

FOREWORD

This book is dedicated to the Divine Word Jesus Christ, the Word *par excellence*, who reveals the very meaning of the word either in written or oral form that there might be; the word that had been interpreted in manifold ways as it had been understood. There remain yet other ways to understand it next because God keeps his promise and the power of the Holy Spirit makes everything move. The word made flesh reveals the unimaginable ways of the Divine that continue inspiring people across cultures to fulfill the desires of His Father; a new way of relating with Him through that Divine Word in human form as we call upon His name, time after time, and whose name is above all (see Phil 2:1-10). He is a person and invites us to a personal relation because He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Creation has been restored and a new creation can hail a new future seen from God's perspective.

'When the Divine meets limits, something greater will be created.' The preceding words have come as an inspiration to open the pages of this great enterprise which can be justly attributed to the Divine that is Jesus Christ.

In the form of a book in your hands, it responds to the inspirations that have been there right from the beginning of this project. That inspiration took shape in verbal form, talks, finding some topics suitable to the intention of the theme, thinking of frames of thoughts, ongoing conversations, sometimes exchanges of ideas and views with some disagreements or a bit of cross talk amongst the conversation. Our humble heartfelt thanks to all contributors who said 'yes' to be part of this book with the expertise that they represent. All that expertise of the contributors meets together to honour the One who made this project possible: Jesus Christ.

This magnificent work of unity was a common effort that only the Divine is able to put together. The papers for the Symposium on the 125 Years of the SVD in PNG with the theme 'Did We Bring the Light?' are dedicated to the second person of the Divine Trinity: the Divine Word Jesus Christ through whom all creation has its hold and its consistency. And He was the one who has brought many experts, scholars from different fields, to converse together in the form of this Symposium held at Divine Word University, Madang, on 12 August 2021.

The speakers, either in person or virtual form, came to honour Him with their inspirational talks. It was, is and will be the source for many in the future. With this relatively 'little effort' written in papers from the contributors we pay tribute to Jesus Christ who was the main

source and the dynamo of this event! The journey of 125 years of the missionary activity of the Divine Word Missionaries is just an example among many on how the Divine Word keeps inspiring people until today. To Him, Honour, Glory and Power in the ages to come with the heartfelt acknowledgment to all People of Papua New Guinea who received the Word of God through the humble ministry of the SVDs. This land is the concrete place, the physical locus where we all venture to say '*fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*' (Luke 1:38).

Geovanne Bustos

Patrick Gesch

From the early days of the Congregation, Papua New Guinea has been one of the main destinations for Divine Word Missionaries. The SVD Missiological Institute in Germany has tried to follow developments and reflections issuing from the multiple mission tasks and experiences there, through books in our *Studia* series as well as in numerous articles in the journal *Verbum SVD*. One of the latest highlights in our dedication to Papua New Guinea is the *Steyley Missionschronik 2021*, a colourful publication particularly for our benefactors which carries many articles and pictures by SVD missionaries and SSPS Missionary Sisters about their commitment and fascination with PNG.

The Symposium to mark the 125th anniversary of SVD engagement in PNG was a further opportunity to gauge the efforts and grace of sharing with the peoples there. It is a privilege for the SVD Missiological Institute to publish the proceedings of this Symposium jointly with the Melanesian Institute in Goroka (Papua New Guinea) and thus to offer wider access to the reflections presented at the Symposium.

Divine Word Missionaries are always in a tension between their sublime vocation of relating to the WORD and their own utterings translating and communicating this WORD into the smaller and bigger words of different cultures and contexts – hence the title of this study. Thus, this collection of reflections brings together many words – certainly not empty words but indeed facts, feats, even failures – that all have intended to join their voices, efforts and commitment in different fields to witness to the WORD that has become flesh and has made his dwelling among us (John 1:14).

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