

Bridging the Filipino Religious Concept of Tagapamagitan (Go-Between) and Christ as The Ultimate Mediator in the Gospel of Mark

Narry F. Santos

INTRODUCTION

The Filipino concept of *tagapamagitan* (or “go-between”) plays an important role in bridging Christian mission and Philippine culture, especially in relation to understanding Jesus Christ as the ultimate mediator. The concept of *tagapamagitan* also serves as the cultural link in incorporating the Jesus of the Bible to the cultural realities and spiritual relationships of Filipinos. To reach the distant Bathala (or supreme God), indigenous religious groups rely on the *babaylan*¹ (or Visayan shaman) or *catalonan*² (or Tagalog shaman) to find access through the *anitos* (or spirit beings). To win the heart of a lovely young woman, a suitor employs a *tulay* (or bridge) to help in the courting process. To end the feud between two warring families, local leaders seek the aid of a respectable *tagapamagitan* in the community.

This cultural concept springs from two polar cultural realities: (1) the Filipino love for harmony (*pagkakaugma*) in life and relationships (*ugnayan*); and (2) the reality of hierarchical structures in society and culture. The *tagapamagitan* thrives in the context of the Filipino desire for harmony, despite the experience of distance in hierarchical structures (both human and supernatural). Such paradoxical relation creates apparent tension in the Filipino understanding of personhood, relationships, and spirituality. This tension seeks to be culturally resolved and has found its resolution in the dynamic cultural tool of *tagapamagitan*, creatively connecting these binary realities in society (i.e., distance through hierarchy and nearness through harmony). Though this concept often occurs in interpersonal relationships, its spiritual and religious aspects (i.e., relationships with God, the spirit world, and people) open doors in helping Filipinos to understand Christ as God’s ultimate *Tagapamagitan*. This essay aims to accomplish two goals; namely: (1) to present inputs on the Filipino cultural realities and roles of the religious *tagapamagitan*; and (2) to propose an approach in linking the role of Jesus Christ as God’s ultimate *Tagapamagitan* in the Gospel of Mark and in relation to

these religious *tagapamagitan* roles. Before setting out to fulfill these goals, it is important to first present the Filipino desire for harmony in spiritual relationships.

FILIPINO EMPHASIS ON HARMONY IN SPIRITUALITY

In his *Filipino Worldview: Ethnography of Local Knowledge*, Jocano discusses at length the Filipino themes of harmony and balance. At the outset of the book, he claims, “The concept of balance or equilibrium (*pagkakaugma*) is widely held in the communities where we conducted this study.”³ He talks about the Filipino’s equilibrium, which is one of the fundamental elements in life – maintaining that “everything must be kept in balance in order to insure good health and good fortune.”⁴ Jocano contends that in the religious realm, the Filipino “lives in harmony with the supernatural and with his fellowman.”⁵ Specifically, he argues that the Filipino has a “religio-secular view that makes possible the understanding of the mundane purposes and spiritual interests that make man live in harmony with nature and hold a position of primacy with his fellowman.”⁶ Similarly, Mercado affirms the Filipino preference for harmony in the spiritual or religious realm. This affirmation is evident in these words:

*In short, the Filipino philosophy of God, the spirits, and the departed ancestors is a reflection of his social philosophy as well as of his general philosophy of harmony. This psychological way of thinking is ultimately due to the Filipino’s non-dualistic or synthetic world view wherein the subject is in harmony with the object. It is quite different from the dualistic world view which sees a dichotomy between subject and object, between mind and matter, between body and soul, between one and the many, between thought and reality.*⁷

Moreover, Covar proposes that the organizing principle of Philippine religious movements is harmony of *loob* (what is inside), and that the organizational set-up of these groups is cast into a material and spiritual sense of unity. He writes, “The universe consists of the material and the spiritual. They are dealt with separately, yet they form a whole. The *pangulo* (president) handles business affairs.

1. The term *babaylan* was used by the early Spanish chroniclers for the Visayan shamans. Cf. Leonardo N. Mercado, *Filipino Popular Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity* (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 2000), 88.

2. Pedro de San Buenaventura mentions in his *Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala* of 1613 about the *catalonan*: *sacerdotista de sus idolos* (“the priestess of their idols”). The early Spanish chroniclers, like Plasencia, Chirino, Loarca, and others concur in their condemnation of the pagan priests and priestesses who were “serving satan and his companions” (Antoon Postma, “The Pandaniwan and His Daniw Power: The Healer Shaman in Mangyan Society,” in Leonardo N. Mercado (ed.), *Filipino Religious Experience and Non-Biblical Revelation* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1992), 91-92.

3. F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Worldview: Ethnography of Local Knowledge* (Quezon City: PUNLAD Research House, 2001), 25.

4. Jocano, *Filipino Worldview*, 32.

5. Jocano, *Filipino Worldview*, 189.

6. Jocano, *Filipino Worldview*, 191.

7. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban, Philippines: Divine Word University, 1974), 173.

The *sinusunod* (spiritual leader) concentrates on the spiritual matters.⁸ Covar also sees this organizing principle of Philippine religious movements as a unity. He argues this way:

*It is a unity. The material is not opposed to the spiritual. The priesthood is not set apart from the laity. Revealed knowledge and knowledge from books are two sides of the same coin. Even as the normative ideological theme refers to a state of becoming, the patterning of organization relates to a state of position. There is gradation but no opposition. Dualism is perceived as a unity*⁹

FILIPINO REALITY OF A HIERARCHICAL SPIRITUAL WORLD

The Filipino religious concept of *tagapamagitan* flows from the desire for harmony in vertical relationships. It occurs in the context of integrating or connecting the supernatural and the natural. Yet, despite such desire, there exists the reality of a complex set of classifications within the Filipino spirit world. In fact, Mercado espouses that the Filipino hierarchic social structure is projected to "the other world" (i.e., the afterlife and the spirit world).¹⁰ He states, "[T]he Filipino's stress for hierarchy demands that people employ intermediaries in asking for special favors. This social hierarchy is reflected in the Filipino's relationship with God, who is so exalted that man is not in contact directly with Him."¹¹ Thus, for Filipinos, intermediaries are required to reach God.

In the indigenous religion before Spanish contact, the spirit world is composed of a remote supreme god (*Bathala, Laon, or Kabunian*), less remote lower gods (*anitos*), and ancestral spirits.¹² In his monograph on Folk Christianity, Jocano lists a host of many kinds of Luzon, North Luzon, Visayan, and Mindanao divinities. He describes the different layers in the afterlife: "The domain of the afterlife was divided into different layers. These were inhabited by spirits. Some of the spirits are good, others were evil. Most of them participated in the affairs of man."¹³ Ramos describes a long list of evil spirits or creatures of lower mythology,¹⁴ while Demetrio spends a whole volume talking about Philippine myths, religious symbols, and native religions that are deeply involved

in the spirit world.¹⁵ Thus, the spirits or deities are of different kinds to Filipinos. Jocano further observes:

*Some of the deities were always near; others were inhabitants of far-off realms of the sky world who took interest in human affairs only when they were invoked during the proper ceremonies which compel them to come down to earth. In this connection, the spirits who were always near were the ones often called by the people for help. Each of these supernatural beings had specific and some independent functions.*¹⁶

Given the context of a hierarchical and complex system in the spirit world and the desire for harmony and connectedness in the material and spiritual realms, the Filipino concept of *tagapamagitan* has been embedded in the deep religious consciousness. This deep religious consciousness is evident among indigenous religious communities and in folk Christianity.

INSIGHTS ON THE INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS CONCEPT OF "TAGAPAMAGITAN"

Since it is overwhelming to investigate here each of the 586 Philippine religious organizations (i.e., 368 groups from Elwood's 1967 list¹⁷ and 218 from Covar's 1972 list¹⁸), this study will limit its scope to the communities under the category of folk Christianity (i.e., religious groups that are of local origin, autochthonous, and are a blend of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Filipino animism).¹⁹ Historically, the Christian doctrines (outside formal and official religious settings) have been dramatically indigenized to the point of producing a popular version, called folk Christianity. In his monograph on Folk Christianity, Jocano claims:

*The indigenous religion appears to maintain its fundamental structures and characteristics since the Spanish contact while the introduced religion (Christianity) has been tremendously modified to suit local ways of thinking, believing and doing things. Many cultural communities still practice similar religious rituals and ceremonies as recorded four centuries ago. The traditional magico-religious rituals and beliefs have remained intact and have continued to form part of rural lifeways.*²⁰

Such indigenous religion or folk Christianity has preserved religious concepts of harmony with the spiritual world and the physical world. One way of

8. Prospero Covar, "General Characterization of Contemporary Religious Movements in the Philippines," *Asian Studies* 13 (1975): 87.

9. Covar, "Contemporary Religious Movements," 87.

10. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 172.

11. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 171.

12. Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1986), 6-8.

13. F. Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity: A Preliminary Study of Conversion and Patterning of Christian Experience in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 5-17.

14. Maximo D. Ramos, *The Creatures of Philippine Lower Mythology* (Quezon City, Philippines: Phoenix Publishing House, 1990), 23-139. See also Ramos' *Filipino Cultural Patterns and Values and their Mythological Dimensions* (Quezon City: Island Publishers, 1973).

15. Francisco R. Demetrio, *Myths and Symbols: Philippines* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1978).

16. Jocano, *Folk Christianity*, 4.

17. Douglas J. Elwood, *Churches and Sects in the Philippines: A Descriptive Study of Contemporary Religious Group Movements* (Dumaguete City, Philippines: Silliman University, 1968), 71-128.

18. Prospero R. Covar, *Philippine Folk Christianity* (Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Social Science Council, Modern History Program, 1972), 2-3.

19. Covar, *Philippine Folk Christianity*, 3.

20. Jocano, *Folk Christianity*, iii.

preserving this supernatural harmony is through the spiritual help of the religious tagapamagitan between God and the indigenous group.

TAGAPAMAGITAN ROLES IN INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Various indigenous religious communities under folk Christianity have different ways of expressing their concepts of *tagapamagitan* in their vertical relationships. Covar gives a sampling of these different *tagapamagitan* names and roles: the *Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi* has an “invoker” (*tagatawag*), who performs the needed ritual to establish direct communication between the *Banal na Tinig* (Holy Voice) and the *kapatiran* (congregation); the *Sagrada Familia de Rizal* has a “medium” (i.e., *Aling Gloria*), who goes into a trance before being spiritually possessed by *Apo Asiong*, who despite his having “left” (not dead, in her view), speaks through *Aling Gloria*; the *Union Christiana Espiritista* has a *talaytayan*, who performs the function of casting out devils and healing the sick; the *Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios and Rosa Mistica* have *supremas* (priestesses), who are ritualists, saying the mass and leading the *kapatiran* during religious ceremonies and rituals; and the *Kapatirang Pag-ibig sa Diyos, Sambahang Kaamaamahan at Kainainahan*, and *Bathalismo* have *Nana Teta*, *Inang Adarna* and *Inang Mahiwaga*, respectively to bless and enlighten the believers.²¹

Millenarian religious communities within the area of Mt. Banahaw (a sacred site in the country) also possess *tagapamagitan* names and roles for their spiritual leaders: the *Ciudad Mistica de Dios* has a *suprema* (the current living one is *Suprema Isabel Suarez*), takes charge of calendrical rituals that include the *paglangkap* (i.e., trance-like possessions and dream visions); the *Cofradia de Sto. Niño ni Aling Vecing* has a “medium” (*Aling Vecing*), who receives prophecies of coming disasters from the *Sto. Niño* or the Nazarene; the *Buklod-Diwa* has the *Lingkod-Busilak* (Pure Servant), who leads the healing sessions, consisting of the laying of hands, herbal drinks, and herbal topical applications; the *Darasa Catholic Mission Group* has Sr. Fe, the charismatic leader who interprets visions and goes through *paglalangkap* (possession/trance) by the spirits of the *Sto. Niño* or the *Mahal na Ama* (Beloved Father); and the *Union Adoradores Cristianos al Espirito Divino* (UNACAED) originally had *Maestro Severino Deang*, the founder who was a guru or learned mystic, communicating with the spirits. The group is later led by his wife, *Inang Goring* or *Popo*, who trances and preaches to the *kapatiran*.²²

Moreover, the *Pinagkaisahan Sambahayan sa Bandilang Bundok*, a spirit cult of the Santo Niño in Majayjay, Laguna has a *kasangkapan* (instrument), who is

21. Covar, “Contemporary Religious Movements,” 88.

22. For a sampling of these nativistic movements see Guillermo Pesigan’s *Dulang Buhay ng Bunbok Banahaw: Karanasan ng Ciudad Mistica* (Quezon City, Philippines: Bahay Saliksikan ng Pili-pinolohiyang Simulain, 1992).

possessed by the Santo Niño in the *gamutan* (chapel). Other spirit cults of the Santo Niño with their own *kasangkapan* (or instrument for spirit possession) include the *Samahang Santo Niño de Praga ng Makati*, *Santo Niño of Bulusan*, Sister Baby and the Company, and *Samahang Santo Niño*.²³

In summary, the *tagapamagitan* roles of the spiritual leaders in indigenous religious communities focus on the key medium-like tasks of their leaders. As spiritual mediators, the religious leaders are able to initiate communication between God (or the spirit world) and the religious group. As messengers of the spirits, they receive major visions and warnings about incoming dangers and disasters. As dispensers of supernatural powers, they heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. As teachers of God, they preach and instruct the *kapatiran* (brotherhood) about purity, enlightened living, and the will of God.

So far, we have covered the first goal of this article; namely: to present some initial insights on the indigenous Filipino religious concept of *tagapamagitan*. The second goal is to give a proposed approach in linking New Testament themes on the role of Jesus Christ as God’s ultimate *Tagapamagitan* and the indigenous Filipino roles of the religious *tagapamagitan*. This approach connects the four functions of the religious *tagapamagitan* to the four roles of Christ, the ultimate *Tagapamagitan*.

PROPOSED APPROACH TO LINK CHRIST AS GOD’S ULTIMATE TAGAPAMAGITAN

The Filipino religious concept of *tagapamagitan* revolves around four functions: (1) as a dispenser of supernatural powers; (2) as a spiritual mediator; (3) as a messenger of God; and (4) as a teacher of God. A viable approach to link Christ as God’s ultimate *Tagapamagitan* is to show that Christ fulfilled to the full what it was to be God’s dispenser of supernatural powers, God’s spiritual mediator, God’s messenger, and God’s teacher. In other words, these four functions can serve as the potential links in verifying the *tagapamagitan* roles of Christ between God and the people.²⁴ This final section will survey these four roles in the Gospel of Mark.

CHRIST AS ULTIMATE DISPENSER OF SPIRITUAL POWERS

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was vividly portrayed as the miracle-wonder worker. He cast out demons; he healed the sick; he performed miracles. Mark brims with such phenomenal examples of spiritual powers

23. For details on these religious groups, see Takefumi Tera-da, “The Spirit Cult of Sto. Niño: An Anthropological Study of Popular Religiosity in the Philippines,” unpublished dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1987.

24. Another way to approach the link to Jesus as the ultimate *Tagapamagitan* is to show that Jesus possesses the qualities that make a *tagapamagitan* effective (e.g., compassionate, humble, sincere, approachable, and sociable).

through exorcisms, healings, and miracles. Mark included four actual instances of exorcisms²⁵ and three “summary statements”²⁶ that tell of his casting out unclean spirits. The crowds who witnessed the exorcisms usually responded in amazement (Mark 1:27), commenting, “He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” Even the disciples were led to ask Jesus a question about his authority (9:28). Those from whom the unclean spirits were cast out obeyed Jesus’ authoritative instructions (5:19-20).

Aside from exorcisms, the Gospel incorporated nine actual instances of healings²⁷ and five “summary statements”²⁸ that tell of Jesus’ healings. How did the recipients of healing respond to these supernatural acts? Some served (1:28); some proclaimed the events freely (1:45; 7:36); some feared and trembled (5:33); some followed Jesus (10:52). The eyewitnesses of the healings responded in amazement, saying, “We have never seen anything like this” (2:12), and “He has done all things well; he makes even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak” (7:37). Mark also included five actual instances of miracles,²⁹ along with public reactions to those miracles. The miraculous stilling of the sea made the disciples afraid, saying, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (4:41). The occasion of Jesus’ walking on water elicited in the disciples great astonishment (6:51). Aside from the exorcisms, healings, and miracles, Jesus showed the greatest expression of supernatural power, when he was raised from the dead after three days (16:1-8). Thus, Jesus was the dispenser of supernatural power.

JESUS AS ULTIMATE MESSENGER OF GOD

Aside from serving as dispenser of supernatural powers, Christ also functioned as God’s messenger. He predicted the future and warned his followers of impending dangers and disasters. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was publicly perceived as an Old Testament prophet. King Herod identified him as the prophet in the person of John the Baptizer who was raised (Mark 6:14). Others boldly named him as the prophet Elijah (6:15a). Others said that Jesus was “a prophet, like one of the prophets of old” (6:15b). In another context, this time in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” (8:27). The disciples give a similar answer about the people’s perception of Jesus: “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets” (8:28). Later in the Gospel, Mark capitalized on this

25. The four instances of exorcism are located in Mark 1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29; cf. 9:38.

26. The three “summary statements” are seen in Mark 1:32-34, 39; and 6:13.

27. The nine healing stories are seen in Mark 1:29-31; 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-5; 5:21-24, 35-43; 5:25-34; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; and 10:46-52.

28. The five healing “summary statements” are found in Mark 1:32-34; 3:10; and 6:5, 13, 55-56.

29. The five miracles are seen in Mark 4:35-41 (sea-stilling); 6:32-44 (5,000 fed), 45-52 (Jesus’ water-walking); 8:1-9 (4,000 fed); and 11:12-14, 20-24 (fig tree’s withering).

public perception and then used the “prophet” designation to show that Jesus is truly “the last and greatest of God’s messengers.”³⁰

Jesus predicted his own death thrice in the Gospel (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). He also predicted future suffering and persecution, which were incorporated within Jesus’ sermon on the end-times (13:1-37).³¹ Jesus authoritatively foretold future events, including the projected suffering of the disciples and emphasizing the coming of the Son of Man with great power and glory (13:24-27). After the prediction of the beginning of the “birth pangs” (13:5-8), Mark included Jesus’ prediction of the persecutions the disciples would encounter in the hands of the Jews and Gentiles (13:9-13), and their relatives (13:12). Before Jewish religious councils and synagogues, they will be delivered and beaten. Before the Gentile Roman political governors and kings, they would stand. In addition, they would be betrayed by their relatives, “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents, and have them out to death” (13:12). This general sense of future hatred for the disciples is capped in the words “and you will be hated by all” (13:13a). Thus, Jesus is God’s ordained, prophetic, and ultimate messenger of God to the people.

JESUS AS ULTIMATE TEACHER OF GOD

Aside from being the dispenser of supernatural powers and God’s messenger, Christ also served as God’s teacher. Jesus is explicitly called “Teacher” 12 times in the narrative.³² This honorific title is attached to him by his disciples (4:38), by some people from the house of Jairus (5:35), by the father of the demon-possessed boy (9:17), by a rich young ruler (10:17), by some Pharisees and Herodians (12:14), by some Sadducees (12:19), and by a certain scribe (12:32). The repeated recognition of Jesus as “Teacher” shows respect for his teaching ability and spiritual depth. In fact, his teaching made so much impact in a Capernaum synagogue that the public was “astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (1:22). Mark showed how teaching is Jesus’ prominent ministry in the Gospel.³³

Related to the title of teacher is the term “rabbi” used for Jesus. Peter calls Jesus rabbi twice (9:5; 11:21); Judas does so once (14:45); Bartimaeus calls Jesus “rabbouni” (10:51). In addition, the verb “to teach” as used to refer to Jesus’s activity occurs sixteen times

30. E. K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 62.

31. Mark 13 is the longest (and probably the hardest) sermon in the Gospel. This teaching on eschatology is often called the “Olivet Discourse,” because of Mark’s reference to its delivery from the Mount of Olives (13:3). It is also dubbed as the “Synoptic Apocalypse.”

32. The title “Teacher,” as it applies to Jesus, is found in Mark 4:38; 5:35; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; and 14:14.

33. David E. Garland, *A Theology of Mark’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 258.

in the Gospel.³⁴ France contends that over half of the narrative is devoted to Jesus' teaching.³⁵ In addition, Beavis observes that Mark alternates between narrative and teaching throughout the Gospel.³⁶ Thus, the mission of Jesus as rabbi and teacher with authority and spiritual depth in the Gospel narrative shows that Jesus is God's ultimate Teacher.

JESUS AS ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL MEDIATOR OF GOD

Finally, Christ also served as the spiritual mediator between God and the people. In the Gospel, Jesus interceded before God on behalf of his people on several occasions. He prayed very early in the morning in a solitary place (1:35). He prayed overnight on a mountainside before He chose the 12 apostles (3:13; cf. Luke 6:12). He prayed on a high mountain with His three disciples before He was transfigured (9:2; cf. Luke 9:28-29). He prayed thrice in Gethsemane (13:32, 35, 39), and taught His three disciples to watch and pray (14:38). Aside from praying, Jesus called people unto Himself and God as a spiritual mediator. He called Simon and Andrew (1:16-17), James and John (1:19-20), Levi (2:14), the 12 apostles (3:14-19), and anyone who would deny oneself, take up the cross and follow Jesus (8:34).

In addition to Mark's Gospel, Christ is also cited as mediator in four occasions of the New Testament. These occasions are as follows: (1) "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5); (2) "But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6); (3) "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance - now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15) and (4) "to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant. . ." (Hebrews 12:24a). Just as the Holy Spirit intercedes to God on behalf of his people (Romans 8:26, 27), Christ also intercedes for his people: "Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:34). Thus, as spiritual mediator, Christ intercedes for people, as the Holy Spirit does. Jesus communicates to God, on behalf of the people; thus, serving as God's ultimate

34. These 16 instances are found in Mark 1:21, 22; 2:13; 4:1, 2; 6:2, 6, 34; 7:7; 8:31; 10:1; 11:17; 12:14, 35; and 14:49.

35. R. T. France, "Mark and the Teaching of Jesus," in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, edited by R.T. France and David Wenham, 101-136 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1980), 112-113. Cf. Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 412.

36. Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4:11-12* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 127. Beavis shows this pattern: Narrative (1:1-3:35); Teaching (4:1-35); Narrative (4:35-6:56); Teaching (7:1-23); Narrative (7:24-9:29); Teaching (9:30-10:45); Narrative (10:46-12:44); Teaching (13:1-37); Narrative (14:1-16:8).

spiritual mediator.

CONCLUSION

Having explored the Filipino religious concepts of tagapamagitan and having connected these concepts to the ultimate Tagapamagitan roles of Jesus (as dispenser of God's spiritual powers, messenger of God, teacher of God, and spiritual mediator), we have seen how this approach can serve as cultural bridge in incorporating the Jesus of the Bible to the cultural realities and spiritual relationships of Filipinos. May this approach help Filipino Christians seek out more relevant and flourishing ways to connect culture with Christian mission, so that more people can discover the joy of knowing and serving better the God of both mission and culture.

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Narry F. Santos
narrysantos@gmail.com

Narry F. Santos is Associate Professor of Christian Ministry and Intercultural Leadership at the seminary of Tyndale University in Toronto, part time Senior Pastor of Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF) Peel and GCF York in Canada, and Vice President of the Evangelical Missiological Society Canada. His PhDs are in New Testament (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1994) and in Philippine Studies (University of the Philippines, 2006). He wrote several books, including *Family Relations in the Gospel of Mark* (Peter Lang, 2021) and *Slave of All* (Sheffield, 2003). He also edited mission compendiums and contributed chapters in diaspora books and biblical articles in academic journals.

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