as Gordon Kaufman does,¹⁹ is a very different thing from accepting how deeply God's work might be entangled with the worldly, material and bodily dimensions of the Here and Now. If the context is only something wherein God appears as Creator and Liberator, one runs the risk of undervaluing the significance of the created world and thereby of the Creator him/herself. Constructive theology in this sense makes us aware of the necessary human condition in the process of doing theology. But it does not do justice to the significance of the cultural and material dimension of the Here and Now wherein God has chosen to act.

Constructive theologians are constantly afraid of becoming bound to the context in their God-talk. But continuing along the paths of incarnation, the human bodily, the politically, and the materially polluted is nothing to be afraid of. Especially if they follow Catherine Keller's ingeniously invented notion of "inter-carnation", constructive and contextual theology do not necessarily need to dwell on different sides of the mystery of God's incarnation, the Creator's diverse flesh-becoming in, within, and into a creation that since then has been inhabited by the Spirit at play in the inter-carnation of being-members-of-each-other.²⁰ On the contrary, it is deep in the material that the Spirit dwells. Still, one should not draw an all too sharp distinction between constructive and contextual theology, as they can complement each other and as the human ability of constructive imagination without doubt also needs to be an essential part of reflecting on God in Context.²¹

Another highly relevant recent development is the emergence of the field of so-called Global or World Christianity.²² These fields sprout primarily from the background of Mission Studies, but gain additional impetus

especially from Anthropology of Christianity, the rather recent branch of Cultural or Social Anthropology where Christianity is studied, mostly in the Global South.²³ This area of study tends to turn increasingly empirical, and while many of the analyses of the data are theologically informed, the emphasis tends to lie on lived religion. The approach has tended to become akin to Religious Studies in the sense that the analysis is carried out from outside the faith community studied, and the author is not involved in constructing theology in the sense of personal existential involvement. Systematic theological approaches are not common, even if in some of these studies there may be sections of analysing systematic theological topics in the studied communities.²⁴ There are, however, some studies that resemble the World Christianity approach in the sense of making use of empirical data from the Global South while clearly dealing with questions traditionally counted as systematic theological.²⁵

For the self-understanding of Christian faith communities in a changing globalised world, contextual theology offers a most valuable tool for interpreting the correlation between one's own traditions and the varied situations in which believers experience the God who acts. Following central tenets of liberation theology, the option for the poor is assigned a central role in the interaction between the liberating God and the suffering, and in the theological interpretation of the ongoing, culturally multifaceted history of salvation. One might, on an epistemological level, question whether the normative critical dimension of doing theology is a necessary, integral part of contextual theology. Without diving too deeply into such a discussion, we can observe in the still-young discipline of contextual theology that such a deep entanglement of the committed critical and the spiritual has been active throughout its short history.

The options for those who are suffering from various injustices and the interpretation of the crucified God have been intimately interwoven in contextual theology. In that sense, one can trace the strength of central tenets in liberation theology. Lived faith has been experienced as liberative praxis, and doing theology has implied reflecting on how God is at work not simply in general but in particular with regard to the challenges and needs of the suffering. Victims have, however, not been regarded as objects for mercy, but as subjects of their own transformation in synergy with the God who liberates.

Contextual theology has thus continued along the older classical paths of reflecting Christ's incarnation, his suffering on the Cross, his resurrection from the dead, and the Son's and the Spirit's liberation of the living. It has furthermore also kept classical deep tenets of trinitarianism alive in interconnecting and integrating faith in God, as the Creator of everything in heaven and earth, and faith in the work of the Son and the Spirit for the liberation of all. Even if the history of contextual theology is young and embedded in the modern global world, it could without doubt also be regarded as striving for a deep continuity with central principles in classical

theology, as it tries to reconstruct and express substantial beliefs in new modes in interaction with new cultural situations and contexts. Contextual theology also appears in such a lens, in its “circle of function”²⁶ between context and theology, as an attempt at an essential correlation of tradition and situation. Contextual theology transforms selected substantial dimensions of theology’s classical tradition into a new world that demands new responses from Christian faith.

This book intends to catalyse the ongoing discussion about contextual theology with perspectives from different regions and contexts around the world. It will in this way offer an exciting mapping of the multifaceted *and* united state of liberating contextual theology today, and will thus offer significant stimulation and inspiration to the further discourse about methodology in systematic theology and mission studies in a new political key.

In the 12 following chapters, the book will develop the agenda of contextual theology further by offering insights into how this overarching approach makes sense in the wide range of geographical, cultural, and confessional contexts of the world today. In this way, it not only allows a deeper understanding of the significance and relevance of the contextual model for theology and how it works in practice, but also produces a new range of original ways of doing theology in the face of contemporary challenges. Contextual theology hereby represents a radicalisation and a breaking free from monistic cages of thinking and acting.²⁷ The range of tools for doing theology is significantly expanded and the agenda of themes to be addressed is elaborated in a constructive way.

The chapters

The book has its origin in the celebration of the 25-year anniversary of the Institute for Contextual Theology association in Lund, Sweden. A one-day conference on the theme of “Liberating Theology” took place at the Faculty of Theology on 24 November 2017, and four keynote addresses by Chun Hyung Kyung, Teresa Callewaert, Sigurd Bergmann, and Martha Fredriks were presented, of which two are rewritten and included in this volume. The association in Lund is just one of several bodies that have been inspired by the Johannesburg Institute for Contextual Theology in South Africa. Other communities and associations have been founded and developed at the intersection of academy, church, and society. Furthermore, the emergence of the Kairos Europe process has produced significant impetus towards the development of liberation theology in Europe, which will be analysed in one of the chapters.

In order to inspire this process further, we (the editors) decided, along with the board of the Institute for Contextual Theology, to invite theologians from other world regions to contribute to what Stephen B. Bevans has often described as “prophetic dialogue”²⁸ about the diversity and communality of contextual theology today. We are happy that so many have

responded positively and shared their interpretation of God in Context from within their own experiences, spheres, struggles, and visions.

In Chapter 2, Dion A. Forster takes as his point of departure the way in which public theology remains a deeply contested approach to theological engagement and reasoning among South African theologians. In his view, the nation remains deeply divided by the lingering legacy of apartheid theologies, apartheid ideologies, and the tangible consequences of apartheid laws. Has public theology any place, or validity, in this context? Some suggest that public theologies are too universal in nature, and so are both domesticated and domesticating. These critics suggest that we should remain firmly committed to black African liberation theologies as an alternative to public theologies. While the critiques are valid, the proposed solution is inadequate for the author since the theologies that are advocated can be exclusive and run the risk of curtailing the liberative and transformative intent of the Christian faith. Rather, what is required is a contextual public theology that can build a bridge between the universal claims of the Christian faith and the particular concerns of the South African context. This chapter presents an example of such a “contextual public theology in South Africa” by reflecting on the findings of a four-year-long qualitative empirical study on the “politics of forgiveness” among black and white South Africans. The intention is to illustrate how a contextual theology bridges the gap between the universal and the particular within the South African theological context.

African Pentecostalism is at the core of Chapter 3, where Chammah J. Kaunda approaches kenotic imagination as a decolonial analytical tool for unmasking the cultural and historical roots of contemporary manifestations of “authority” in African Pentecostalism in relation to sexual- and gender-based violence. The chapter argues that neo-Pentecostal notions of authority represent social, economic, political, and cultural contextual forces. Kenotic imagination framed within decolonial thinking can help to interrogate a religious paradox within neo-Pentecostalism, that is, the simultaneous rejection and uncritical perpetuation of core elements of traditional cultural forms of authority. The chapter highlights how African neo-Pentecostalism reinforces and legitimises authority by adopting sacred attributes that give unquestionable and unaccountable power to their clergy, creating an authoritarian atmosphere in which women and children are easily subjected to sexual abuse. By drawing examples from cases of sexual abuse of women and children by neo-Pentecostal pastors in South Africa and Nigeria, the chapter stresses that this contextualised form of authority is dangerous to the wellbeing of women and children. The author develops a life-giving kenotic theology of authority which is boundary-crossing from the centre to margins.

From Africa we move to northeast Scandinavia. Elina Vuola in the Chapter 4 analyses two groups of Eastern Orthodox women in Finland and their relationship to the Mother of God. The analysis is based on 62 ethnographic

interviews and 19 written narratives. The focus is on two groups in two marginal contexts within Orthodoxy: women converted from the Lutheran Church and the indigenous Skolt Sámi women in Northeastern Lapland (all cradle Orthodox). Both contexts reflect a broader ethno-cultural process of identity formation. The converted women tend to reflect on their image of the Mother of God in relation to their previous Lutheran identity, in which the Virgin Mary plays a marginal role. In Skolt Sámi Orthodoxy, the figure of the Mother of God is less accentuated than St. Tryphon, their patron saint. The Orthodox faith and tradition in general have been central for the Skolts in the course of their traumatic history.

Chapter 5 takes us to Germany, and reflects the history of ecumenical liberation theology. Ulrich Duchrow explores how it arrived in Germany and Europe after 1968. The author reflects on the early beginnings of liberation theology as they were presented by Ruben Alvez and Gustavo Gutiérrez in Europe in 1969. He traces the historical influence of liberation theology on ecumenical theology and ecumenical practices, and discusses its outstanding significance for faith communities and social movements. In this way, the chapter contributes highly relevant historical insights into the contemporary history of ecumenical, political, and contextual theology in Germany and Europe. As the author himself has acted as a prominent representative of ecumenical liberation theology and later as initiator of the European Kairos movement, the chapter offers exciting insights from a contemporary witness.

Atola Longkumer upholds the tradition of liberation theology and draws our eye in Chapter 6 to a border location in India. Her interpretation is premised on the persistence of debilitating poverty and powerlessness. Drawing from an indigenous/*adivasi* location in India, the author argues that contextual theology needs to critique the inherent social and cultural hierarchies in particular contexts in order to be truly liberative and conducive to flourishing for every member of the community. The difficulties faced by women – and other cultural boundaries that exclude and alienate the vulnerable – persist, maintaining an economic and cultural status quo. Inclusive justice continues to be elusive; the chapter argues that it is possible only when the alleged cultural norms within contexts are overcome and intentionally replaced with egalitarian practices.

In 2008, the three main banks of Iceland suffered an economic meltdown. Sigríður Guðmarsdóttir in Chapter 7 takes a closer look at the downward spiral of the Icelandic economy after the financial crash, which has deeply affected the living standards of Icelanders, and simultaneously opened up the potential for complex cultural identities. In the first years of the new millennium, the Icelandic banking system grew rapidly and was boosted by the risk-seeking confidence of financial tycoons who called themselves “Outvasion Vikings”. These new Vikings represented themselves as leading peaceful “outvasions” into the global market instead of the violent invasions of the Vikings of yore. What rhetoric of identity is operative in language in a melding of Viking mythologies and economics? What kind of political,

gendered, sexual, or religious transgressions take place in such a climate and its aftermath? The chapter uses the theories of political theorist Chantal Mouffe and the contextual theologies of Marion Grau and Joerg Rieger to probe theologically into the context of this postcolonial and economic Icelandic existential crisis.

While Guðmarsdóttir sought to wrap her head around the multifaceted transgressions in the aftermath of a national economic meltdown, and Longkumer portrayed the contemporary global situation of immense marginalisation that makes many vulnerable through an economic system beholden to wealth and profit, Teresa Callewaert investigates in Chapter 8 the question of theology's potential for developing critique of the hegemony of global capitalism. This is treated through an engagement with two writers from the beginnings of liberationism, i.e. theologically grounded critique of oppression and exploitation. The Peruvian Catholic theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez and the Iranian Shiite thinker Ali Shariati both represent an understanding of religious tradition as a possible vehicle for conscientisation and the construction of awareness, self-reliance, and resistance, since not only is it uniquely positioned among the poor, but it also contains insights into poverty, God's will, and hope. The analysis points to the continuing ability of theology to offer particular insights and avenues for thinking about resistance. However, such strategies can position critiques both within and outside of traditions. It is suggested that a position that relates to the methods, justifications, and tools of tradition itself carries potential to uncover distinctly theological insights that can contribute to political critique without surrendering either its radicalness or its tradition.

While Chammah J. Kaunda earlier focused on African Pentecostalism's impact on women, David Emmanuel Singh offers in Chapter 9 insights into Pentecostal processes of doing theology, and relates these to Sufi-inspired faith. "The image of the Path or journey" has been used by charismatics across religions, in Christianity as well as in Islam. The Sufi-inspired millennial sect of Mahdawiyya offers a more detailed view of such a journey. Here, in a journey involving retreat and trust in God, remembrance-ritual, and speaking from experience, the disciples aspire to "vision/illumination", but not as an end in itself. The experience serves as a preparation in readiness for missionary outreach. The chapter explores similarities between the Mahdawi case and the charismatic Christian tradition in which the author was raised. Pentecostalism and Mahdawyya obviously belong to different religious spheres; what connects them is their affiliation with millennialism, and their marginality to their respective traditions. Using the method of "comparative juxtaposition", the author aims to search for theological meaning behind apparent similarities. Inspired by phenomenology, the chapter investigates how human effort in seeking nearness with God is not a one-sided exercise; God reciprocates human effort at seeking him. Phenomenology involves, for the author, comparative descriptions of the subjects' experiences as they appear or are presented to the researcher; theology

presupposes the reality of God, and God's initiatives and responses towards the creatures. Singh sets out on a search for meaning as both a student of Sufism and a Christian traveller on a Godward journey.

Environmental challenges have in recent years gained more and more importance. Sigurd Bergmann in Chapter 10 focuses on the notion of "Anthropocene", which implies a shift from the Holocene to a new epoch in the earth's history. At present, scientists in various disciplines are intensely and critically discussing from different angles what this means. Bergmann explores this through an ecotheological lens, and begins by discussing critical arguments against the triumphalist interpretation of the Anthropocene. In a second step, it formulates the central challenge within the discourse and searches for antidotes. Finally, theological skills are explored, to widen our vision from the past and present to a future beyond the Anthropocene. In this way, the chapter shows how contextual theopolitics might contribute to experiencing the earth as Ecocene.

Environmental challenges are also at the core of Chapter 11, as Panu Pihkala elaborates a theology of "eco-anxiety" as liberating contextual theology. Numerous people suffer nowadays from various psychological impacts of environmental problems. Sometimes the symptoms are severe and are called "eco-anxiety". The chapter explores theological contributions which have sought to channel eco-anxiety into hope and action. "Theology of eco-anxiety" is a new form of liberating contextual theology and, according to the author, it will probably gain new forms as the environmental crisis escalates.

The two final chapters address forward looking issues of subjects, objects and methods of liberative contextual theology.

Contextual theology has produced not only words and rhetorical expressions but also a vibrant sphere of images. Volker Küster in Chapter 12 does justice to this wide field and explores contextualisation through the arts. Christian Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has produced a contextual theology in its own right beyond words, offering an incredibly comprehensive, rich, and multifaceted area of material religion. The chapter introduces a theoretical framework for how to approach and understand this area, and demonstrates its feasibility by examining and interpreting in detail concrete works of art.

In the concluding Chapter 13, Mika Vähäkangas analyses the emergence of the discipline of World Christianity as a process of theology's post-colonialising. Theology as an academic Eurocentric discipline is challenged to renew itself. This challenge comes from academia, where traditional closed confessionalism is no longer acceptable in pluralistic and increasingly secularised societies. However, modernist projects aiming at scientific and objective theologies are not viable due to the realisation that all theology is contextual. Theological Eurocentrism is also challenged from the perspective of ethics. The renewed academic theology needs to be multireligious, confessionally open, and culturally inclusive. Many of these changes have recently taken place in mission studies, as it has transformed into World

Christianity. Undoubtedly, this process can contribute to the renewal of academic theology, and the chapter explores this potential with special emphasis on Northern Europe.

Doing theology – “making-oneself-at-home” on earth

While earlier works, often monographs,²⁹ mostly offer methodological reflections on and arguments for why theology should be contextual, this book provides in its 12 following chapters a wide range of examples of how this takes place in practice. The approach of contextual theology does not function here as a loose, lowest common denominator, but rather as a deep, central driving force for intensifying the interpretation of “God in Context” in the lens of both tradition and experiences in concrete local situations. Doing theology herein serves as what we might describe as a cultural skill of “making-oneself-at-home”³⁰ on earth in particular localities and of “being alive”³¹ in specific contexts. Through its arrangement of themes and contexts, the book furthermore catalyses the ongoing negotiation about what count as urgent, relevant, and prioritised challenges to Christian faith today. The geography of the chapters provides a worldwide survey of fruits grown in indigenous lands, as well as in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America, and Australia.

To sum up, this book explores the significance of contextual theology today. It does not offer a comprehensive map of all that is going on in the field, but allows insights into selected contexts and themes where the agenda and method of theology’s contextualisation are taken further. As such, it rather offers encouragement and constructive contributions from within, instead of a bird’s eye metatheological perspective. Discussing a range of prioritised thematic perspectives in a worldwide range of selected geographical, cultural, and confessional contexts, it intends to catalyse the ongoing discussion on the methodology of doing theology. Themes such as interreligious plurality, global capitalism, ecumenical liberation theology, eco-anxiety and environmentalism, postcolonialism, intersectional fluidity and gender, neo-Pentecostalism, contextual public theology, world theology and forgiveness and reconciliation are emphasised in depth. Voices from indigenous lands, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, and North America are entering a “prophetic dialogue” on what it means to contextualise theology in a globalised and changing world today.

In this way, the book not only allows a deeper understanding of the significance and relevance of the contextual model for theology and how it works in practice, but also produces a new range of original ways of doing theology in the face of contemporary challenges. Contextual theology thus represents a radicalisation of and a breaking free from monistic modes of thinking and acting. It offers new skills for practices of liberating faith. The range of tools for doing theology is significantly expanded and the agenda of themes to be addressed is elaborated in a constructive way.

Notes

- 1 The Fund for Theological Education was formed in 1958 in Accra, Ghana, and became in 1977 the (Ecumenical) Programme for Theological Education. Cf. Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 114.
- 2 Peter Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1990), 19.
- 3 Justin Ukpong, "Contextualization: Concept and History," *Revue Africaine de Théologie* 11, no. 22 (1987): 149–63. On using contextualisation as an umbrella term bridging inculturation and liberation theologies, see Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993); Stephen Munga, *Beyond the Controversy: A Study of African Theologies of Inculturation and Liberation* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998).
- 4 Robert J. Schreiter, "Contexts and Theological Methods," in *Christian Mission, Contextual Theology, Prophetic Dialogue: Essays in Honor of Stephen B. Bevans, SVD*, eds. Dale T. Irvin and Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018), 101–17, 102.
- 5 Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.
- 6 Cf. Sigurd Bergmann, *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (London: Routledge, 2003), 1–7 (1st ed. in Swedish, 1997); and Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*, 168.
- 7 Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (London: SCM, 1985).
- 8 Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*, 1, emphasis ours.
- 9 Schreiter, "Contexts and Theological Methods," 107–12.
- 10 Bergmann, *God in Context*, 3.
- 11 Cf. Paul Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, eds. John Hick and Paul Knitter (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992).
- 12 Cf. Volker Küster, *Einführung in die interkulturelle Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).
- 13 Cf. Susanna J. Snyder, "Displacing Theology: God-Talk in an 'Age of Migration,'" in *Home and Away: Contextual Theology and Local Practice*, eds. Stephen Burns and Clive Pearson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 104–23.
- 14 Dieter Gerten and Sigurd Bergmann, eds., *Religion in Global Environmental and Climate Change: Sufferings, Values, Lifestyles* (New York and London: Continuum, 2011).
- 15 John Webster, "Introduction: Systematic Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook in Systematic Theology*, eds. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1, 6, www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199245765.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199245765-e-1?print=pdf.
- 16 A different view is held by Aruthuckal Varughese John, who locates modern apologetics within the framework of contextual theology. Aptly, he notes that apologetics represents a product of modernity, and suggests that we should strive for a "Spirit-shaped apologetic" (219) that can re-enchant the world, based on an understanding that the Holy Spirit's work changes everything. Aruthuckal Varughese John, "Third Article Theology and Apologetics," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission in a Pluralistic Context*, ed. Roji T. George (Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 2017), 202–22.
- 17 The project on "Lived Theology" was established by theologians in the United States in 2000 in order to reflect on the interconnection of theology and lived

- experience, and to offer academic resources to social justice and human flourishing. Cf. www.livedtheology.org/overview/, accessed May 8, 2019. A similar approach has also been developed in so-called “empirical theology”, where Heimbrock unfolds practical theology as “analysis of the culturally shaped forms and symbolic representations of life in order to describe religious experience as rooted in ‘lived experience’”. Hans-Günter Heimbrock, “Practical Theology as Empirical Theology,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 14, no. 2 (2011): 153–70.
- 18 Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 13.
- 19 Gordon Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), ix.
- 20 Catherine Keller, “Members of Each Other: Intercarnation, Gender and Political Theology,” workshop presentation at the Faculty of Theology in Lund, September 16, 2019. Cf. Catherine Keller, *Intercarnations: Exercises in Theological Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).
- 21 For a more extensive discussion of constructive theology see Jason A. Wyman, Jr., *Constructing Constructive Theology: An Introductory Sketch* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).
- 22 Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003); Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002).
- 23 Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood, eds., *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). On anthropology of Christianity and theology, see Joel Robbins, “Anthropology and Theology: An Awkward Relationship?” *Anthropological Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2006): 285–94; Joel Robbins, “Afterword: Let’s Keep It Awkward: Anthropology, Theology, and Otherness,” *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 24 (2013): 329–37. See also Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas, eds., *Faith in African Lived Christianity: Bridging Anthropological and Theological Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).
- 24 See Elina Hankela, *Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry: Being Human in a Johannesburg Church* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Jonas Adelin Jørgensen, *Jesus Imandars and Christ Bhaktas: Two Case Studies of Interreligious Hermeneutics and Identity in Global Christianity* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2008).
- 25 Mari-Anna Pöntinen, *African Theology as Liberating Wisdom: Celebrating Life and Harmony in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Martina Prosén, “Pentecostal Praise and Worship as a Mode of Theology,” in *Faith in African Lived Christianity*, eds. Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 156–79; Mika Vähäkangas, “Negotiating Religious Traditions – Babu wa Loliondo’s Theology of Healing,” *Exchange* 45, no. 3 (2016): 269–97. For a proposal on methodology for such an endeavour, see Mika Vähäkangas, “How to Respect the Religious Quasi-Other? Methodological Considerations on Studying the Kimbanguist Doctrine of Incarnation,” in *Faith in African Lived Christianity*, eds. Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 133–55.
- 26 Cf. Bergmann, *God in Context*, 3.
- 27 This was one of Chun Hyung Kyung’s central points in her keynote lecture, entitled “Breaking Free from the Monoreligious Cage”, at the event in Lund in 2017 which gave rise to this volume.
- 28 See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 284–85. Bevans aims at dialogue both within Christianity and between Christianity and other religions.

Cf. part III in Dale T. Irvin and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Christian Mission, Contextual Theology, Prophetic Dialogue: Essays in Honor of Stephen B. Bevans, SVD* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018).

- 29 Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*; Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992); Bergmann, *God in Context*; Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ: Intercultural Christology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001) (1st ed. in German, 1999); Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*.
- 30 Sigurd Bergmann, *Religion, Space and the Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 19–47.
- 31 Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).