

# **The Case for Positive Entanglements with the Colonial Past: Singapore as Locus Theologicus of Contextual Theology**

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## **Abstract**

The importance of “context” in theological exploration has been solidly affirmed through disciplines such as contextual theology and intercultural theology. These disciplines stressed that it is impractical to establish a one-size-fits-all narratives in the search for God-talk. Inspired by this idea, this paper attempts to provide a fresh optic into postcolonial theology by introducing Singapore as a Locus Theologicus. The insights of Singapore’s contextual theology can offer an alternative vision into understanding the relationship, power dynamics, and theological discourse between a locality and its colonizer. Ultimately, this invites the consideration for a new paradigm to harvest positive entanglements with a colonial past, which could eventually facilitate a journey from lamentation to hope.

## **Introduction**

Postcolonial theology has surfaced and gained significance over the past few decades as the framework to reflect on the trauma, hurts and exploitation between a locality and its previous colonizer(s). The theology calls for a critical view of the multi-faceted impositions and oppressions of the colonizers and explores paradigm to dislodge the control and grip of the colonial West on all aspects of the liberated countries. Furthermore, it also raises the reflection on the imbalanced power dynamics, even in the realm and scope of theological methodology. The entanglements between the colonizer vis a vis colonized thus have typically been viewed negatively. Unique as it may be, Singapore, a small island that became an independent country, only started its search for a national identity after the withdrawal of the colonial power, and does not seem to display the trauma of its colonial past. In fact, the country utilized the entanglement with its past as the strategic element to propel the nation to astonishing economic and social development within a short frame of time. This paper aims to first investigate this reality, and then question if there is in fact a possibility for a so-called *positive entanglement* between a locality and the colonizer(s).