

Review

Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence

eds. Lius Pantoja, Jr., Sadiri Joy Tira, and Enoch Wan
Life Change Publishing, Inc.: Manila, Philippines, 2004

Reviewed by Dr. Jonathan Exiomo
President of Alliance Biblical Seminary, Manila, Philippines

Published in Global Missiology, Review & Preview, October 2004, www.globalmissiology.net

The book is a compendium of articles by different presenters of varied disciplines designed to address issues related to the phenomenon of *diaspora* in general and Filipino *diaspora* in particular in relation to the missiological mandate of Jesus Christ to the church. Inspired by the vision to see the Filipinos all-over-the-globe to help fulfill the Great Commission of Christ, Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira, Dr. Luis Pantoja, Jr., Dr. Enoch Wan, among others, organized the Filipino International Network for “Seoul Consultation” on April 12-15, 2004 at the campus of TORCH Trinity Graduate School of Theology in Seoul Korea.

Diaspora is widespread. The book seems to argue that the movement is a creative expression of self-interpretation for self-realization. That is, instead of being desperate about it because of internal and external factors that propelled the plight, this is an occasion for Filipino flight to advance the Good news. The Evangelical church could soar above the phenomenon and become creators of possibilities as the people’s dispersion becomes an occasion for peoples group including the “Filipinos” overseas to be disciplined for Christ. The book accomplishes this through 23 articles addressing problems of varied kinds.

Part 1 of the book comprised the first two articles concerning the real score of Filipino *diaspora*, from a non-government and government perspectives. While both articles hailed the Filipinos competitive skills as compared with others in the international labor market and the remittances that keep the Philippine national budget afloat, the former article laments over the social costs to Overseas Filipino Workers’ families (p.22).

Part 2 surmised the biblical-theological perspectives on *diaspora* in the context of persecution and suffering. Moreover, the evidences from the Scripture testify to the fact that such reversals occasion the expansion of missionary work to the Jews, Samaritans, and the Gentiles. The second article argues that mobility is endemic in human being and becoming, seen through the lens of selected themes often popular among systematic theology books such as God, Man, Jesus Christ, and End Times as the ontological justification of *diaspora*.

Part 3 is composed of two articles which perspectives on mission theology, to my view, is shaped by a new way of seeing relationships in the world from modern’s either or dualism to interrelationship. Thus theology of missions takes cognizance of multiculturalism, inter-racial and Christian hospitality based on the theoretical

formulation of the concept of Trinity (Triune God). From such framework came the methodological implications to missions (pp.110-117). The other article develops such as it tries to re-interpret the Great Commission text in Matthew 28 from the framework of the non-negotiable, namely, soteriological rather than the usual geographical reading.

Part 4 answers the question, how can the Christians in the Filipino *diaspora* help fulfill the Great Commission. Articles 7 to 15 provide challenging answers in the forms of vision-filled organizations and structure that provide a network of resources for the Christian OFWs that should engage in the realization of the Great Commission. The different organizations share the vision in Revelations 7 and 22 concerning the gathering and the worshipping of the nations before the Triune God.

Part 5, which comprises articles 16 to 23 balances the tendency of the previous articles to dwell on Meta narratives by presenting individual stories. These stories touch the ground of human being in the lived-experience. The stories articulate how individual narrative becomes significant in the light of the larger dimension, that is, salvation-historical.

The Postscript helps the reader to catch the detailed discussions and presentations found in Parts 1-5 and cannot miss the devotional plea to get caught in the movement towards the vision in Jeremiah 29.

As the title indicates *Scattered*, I long to see the sequel of the initial volume titled *Gathered* where the most affected families of the OFWs celebrate the victory of presencing from a long time absence of their loved ones.