

Peter C. Phan's book *Theology and Interreligious Dialogue in the Postmodern Age*

“Needless to say, this new cultural, socio-political, and religious context – cultural diversity, economic globalization, and religious pluralism – presents difficult challenges to the church and theology. *Culturally*, how can the Catholic church purge its two-millennia-long tradition of Eurocentric elements so that its face is truly catholic, that is, universal? How can the Catholic church become a truly local church? *Socio-politically*, how can the church credibly preach Jesus’ teaching on God’s preferential love for the poor and the marginalized and act in solidarity with those crushed by the forces of globalization? *Religiously*, how can the church not only respect but also incorporate into its own life and worship the teachings and practices of other religions in order to be enriched and transformed by them?”

“But in the postmodern age the way of carrying out liberation, inculturation, and interreligious dialogue cannot be the same as in times past. In our time we need a new church and a new way of being church. Not a church allied with the rich and the powerful in their conquest of foreign lands and subjugation of peoples in order to save their souls and plant the church, but a church opting for and living in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized. Not a church associated with imperialism and colonialism, in a *mission civilisatrice*, exporting Western civilization to the ‘uncouth’ natives of other continents, but a church willing to empty itself of its own cultural traditions and learn from the treasures of the more ancient cultures of these peoples in order to enrich its understanding of the gospel. Not a church proclaiming itself as the exclusive channel of God’s grace and asserting its superiority over the religions of the ‘pagans’ whom it come to save from spiritual darkness and moral depravity, but a church humbly walking side by side with other seekers of God and God’s reign, witnessing to them its faith in Jesus as God’s gift of all-inclusive love to humanity and recognizing the presence of God’s Spirit among them and learning from them ways of being more faithful to God’s call.”