Title: A Biblical-based self-esteem for the Filipino: an attempt in constructing a Theology in context

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Abstract:

This study addresses the self-esteem of the Filipino. Filipino self-esteem, *amor propio* indicates that the Filipino has a high sense of individual dignity yet at the same time manifests an accompanying over sensitivity to slights and personal affront.

The methodology used in the research is a modified transculturation approach developed by Charles Kraft. The first step involved an analysis of Filipino culture in relation to self-esteem. The analysis revealed that the various elements of Filipino culture affirm the worth and dignity of each individual. On the other hand the same cultural elements likewise bring about the over sensitivity and often confrontational reaction when *amor propio* is slighted. The issue therefore is not inferiority or low-self-esteem but the cultural socialization processes that are the antecedents of Filipino self-esteem.

The second step of the methodology is the analysis of the biblical foundations for self-esteem. A self-esteem consistent with the biblical teachings on personhood places self-worth in the context of basic human relationships. But the underlying principle is a biblically-based self-esteem is theocentric in basis and orientation.

The last step of the methodology is the theological formulation for the Filipino self-esteem. A shift from the socio-centric basis and reinforcement of Filipino self-esteem toward a
theocentric basis and affirmation is proposed. The formulation works in the framework of Filipino personalism, using the concepts of pagkilala sa Dios (knowing God) and the concepts related to loob (inner self). The Filipino Christian, because of his pagkilala sa Dios has a pagpapahalaga sa sarili (self-worth) that is based in a loob secure in God’s unconditional love, and not on social estimation.