

Globethics Repository



Madang Journal [Vol 5, June 2006]

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Journal volume
Authors	Institute for the Study of Theology, Sungkonghoe University
Publisher	Sungkonghoe University
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-17 04:03:45
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/184063

**International Journal of Contextual Theology
in East Asia**

Volume 5 (June 2006)

4 Foreword

Articles

- 7 Theological Issues of Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula
Ji - Seok Jung
- 23 Contextual Transformations - Minjung Theology Yesterday and Today
Volker Küster
- 45 Religious Dialogue and Co-operation in the Context of Globalization: Global Ethic, New Liberalisms and Empire
Micah Eun-Kyu Kim
- 63 Saeng-myung Feminism : an Attempt to Localize Eco-feminism
Young-suk Yi
- 83 Korean Feminist Ecclesiology : A Wholistic Approach
Mee - Hyun Chung
- 105 Exiles and Exotic Intruders : Christians in Britain
Werner Ustorf

Abstracts of Recent Doctoral Dissertations

- 119 The Non-Existent Existing God : An East Asian Perspective with specific Reference to the Thought of Ryu Yŏng-mo
Jeong-hyun Youn
- 120 The Comparative Study between Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung : In terms of the first cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party in China and the first movement for unity in Korea
Kyong-nae Lee
- 123 A Study of Gandhi's Thought Regarding Non-Violence : from the perspective of Christian Ethics
Won-Kyung Rim

Foreword

A Fresh Attempt to Construct Asian Theology for the 21st Century

I have welcomed an Invitation from Christian Conference of Asia to reflect on the theme “Rerouting Mission in Asia” from the perspective of the Asian people. For this awesome task, I am taking a cue from the bold and creative proposal by a Chinese theologian at the end of last century, for “Construction of Chinese Theological Thought: 中國神學思想建設”. Like the Chinese Christian community, I believe the Asian Christian movement also needs to make a fresh attempt to construct Asian theology.

Recently I was invited by the National Association of Korean Systematic theologians; and I delivered a paper, similar to this topic.

The history of the Asian Christian movement needs reconstruction. The Asian historical context that has shaped the movement has been complex and changing. Recently we have experienced Western encroachment, modernization with national independence, and now globalization. In the light of these changes in the Asian historical context we need to write a fresh history of the Asian Christian movement, not simply viewing it as an extension of “Western Christendom.” In the context of the Asian peoples’ struggles for national independence, it is clear that the Asian Christian movement should have been regarded as an integral component of those liberation movements. In the context of the Asian peoples’ struggles for democracy and justice, the Asian Christian movement should have been an integral part of those movements. On the contrary, however, Asian Christianity remained, by and large, an Asian version of Western Christianity. Many efforts have been made to overcome this mistaken identity. Translation of scriptures, theological textbooks and other Christian writings from the West was the first step. Then there was a process of indigenization and acculturation of Western Christianity in Asian soil. Still another step was the process of contextualization of the classical theology rooted in Western Christendom.

Why a fresh construction of Asian theology?

In the first place, the identity of the Christian movement in Asia is being seriously questioned as to its true Gospel character, that is, its truth and the nature of its liberation. This is not a new question; it has been asked throughout the Asian expansion of Western Christianity. Now, in the 21st century, it is an acute issue

demanding fresh construction of the identity of the Asian Christian movement. A parallel task is the critical assessment of Asian Christianity, which has been transmitted from the West to Asia and has maintained close relations with Western Christendom and Western Christianity.

For example, Western Christianity has implanted its denominationalism, including its ecumenical efforts for unity among denominations, in the Asian soil. When the Chinese Christian movement seeks theological clarification and construction of a post-denominational ecclesiology, it immediately faces the obstacle of Western denominationalism in its historical and contemporary church life. A closely related issue is the exclusive attitude of Asian Christianity towards Asian religious experiences, Asian religions and their heritages. So-called Christian dialogue and relations with other Asian religions presuppose and emphasize the distinctness and even exclusiveness of Christianity. The important continuity of Asian Christian religious experiences and the common heritage shared with other Asian religions are underestimated, if not rejected. The process of indigenization and contextualization of Western Christianity has not dealt with this problem. The roots of the Asian Christian movement have not been clarified and established.

Now Christianity is becoming a religion of the global empire, as it seeks to build "World Christendom." Though this is an old vision, inherent in the world mission movement of Western Christianity, now the Western Christian ecumenical movement for church unity and for social and cultural liberation faces serious challenge from the conservative, fundamentalist Christian movement in the West. The impact of this challenge is similar for the "mission churches" and the ecumenical movement outside the West as well, since they are fundamentally rooted in the West.

In the second place, the Asian Christian movement is gradually becoming a religion of the middle class, reflecting its Western Protestant mission roots, which originated in the rising bourgeois class of Western societies. Though the Asian Christian movement has lived among the poor, oppressed and alienated people in Asia, and one of its dimensions has been solidarity with the people (the *Minjung*), this has been marginal; and is becoming even more marginalized today by (Western-inspired) middle-class Christianity.

Asian Christianity as a whole has not taken seriously the challenges of social, cultural, caste and racial movements for liberation. It has not taken

seriously the Christian movements and Christian religious experiences in the post-capitalist and socialist societies of Asia. The Chinese Christian movement's proposal for "construction of Chinese theological thought" is a big challenge to both Asian Christianity and world Christianity. Here we see another dimension of the crisis in Asian Christian identity. Asian Christianity is not a religion of the people and not a religion of liberation.

In the third place, Asian Christianity, along with Western Christianity, has failed to cope with Western modernity: with all its manifestations in economy, politics, culture and ecology. The Western chauvinistic penetration into Asian civilization, together with the modernization drive of the Asian nation states, is bringing total disintegration of the order of living beings at micro- and macro-cosmic levels and in the areas of economic, geo-political, political, social, cultural and ecological life of Asia, as in the whole world. This means the disintegration of Asian civilization. Christianity has been an integral part of this process, alongside Western modernity. What is the identity of the Asian Christian movement in this process of erosion of Asian civilization?

There may be many other reasons why we need to construct Asian theology in a new way. In any case, the signs of the times in Asia and global society demand a really fresh approach for construction of theology for the Christian movement from an Asian perspective.

Chief Editor, Kim Yong-Bock

Theological Issues of Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula

Ji - Seok Jung*

Introduction

The Korean peninsula is in a crisis of war. The Bush administration of America is condemning Kim Jong-Il's North Korean regime as an "outpost of tyranny" or "axis of evil" and publicly announcing military action to break down North Korea's nuclear program, which is currently in negotiation at the six-party talks. Meanwhile North Korea has been suffering from an economic shortage resulting in a famine which has caused numerous deaths. South Koreans are divided into two groups: conservative rightists and liberal leftists. The former group is against the Kim Jong-Il regime and pro America while the latter group is pro North Koreans and anti Bush administration. The Korean peninsula is in a complicated conflict domestically and internationally.

Reunification is a way of peace in the Korean peninsula. At the same time

Ji-Seok Jung is teaching Peace Education at Hanshin University. He received his Ph.D degree from Sunderland University (Woodbrooke College) in England. His doctoral thesis is Quaker Peace Testimony, Ham Sokhon's Ideas of Peace and Korean Reunification Theology. He is a Presbyterian minister (PROK) who has worked at a rural church, a minjung church, the National Council of Churches in Korea(NCCK) and Korean Christian Academy. He is director of Korea Christian Peace Institute(KCPI). E-mail : pecom2003@yahoo.co.kr

reunification has paradoxically been a main source of conflict because the South wants to reunify the two Koreas by its own system (capitalism) while the North also by its own system (communism). This tendency, however, has been changing since the German reunification in 1989. The North and South Korean governments seem to hesitate to pursue an immediate reunification. The South is anxious of the economic burden and the North worries about being absorbed by the South. The two Koreas want to have a period of peaceful co-existence instead of an immediate reunification. The prolongation of reunification increases a threat to peace in the Korean peninsula. This is the dilemma we are facing. In this situation we consider reconciliation between the two Koreas, between North Korea and America, and between conservative rightists and liberal leftists within South Korea, as a precondition of a peaceful reunification between North and South Korea.

Conflict between North and South Korea is characterized as not only political and military but also cultural and psychological. Since the Korean War (1950-1953) and the subsequent division of the nation, people in North and South Korea have been living under different social systems and thus their life-styles, attitudes and values are different. An old Korean pastor laments that "the North is insane and the South is spoiled."¹⁾ The long ideological and politico-military conflict has made people think that the two Koreas are hostile to each other. Deep mistrust and antagonism are rooted in their minds. National division has made a great chasm between them, which is a main obstacle to the national unity. Reconciliation is to build a bridge to cross the chasm. This essay deals with the theological issues of reconciliation in the Korean context in four ways: repentance; jubilee and sharing; memory and Eucharist.

Repentance

The Korean Churches' confession of sin in the Reunification Declaration in 1988: "we have long harbored a deep hatred and hostility toward the other side within the structure of division" made a significant breakthrough opening a new stage of relationship between North and South Korea. That is, this confession of sin broke the political, social, cultural and religious taboos on South-North relations. The Korean theologian, Oh Jae-Shik, who

1) Lee Sang-Chul, "Peace March Toward the New Millenium," NCKK, *The 10th Anniversary of the '88 Declaration*, 15.

led the seminar process of the document, described the significance of the religious action as follows:

The social atmosphere at the time, with regard to South-North relations, was that nobody admitted their wrongs or even mentioned them. But the Declaration confessed our sins of hatred and unforgiveness of our brothers and sisters, and we stood up naked before God. Through that opportunity we came to stand at the same level as the people in North Korea bearing together our past historic burden, as equal partners, and recognizing the other side as the counterpart with whom we could cooperate for a common future. Through the Declaration we voluntarily gave up the foundation of our insistence that all the wrongs were on the side of North Korea.²⁾

Confession of sin means a behavior of repentance, which becomes the first activity to open the gate of reconciliation in hostile relationship between North and South Korea. Let's see the theological implications of repentance in terms of reconciliation.

(1) Repentance is based on truth. It doesn't aim to quarrel over right and wrong.

Repentance aims at turning to God and "renouncing a way of thinking or acting regarded as bad."³⁾ In biblical terms it implies metanoia, which we translate as "conversion" or "repentance."⁴⁾ It forms the identity of Christians.

Metanoia speaks of a radical change in one's understanding of the world and oneself, a reorientation not only of the mind, but of the entire being, a change of allegiance committing oneself to doing the will of God and adapting oneself to the values of God's realm (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18; 26:20).⁵⁾

2) Oh Jae-Shik, "Reconciliation and Cooperation," NCKK, *The 10th Anniversary of the '88 Declaration*, 59.

3) Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993), 66.

4) Ibid., 2.

5) Konrad Raiser, *To be the Church: Challenges and Hopes for a New Millennium* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 57.

(2) Repentance creates a new future.

Genuine repentance means “a turning away from the negative images and exclusive identities fostered by the anathemas and mutual condemnations of the past.”⁶⁾ It includes “the desire for a new beginning and the restoration of broken relationships.”⁷⁾ Justice and peace and integration of creation follow repentance. True repentance is proved in its social significance it “is then unfolded in a commitment and obligation to move away from divisions and separations, discrimination, violence and exploitation, and to move towards an inclusive society in which all find their place and the diversity of cultures and traditions is respected a society marked by active nonviolence and a caring relationship to nature, a true community of women and men and a renewed church which lives out of continuing forgiveness.”⁸⁾

(3) Repentance is the grace of God.

Repentance does not come naturally but is the response to a call (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38). In the Gospels Jesus calls for repentance and people respond. At the same time it is a gift of God (Jer. 31:18; Acts 5:31; 11:18).⁹⁾ Raiser articulates it as follows: “Turning to God in conversion is not the first but the second act. Conversion is possible because God has first turned to this world in love and has become present in Jesus Christ for all of humanity.”¹⁰⁾ Repentance, therefore, becomes a privilege for Christians while it used to in shame or as a scandal in politics and secular life. Nevertheless, it is true that repentance has not only a religious effect but also the political and social power to create reconciliation. Often the repentance of politicians contributes to purify the political order and create a new relationship with rivals.

(4) To repent first in a hostile relationship leads a process of reconciliation.

There is a stereotype in a hostile relationship: we are right and you are wrong, and so you should repent first; we are victims and you are

6) Ibid., 60.

7) Joseph Liechty, “Repentance and Peace: A Challenge to the Churches,” Alan D Falconer and Joseph Liechty (Eds.), *Reconciling Memories* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1998), 262.

8) Raiser, 59.

9) Dombes, 67.

10) Raiser, 58.

persecutors. This “righteousness mentality” and “victim mentality” hinders true repentance. Repentance of the righteous and the victim, therefore, creates reconciliation. In this respect, Gil Bailie, a reader of Rene Girard, suggests that “to repent of the violence of our justice,”¹¹⁾ may cut a vicious cycle of violence. Volf’s comment that victims’ repentance may bring about genuine reconciliation is worthy to be listened to:

Victims need to repent of the fact that all too often they mimic the behavior of the oppressors, let themselves be shaped in the mirror image of the enemy. They need to repent also of the desire to excuse their own reactive behavior either by claiming that they are not responsible for it or that such behavior is a necessary condition of liberation. Without repentance for these sins, the full human dignity of victims will not be restored and needed social change will not take place... If victims do not repent today they will become perpetrators tomorrow who, in their self-deceit, will seek to exculpate their misdeeds on account of their own victimization.¹²⁾

(5) Of what should we repent in our social life?

Jesus’ message of wealth and violence illustrates the social relevance of repentance. He says, “You cannot serve God and wealth,” (Matthew 6:24) and “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). These two injunctions express a critique of the greed and enmity which destroys peace and reconciliation in both human minds and society. Our repentance in social life is to turn to Jesus’ call to life from greed and enmity. Raiser comments on this: “Jesus’ call to life took many forms for the rich, it meant to get free from Mammon; for the sick, it meant to believe in God’s love and healing power; for the privileged, it meant to share wealth and power; for the downtrodden, it meant to overcome despair; for the educated, it meant to renounce the pride of superiority; for the weak, it meant to gain self-confidence.”¹³⁾

(6) Repentance and forgiveness should go hand in hand.

Repentance calls for forgiveness and forgiveness calls for repentance.

11) Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 200.

12) Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 117.

13) Raiser, 59-60.

Both are reciprocal. The Irish theologian Joseph Liechty explains this as “a mirror-image relationship repenting is a way of dealing with my sin, forgiving is a way of dealing with sins against me so that what is true of one is likely to have a complementary application to the other.”¹⁴⁾ Biblically this is echoed by the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us” (Luke 11: 4). Shriver says: “Divine forgiveness alone will produce an interior renovation of humanity sufficient to renovate relations between humans.”¹⁵⁾

Repentance and forgiveness release us and our enemies from the past tragedy, and create a new relationship. A reconciliation which is captured by the past cannot be a genuine reconciliation with forgiveness and which cleanses the past wrongdoing. In this respect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the Republic of South Africa, which was a holy experiment not only for a new nation-building for South Africa but also for a new humanity in the world, suggests a spiritual source for theological reflection on repentance and forgiveness. The Commission begins its work from hearing stories of victims who have a temptation of vengeance against the persecutor. The TRC offered the cathartic opportunity for victims to speak their stories, which include anger, sorrow and frustration. At the same time victims’ voices were heard openly through public media, and recorded as the historical truth. Through this process, past victims are able gradually to restore their human dignity.¹⁶⁾ On the other hand, the oppressors were forgiven by their repentance and confessing of truth about their past faults in front of the Commission: the so called “amnesty by truth.” The TRC gave wrong-doers an opportunity to repent and restore their humanity through a confession of truth. Finally, even though not fully satisfied, the TRC contributed to save South Africa from apocalyptic violence.

We have seen the theological implications of repentance in six ways:

14) Joseph Liechty, 263.

15) Donald W. Shriver Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30.

16) Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflection on Healing and Reconciliation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 89. “This profound satisfaction is not a subliminal form of revenge, but expresses itself in a genuine readiness to forgive. Many victims repeat the phrase expressed by a witness during the first days of the hearings: I am ready to forgive, but I need to know whom and for what.”

truth, a new future, a grace of God, greed, enmity, and forgiveness. True repentance brings about true reconciliation. Repentance is not only a religious concept but also a sociological idea which has an effect on the political and social relationship. In particular, the Korean ecumenical group has experienced that repentance could make a great breakthrough in reconciliation between North and South Korea.

North and South Korea fought each other in the Korean War and have kept a hostile relationship until now. North Korea has tried to communize South Korea while South Korea has tried to destroy the North Korean communist system. They have criticized each other for their lack of endeavor for national reunification. "This is the logic of the vicious circle. Seized by this logic, both parties are trapped within the negative mutualism of 'I won't do a thing until you implement the agreement first.'"¹⁷⁾

The way to break this negative mutualism is a unilateral action to implement the Agreement. Although the action seems to be risky in political realism, it could be a worthy adventure to create trust. Some people advise that such an attempt is effectual when there is equal power between both parties, however, the matter of trust-building is not done by political strategy but rather by human capacity to create a good and new relationship. In this respect a theological contribution is expected to be part of reconciliation.

Jubilee and Sharing

The Korean National Council of Churches (NCCCK) announced the year 1995, which was the 50th year of the division of Korea, as the year of Jubilee and the Christian movement for reunification in the light of the spirit of the jubilee.

Biblically the Jubilee means the fiftieth year following the completion of a cycle of seven sabbatical years totaling 49 years (Leviticus 25:8-10). As a vision of new history the Jubilee is revealed in relation to the Israelites' experience of Exodus, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt." (Leviticus 25:38), and to the building of a new community. Jubilee is a "year of liberation" free from the social and economic oppression of the powers: the enslaved are liberated, the indebted have their debts forgiven, sold land is returned to its original tillers, and seized houses are returned to

17) Ibid., 113.

their original inhabitants (Leviticus 25:11-55). Jesus proclaimed the Jubilee as the core spirit of his ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). Through the proclamation of Jubilee in Korean history, Korean ecumenical Christians aimed to express their belief in the historical presence of God and the realization of the covenant community of peace in the history of the Korean peninsula.

Jubilee is not solely a utopian ideal but indicates a historical vision that the Kingdom of God is achieved in this world. Han Ucko emphasizes its social significance as follows:

The jubilee legislation requires society to recognize a basic right of entitlement as part of being human... And it is "not in heaven" (Deut. 30:12); it will not come to pass only in the beyond. The jubilee legislation is not conceived for another dimension, but it is set in time and in a regulated time, for everyone to count the days and years, when things will be changing, debts will be cancelled, the slaves will be freed and the land will lie fallow and rest.¹⁸⁾

In this spirit of Jubilee the Korean churches proposed the philosophical grounds of "true" reunification which includes ideas of reconciliation: reunification for life together (symbiotic reunification); reunification for reciprocal learning and reflection (convergent reunification); reunification for renewal (creative reunification).¹⁹⁾

First "reunification for life together" rejects the destructive reunification through conquest over rival and seeks the way of mutual cooperation and prosperity. In order to foster such a circumstance North and South Korea should overcome a hostile relationship and take a realistic step for mutual trust, i.e. mutual disarmament. In particular, economic exchange will help both Koreas North Korea has good natural resources and labor while South Korea has high technology and international networks. Reunification will

18) Hans Ucko, "The Jubilee as a Challenge," Hans Ucko (Ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 2-3.

19) Park Kyung-Seo, *Reconciliation Reunification: The Ecumenical Approach to Korean Peninsula* (Hong Kong: Christian Conference of Asia, 1998), 118-120.

be of much benefit to both Koreas.

Second “reunification for reciprocal learning and reflection” pursues reunification not by a one-sided ideology or system but by being productive through good experiences in different ideologies and systems. During the period of division over 50 years North Korea has experienced socialism, equality and self-reliance while South Korea has experienced capitalism, freedom and international competence. In the process of reciprocal learning and reflection, the good points of both sides should be synthesized dialectically on the one hand and the bad points of both should be overcome on the other. This is the convergent reunification, which needs a positive attitude to respect ones rival’s good points (Matthew 7:3; Romans 12:6; 15:1-7).

Third “reunification for renewal” indicates a new and future-oriented national community building. Being one country is not to return to the old system; rather, it means to create a new national community based on true spirit and the system which has national independence, democracy, peace and justice, and human rights in the Korean situation. In this sense the national Jubilee is embodied in the process of reordering and reorientation into the world of reconciliation and liberation.

Jubilee presents the spirit of sharing. The early Christian apostolic community practiced the spirit of sharing among the believers. “The material, socio-economic resonance of the jubilee idea is clearly audible in the life of this Pentecost community as described in Acts 2: 42-45.”²⁰⁾ After the experience of Pentecost they shared everything with each other selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need. This is the practice of sharing to characterize the new community.

Since the early 1990s, North Koreans have been suffering from the poverty and starvation which was caused by both natural disaster and economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America. The North Korean economy is bankrupt. It is presumed that millions of people have died since then. Korean Christians have sent food and medicines, and actively participated in various relief campaigns for North Koreans with the spirit of sharing and life together. They believe that the sharing should be based on unconditional and genuine fraternal love, and that through this

20) K.M. George, “Sunday, Pentecost and the Jubilee Tradition: A Patristic Perspective,” Hans Ucko (Ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility*, 100.

process, more trust will be built up. Jubilee and sharing are biblical ideas to create reconciliation.

Memory

Memory makes the past to be the present. The past confines the present through memory. The Irish theologian Alan Falconer says that, “memory is an important element in the shaping of contemporary identities and contemporary conflicts.”²¹⁾ There are good and bad memories: the good memory forms a good identity while the bad memory a bad identity. The Korean War has been the most painful memory for Korean people. It left a great trauma in the hearts of Koreans and whenever remembering it fear, anxiety, anger, sorrow and antagonism are also refreshed. “A remembered wound is an experienced wound. Deep wounds from the past can so much pain our present.”²²⁾

Politics, education and religion are conveyers of memory. They contribute to strengthen a group identity through remembering. Politicians, teachers and priests continue to revive memory and shape identity. In South Korea the slogan, “remember 6. 25 (June 25),” the date on which the Korean War started, shapes anti-Communist identity and provokes resentment and wariness against North Korea while the memory of the Korean War in North Korea supports the state identity of being against American imperialism. Also many victims of the Korean War keep their enmity alive in their memory. Therefore, without reconciling the memories first, genuine reunification between the two Koreas would not be achieved; whatever “reunification” may be achieved the reunified Korea would enter a whirlpool of vengeance. Memory may create conflict or peace according to our approach to it. In this regard, let us examine the way to deal with memory from the theological aspect of reconciliation.

First, we can see two leitmotifs for the positive interpretation of memory in Scripture. In the Old Testament, remembering (anamnesis) is linked with the Exodus experience. Remembering the Exodus is a core idea of Israelite identity. “Thus the admonition ‘Remember Egypt’ leads to laws that focus on the protection of the aliens, the weak and powerless.”²³⁾ In the

21) Alan D. Falconer, “Remembering,” *Reconciling Memories*, Alan D. Falconer and Joseph Liechty (eds.), (Dublin: the Columba Press, 1998), 16.

22) Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace*, 133.

New Testament, it is discovered in Christ's words to the disciples at the last supper: "Do this in remembrance of me." This memory in Eucharist forms the Christian identity. Blyth describes the liturgical significance of memory in Eucharist as follows:

It is not just a rehearsal of a past event, a passive backward-looking memorial, but it is also a forward-looking event, involving re-collecting, re-presenting, and re-committing all that that event symbolizes, in order to receive the sacramental energy for living.²⁴⁾

In the Scriptures, remembering means the way of salvation (liberation) and truth, not revenge and resentment. In this respect, we may think of the memory of the Korean War as being to promote peace and for the victims of the war not to stimulate hostility and revenge. Many Korean churches' preaching of anti-Communism at the annual Korean War Memorial Sunday, is based on the negative interpretation of the memory of the Korean War. Positive interpretation of memory becomes a leitmotif of reconciliation theology in the Korean peninsula. The Korean thinker, Ham Sokhon, interpreted positively the Korean War in the light of the theology of the burnt offering:²⁵⁾

It was in the 6.25 (Korean War) that a "princess of the suffering" (i.e. Korea) cried while giving birth to the king of the new era... The Korean War was the burnt offering for cleansing the sin of the Korean nation. Though it brought about severe destruction, the original purpose of the war was to cleanse completely the deep-rooted sin in the heart of Koreans. Many people who came from several countries poured out their blood on the Korean soil. Korea was the common altar of humanity, UN and nations.²⁶⁾

23) Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness*, 37.

24) Myra Blyth, "Liturgy after the Liturgy," *The Ecumenical Review* vol. 44, no. 1, January 1992, 74.

25) "Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for him, and he will be clean" (Leviticus 14:19-20).

26) Ham Sok-hon, *The Korean History in the Light of the Providence* (Seoul:

Second, a way to deal with bad memory is the forgetting of the past. "Let bygones be bygones." This is a future-oriented way. Nobody steps forward to a new future with a bad memory. In the Scripture, the forgetting is symbolized by Jesus' teaching "don't look back" "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62); "But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26). Remembering the bad thing of the past brings about only conflict and misfortune.

Bad memories need cleansing in terms of religion. This is not something resolved by a political negotiation. Among the rituals of Korean folk religion there is a ritual for cleansing called ssikgim kut. This ritual calls out the ghosts who died with an oppressed mind, and soothes them through apologizing for the sin against them. Apology means to confess the sin. The persecutor himself/herself or some agents on behalf of the persecutor can do it. Finally, the survivors make a new promise to live rightly for the future.

This ritual helps people to be free from the bad memory in which the victims' cries remain vivid. It cleanses the bad memories in the psyche of survivors (persecutors). The religious ritual activity for cleansing the past wrongdoing can therefore contribute to healing the bad memory and creating a new future and a new relationship. "In the Christian tradition, the miraculous cures of Jesus are the distinctive sign that the Messiah has come and that the new age of the kingdom of God has dawned (Mt. 4:23-25, 10:1, 10:7-8, 11:4-5). As the divine physician, Jesus instructs his disciples how to cure all kinds of diseases, especially by casting out unclean spirits."²⁷⁾ Paul F. Knitter explains the significance of religious healing in relation to the human psyche as follows:

Religions therefore play a valuable, a necessary, role in mediating between the "divine content" of the unconscious and a person's conscious awareness... So Jung could call the world religions the great psychotherapeutic symbol systems of the world; they provide the symbols by which the archetypes can be touched and called forth. They tune us to the mystery within so that we can feel its call and not be

Hangilsa, 1997), 402-422.

27) Mircea Eliade (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* volume 6 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 226.

frightened by its unknown demands. They assure us that this mystery is real and at work within us.²⁸⁾

To recover the value of religious faith and to regain a religious outlook might be the process of reconciliation beyond the wound caused by the conflict and division. Reconciling memory might be a very painful process, but is indispensable for true reunification between North and South Korea. Without the reconciliation of memory it is impossible to rebuild a new community based on the wholehearted embracement of people in the two Koreas.

Eucharist

Eucharist is a religious resource of unity and reconciliation between North and South Korea. When some North-South Christians met each other for the first time in Glion, 1986, they embraced each other in Eucharist. Distrust, antagonism and wariness were all swept away at the moment when the North-South Christians had Eucharist together and warmly embraced each other.²⁹⁾ In effect, nobody had anticipated such a moving meeting. Such a meeting had never happened in political meetings between the North-South governments. However, at the first meeting the North-South Korean Christians experienced the mystery of Eucharist to reconcile peoples in opposition. Keshishian says that:

The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity par excellence. The unity between Christ and his people as well as among the people who constitute the *koinonia* is revealed in the Eucharist through the sharing of the bread and the wine.³⁰⁾

St. Paul stresses Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:17). Christians are unified with Christ through eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ. In spite of various differences Christians experience oneness in Eucharist which is a holy locus of unity.

28) Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 60.

29) Erich Weingartner, "A momentous encounter", *One World* 120 (1986), 4-6.

30) Aram Keshishian, *Conciliar Fellowship* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1992), 46.

Christian identity is confirmed by Eucharist. A Christian, therefore, who refuses Eucharist cannot be a genuine Christian.

Eucharist has two symbolic behaviors: eating and drinking, and remembering. Whenever eating the body of Christ and drinking the blood of Christ, Christians remember Jesus Christ's life and death his sacrifice once-for-all and his ministry. Eating and drinking something together is an expression of companionship.³¹⁾ Nobody eats and drinks with an enemy. But Eucharist as a table of "holy food" changes the enemy-friend relationship. Before that, all people are only sinners and debtors with obligation to Christ's costly redemption. This awareness that all are sinners creates the equal relationship between the people participating in the Eucharist, in which injustice, discrimination, distrust and resentment are immediately swept away. This is the mystery of Eucharist to make a true unity. Keshishian says, "In other words, the so-called 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions of unity are existentially experienced in the Eucharist."³²⁾ Eating and drinking the same thing together reveals the sociological significance of the Eucharist. "The sharing of the common loaf and the common cup in a given place demonstrates the oneness of the sharers with the whole Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places. By sharing the common loaf they show their unity with the church catholic."³³⁾ Jesus of Nazareth used to break many social taboos in eating together with people like tax-gatherers and other sinners. Shriver argues eating's sociological influence on reconciliation and unity as follows:

The act of sitting down to eat is a human gesture of consent to human company; where barriers of social custom or a history of hostile relations have stood in the way of such consent, the mere joint presence of the alienated, now around the same table consuming the same food, can be a powerful symbol of the beginning of negotiation on its way to reconciliation.³⁴⁾

Another important aspect of Eucharist is remembrance through which the sacrifice and ministry of Jesus Christ is transmitted into our present

31) Shriver Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies*, 40.

32) Keshishian, 6.

33) Ibid.

34) Shriver Jr., op. cit.

lives. In this respect Eucharist is not simply a ritual but a transformative action. Blyth argues that “the ‘liturgy after liturgy’ or ‘living the liturgy’ means to translate the Eucharistic actions of receiving, thanking, breaking, and sharing into a deliberate and intentional life-style.”³⁵⁾ The Eucharist as a sharing of the body and the blood of Christ is “the heart of the original Jesus movement, a shared egalitarianism of spiritual and material resources.”³⁶⁾ In this remembrance, Christians inherit the historical life of Jesus Christ who went the way of reconciliation and unity beyond all kinds of barriers and conflict. Regardless of friend or enemy, sharing economic and spiritual goods is a political economy of the Eucharist, which is also a core spirit of ecumenism.

The lack of daily bread, for which Christ taught us to pray, brings hunger, starvation and death to a world that is now unjustly divided between the rich and the poor. Here is the meeting of ecumenics and economics. The Eucharistic cup calls for a daily sharing of bread and of material and spiritual resources with the millions of hungry people in this world. Through them God, the Trinity, comes on pilgrimage to us at every moment.³⁷⁾

Conclusion

We have examined repentance, jubilee and sharing, memory and Eucharist in terms of reconciliation. Repentance opens the way towards reconciliation from the hostile relationship between North and South Korea both of whom argue mutually their righteousness. Jubilee is a political economy of reconciliation through sharing and liberation. A good memory creates reconciliation while a bad memory creates conflict. Eucharist is a liturgy of reconciliation and unity. Reconciliation is a healing process of the wounded and the oppressed mind of people in the Korean peninsula. Therefore, it is the substance of reunification which is an essential condition of peace in the Korean peninsula. Reconciliation in the Korean peninsula, therefore, becomes a peace-making reconciliation. Without the reconciling healing

35) Myra Blyth, ‘Liturgy after the Liturgy,’ 74.

36) Shriver Jr, op. cit.

37) Cf. the reference in *Gathered for Life*, official report of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC, D. Gill ed., WCC, Geneva, 1983, p. 26, cited in *Shalom*, 163.

process, genuine reunification may be impossible, and even though reunification may be achieved, it may only result in a chaotic situation of violence. German reunification has awakened Korean society to the fact that reconciliation is a prerequisite to reunification. The Korean theologian, Park Jong-wha described the relationship between reconciliation and reunification as follows:

In the long term perspective, reconciliation envisions a fully “reconciled national community,” but a reconciling and reconciled life-style in the midst of the division can make a foretaste of reunification possible.³⁸⁾

38) Park Jong-wha, “Reunification as Reconciliation”, NCKK, *The 10th Anniversary of the 88 Declaration*, 22.

Contextual Transformations - Minjung Theology Yesterday and Today

Volker Küster*

It were younger Korean theologians themselves who introduced the distinction of generations in Minjung theology. While the differentiation between first and second generation is evident age wise and in terms of content, the third generation is not so easy to delimit in neither way. They still have to come of age theologically by addressing the contextual challenges under the impact of globalization. In this case generation is therefore meant more thematic than biological, which at the same time makes the transitions more fluent. Whether in the end what comes out of it still should be called Minjung theology is an open question. In this article I ask in what ways the generations differ and how precisely the ever-changing context has affected them in their doing theology.

This article is a preprint of the concluding chapter of my forthcoming book Volker Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion. Minjung Theology Revisited*. It has been slightly revised to be readable on its own. I thank the editors of *Madang* and the Korea Association of Progressive Theologians for organizing a small symposium around this text at the Anglican Sungkonghoe University in Seoul on Dec. 1, 2005.

Volker Küster is professor of Theologische Universitaet Kampen in Netherlands. He is interested in interculture theology, inter-religious dialogue, the third world theology, hermeneutics, and mission theology. His email is vkuester@hotmail.com

The discovery of Christ among the minjung The first generation

The proceedings of a conference in 1979 (Oct. 22.-29.), co-sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCK), with the harmless title "The People of God and the Mission of the Church" has become something like the manifesto of Minjung theology.¹⁾ While some of the speakers were invited to write a contribution specifically for this conference and have never published in this line of thought again, others had already made their mark as Minjung theologians in the course of the seventies. To this nucleus belong Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996), Suh Nam-Dong (1918-1984), Hyun Young-Hak (1921-2004) and Kim Yong-Bock (*1938). David Suh (*1931) stood in their shadow for some time.²⁾

Despite the individuality of each of these theologians, there is a certain amount of commonalities that bring a milieu to the fore in which Minjung theology thrived. Denominationally, Minjung theology is a protestant affair. This is true despite the co-operation with the Catholic Church, especially in the political and social field and despite the lasting influence of the Catholic poet and lay-theologian Kim Chi-Ha (*1941) on Suh Nam-Dong. Its strongest supporters Minjung theology had in the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK; kor. *Kichang*), the most ecumenical oriented among the diverse Presbyterian denominations.

It is striking that the leading Minjung theologians have their roots either in Manchuria or North Korea (Ahn, Hyun, David Suh), or in the structurally poor Cholla province (Suh Nam-Dong and Kim). Without exception they have studied, at least temporarily, abroad. The elder among them still finished at least part of their education in the country of the colonial power Japan (Ahn, Suh Nam-Dong and Hyun), the younger ones studied mostly in

1) Cf. *Minjung Theology. People as the Subject of History*, rev. edition (New York: Maryknoll, 1983); Volker Küster, *Theologie im Kontext. Zugleich ein Versuch über die Minjung Theologie*, Nettetal 1995.

2) In the wider circle the brothers Moon Ik-Hwan (1918-1994) and Moon Dong-Hwan (*1921), Lee Woo-Jung (1923-2002), the grand old dame of the Korean women's movement and the pastors Park Hyung-Kyu (*1923) and Hu Byung-Sub (*1941) - the later ones more because of their practical engagement than their theological contributions - are to be mentioned.

the US (Hyun, Kim, David Suh).³⁾ Suh Nam-Dong graduated in Canada. Ahn was the only one to go to Germany, led there by his interest in Bultmann's theology.

Through bringing the Christ event and the Korean concept of *han*⁴⁾ into a fruitful interaction, Minjung theologians came to a new perception of suffering in the Korean context that was unique in the Asian sphere up till then. It is to the credit of Minjung theology to have articulated God's capacity to suffer as well as tracing his presence in the suffering people of Asia. Compared to the two extremes of contextual theology in Asia the Indian theology which is abundant with tradition and determined by its dialogue with Hinduism and Philippino theology which is strongly oriented towards Latin American liberation theology Minjung theology is the first synthesis between the socio-economic, political and cultural-religious types of contextual theology⁵⁾ in the Asian context. Dalit theology in India has followed its path by criticizing the older dialogue theology for neglecting the cast issue.⁶⁾ In contrast to Latin American liberation theologies, first generation Minjung theologians kept their reservations toward historical materialism. The cause of this reticence should not be considered a submission to official anti-communism, but is grounded in the personal experiences of this generation the flight and expulsion from North Korea and the destructions of the Korean War left deep scars. This becomes impressively clear from the memories of a contemporary witness:

3) Here parallels can be discerned to the development of the military and administrative elite. Whereas Park Chung-Hee even served in the Japanese army, the younger generation is clearly oriented towards the US.

4) Like the term "minjung" itself Minjung theologians deemed "han" untranslatable because of the specific Korean experience that lies at its ground. For further reference cf. Volker Küster, *The Priesthood of Han. Reflections on a Woodcut by Hong Song-Dam*, in: *Exchange* 26, 1997, 159-171; id., *A Protestant Theology of Passion. Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, in: Pieter N. Holtrop et al. (eds.), *Passion of Protestants*, Kampen 2004, 213-228.

5) For this typology cf. Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ. Intercultural Christology* (London 2001), 24-28.

6) Dalit is the name for the casteless. Cf. M.E. Prabhakar (ed.), *Towards a Dalit Theology* (Delhi 1989); *Indigenous People: Dalit. Dalit Issues in Today's Theological Debate*, ISPCCK CTE 5, (Delhi 1994); Arwind P. Nirmal (ed.), *A Reader in Dalit Theology*, Madras.

I grew up in North Korea and my father was a Presbyterian minister in Pyongyang. When the Korean War broke out, he was taken in by the North Korean secret police. Later we found his body floating in the Taedong-river.⁷⁾ He was shot by the North Korean soldiers. We buried him in the North, in Pyongyang, and we came down to South Korea with the retreating South Korean and US Army. Because of this experience in my family, I have a lot of hatred towards the North Korean Communist system. [...] Under this very oppressive regime, Christians and their leaders were almost helpless. The only things they could do were either to resist or to give up Christianity. My father took the position of total resistance.

More than 600.000, some people even estimate a million North Korean Christians took refuge in South Korea. If South Korean Christianity has any ideology, then it is anti-communism which is very emotionally, existentially and experientially motivated. Therefore South Korean Christians resist or reject any kind of learning or understanding of Marxism, or of the developments in Eastern European countries, Russia, or China.

This is the kind of situation in which some people, I included, try to talk about peaceful co-existence with North Korea and about the recognition of the existence of Christian communities there. But I have an internal struggle to fight. The North Korean regime is the murderer of my father, and I am trying to make peace with my enemies. On top of it, I am a Christian and I ask myself: how can you really love your enemy in a true sense? And how can you talk about peace and peaceful co-existence without repentance for the hatred of your own brothers? This internal struggle is at the same time a theological problem. South Korean Christians cannot talk about peace or reunification without repentance for the deep-seated hatred towards the brothers and the sisters in the North.⁸⁾

David Suh (*1931) is an eloquent interpreter of Minjung theology, who has affiliated himself early on with this movement.⁹⁾ Halfway through the

7) One of Korea's main rivers, flowing through Pyongyang.

8) Interview with David Suh of 15 February 1988.

9) "I was told by my friends that I am more or less the spokesperson of the Minjung theologians. I interpreted what my friends were doing theologically for the Western world. This is why I have more writings in English than in Korean" (interview of 15 February 1988).

eighties he took on the problematic issue of Korean reunification. This theme had consistently been fraught with risks in the minjung movement, and hardly been addressed theologically up till then.¹⁰⁾ Again the theological language is serving to articulate the aspirations of the Korean people. Suh calls the Korean Christians to repent that they fell into the trap of the ideology of national security and economic development. This has been a sin against God.¹¹⁾ The question of peace and reunification gets uplifted to the level of status confessionis. Suh was one of the key speakers at the 1988 NCKK International Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea in Incheon (April 25.-29.). The NCKK had declared 1995 as the jubilee year for Peace and Reunification, after fifty years of division the two Koreas should be reunified.¹²⁾ Suh interprets the division straight forward in Christological terms. The “cross” of division from which the people are suffering will be overcome in the “resurrection” of reunification. Referring simultaneously to the traditional festivals *hanshik* and *chusok*, the spring and autumn festival respectively, Suh intertwines the Christian language with traditional ancestor veneration. Many refugees to the South are longing to visit the tombs of their ancestors located in the North on these days. This effort to once again make Minjung theology the talk of the town did not find international resonance. Even among Koreans its theological sophistication was questioned.

The supporters of Minjung theology remained a disappearing minority among Korean Christians. It lived its heyday undeniably during the CCA-conference in 1979. At this point in time the critical, theological potential, which had been developing from the early seventies on, culminated. Despite the exterior political pressure a phase of consolidation ensued. The Minjung theologians (Ahn, Suh Nam-Dong, Hyun, Kim and David Suh) met on a monthly base at Ahn's institute. Some of the progressive thinkers

10) Cf. David Kwang-Sun Suh, “Penitence for Peace. Toward a Theology of Reunification,” in: *Korea Scope* 6, 1986, 75-79; id., “The Theology of Reunification: A Korean Theology of the Cross and Resurrection,” in: id., *The Korean Minjung in Christ* (Hong Kong 1991), 177-188.

11) Suh, *Penitence for Peace*, 59.

12) Cf. Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace, February 1988, in: *Reunification. Peace and Justice in Korea. Christian Response in the 1980s*, ed. Christian Conference of Asia (Hong Kong 1988), 87-96 (also: www.warc.ch).

of the secular minjung movement attended as well. Only after the expelled professors were rehabilitated these informal roundtable talks gradually dissipated.

On the base of their ecumenical contacts and their international fame, the Minjung theologians gained a certain political influence in the church, which has not least found its expression in important church documents.¹³⁾ They also played a considerable part in politics. Some among them belonged to the closest circle of Kim Dae-Jung's advisors. His Peace and Democratic Party (PDP) got in a serious crisis after the defeat in the elections of 1987. That it was united and managed to catch up with the government party in the parliamentary elections of 1988 was mostly to the credit of some prominent dissidents from the sphere of Minjung theology joining the PDP. Pak Young-Suk, wife and political companion of Ahn, and Moon Dong-Hwan attained leading positions in the party and were members of parliament (1988-1992). Moon became the chairperson of the parliamentary commission researching the Kwangju-massacre (1988-89).

Building the minjung church The second generation

In these same years some young ministers, mostly students of the first generation Minjung theologians, founded little minjung parishes in worker-neighborhoods and slums. They saw themselves in the tradition of the UIM centers,¹⁴⁾ some of which had turned into churches in the meantime. But they were operating on a much smaller scale with an average of about 20 members each. These parishes tried to organize themselves and find a theological voice. To strengthen their position over against the established churches and to intensify the exchange of experiences, the Council of minjung churches in Korea was founded. This self-organization was necessary, not in the least for economic reasons. Until today there is no central organ for the joint and equal payment of pastors' salaries. It is up to

13) Next to the 1988 *Declaration on National Reunification*, here the *Theological Declaration of Korean Christians* (1973) and *The Declaration of Democracy and National Salvation* (1976) have to be mentioned.

14) Cf. *Presence of Christ among Minjung. Introduction to the UIM in Korea*, Seoul 1981; In, Myung-Jin, *Rethinking the Work of Urban Industrial Mission in the Presbyterian Church of Korea in the Light of Minjung-Theology*, PhD Dissertation Seoul/San Francisco 1986.

the parish involved to take responsibility and thus dependent on the parish's financial situation. Many of the young minister's families lived below the poverty line. The theological main theme was ecclesiology: how can being-a-church be shaped in these particular circumstances? The question of the relation between gospel and culture has also been high on the agenda in these circles through their efforts towards a Korean liturgy.

Besides these ministers, who were deeply rooted in the praxis of the parish, there were a number of theologians with academic ambitions, who refer to themselves as "the second generation."¹⁵⁾ Contrary to their predecessors, they did not have the advantage of studying abroad in the first place; they received their theological education in Korea.¹⁶⁾ An essential bone of contention with the first generation was the issue of ideology, as the younger did not share their skepticism regarding Marxist analysis. Because the second generation published in Korean, the discussion was mostly internal and it is difficult to gain an insight for the outsider without knowledge of Korean.

In retrospect Hwang Hong-Eyoul sees the ideological orientation as one of the obstacles of the second generation¹⁷⁾: "the revival of Marxist ideology was a backdrop to the formation of the minjung church" (9). The gap between community organization and conscientization on the one hand and building a Christian faith community on the other seemed to be unbridgeable. The workers participated in all sorts of social activities during the week but nevertheless did not attend the Sunday worship services.

Only in the 1990s minjung pastors came to the conclusion, that "for minjung mission to be effective it needs to rely heavily on the spirituality of the cross" (21), which brings them back to one of the core ideas of the first generation. It came to a rediscovery of spirituality and religion as a way of life (22). At the same time they emphasized the imbeddedness of the minjung spirituality in "the spirituality of eastern religions where life and doctrine are one" (22). The minjung was even seen as bearer of traditional

15) Cf. for instance the former assistants of Ahn Byung-Mu, Kang Won-Don and Park Song-Joon.

16) Eventually some of them went abroad at a later age, the aforementioned Kang to Germany and Park to the US.

17) Hong-Eyoul Hwang, *The History of the Minjung Church in South Korea from 1983 to the Present*, unpublished manuscript (forthcoming in: *CCA Peoples Concept of Mission South Korean Dialogue*). Page references in the text.

culture and religion. This meets with the “survival-liberation centered syncretism” propagated by Chung Hyun-Kyung (*1956), who belongs to this generation age-wise, but is theologically closer to her teachers’ generation. Only with her feminist perspective she went beyond them.

The Korea Association of Minjung Theologians, which was founded in September 1992 under the chairpersonship of Ahn Byung-Mu and David Suh, functioned as a forum for the encounter of the various groups within Minjung theology. Besides the continuing strive for peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula, the ecological question became more and more a topic in the discussions. This was a point of contact with so-called civil movements. The changing context has certainly lessened the attendance and influence of this forum that exists till today.

What Subject of Which History? The Quest of the Third Generation

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama, one of the augurs of the American empire in times of globalization, proclaimed the end of history in a much-disputed article.¹⁸⁾ With the breakthrough of liberal democracy, history would have reached its finishing point in an ideological evolution. The collapse of the bipolar world order which is symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in the same year and accompanied by the extension of neoliberal capitalism and the increasing compression of the world by means of new communication technologies can be viewed as the end and the beginning of an era.¹⁹⁾

Many peaceful regime changes took place in the Third World too. In South Korea Chun Do-Hwan decided not to strive for a second term due to the pressures of the ongoing demonstrations in 1987. Unfortunately, the opposition was unable to reach an agreement on only one candidate, which provided once more for the victory of a military, Roh Tae-Woo.²⁰⁾ A few years later, however, he and his predecessor Chun had to give account of

18) Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, in: *The National Interest* 16 (1989) 3-18; id., *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York et.al. 1992).

19) Cf. Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity. Theology between the Global and the Local* (New York: Maryknoll, 1997).

20) Cf. *Lost Victory. An Overview of the Korean People's Struggle for Democracy in 1987* (Seoul 1988).

their involvement in the Kwangju massacre in court.²¹⁾ Both leaders of the opposition in 1987 were chosen as presidents one after the other, Kim Young-Sam from 1993-1998 and Kim Dae-Jung from 1998-2003. With president Roh Moo-Hyun (since 2003) a former human rights lawyer and representative of the younger generation that fought the military dictatorship took office.

Within 30 years South Korea has gone through a development, for which Europe still had 200 years. The price that the 'little people' had to pay for this was high. The minjung movement and Minjung theology with it made a large contribution to the democratization and the social progress of large sections of the population.²²⁾ Although the social and political set-ups have changed radically in South Korea, the reunification issue remains virulent.²³⁾ Korean activists have carefully watched the reunification process of Germany and have thereby matured to realistic politicians.²⁴⁾ To many Korean contemporaries, the historical-theological project of the minjung movement appears as a myth of times long gone. The question as to who is minjung today, that is still asked every once in a while, indicates that to many not just this story has come to an end, but also its subject seems to have gone lost. Nevertheless, the spirit of the minjung movement is still alive in the civil movements of South Korea.

Fukuyama was right in proclaiming a new era that we call today the age of globalization - but his perspective was western, he missed the eye for the non-simultaneousness of simultaneous processes (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*) and the plurality of modernities. The hyperculture of

21) In 1997 Chun got a life-sentence and Roh 17 years imprisonment. They were released however only 8 month later due to an amnesty by then president Kim Yong-Sam.

22) Still 25 % of the population live beyond the poverty line and many people work for leasing firms, who get only a split of the salaries of the regular employers of the big firms they work for.

23) Cf. Ji-Seok Jung, Korean Reunification Theology: A Theological Reflection on Peace in the Situation of Conflict and Division between North and South Korea, in: *Madang* 2, 2005, 27-48.

24) Cf. Yang Sung Chul, "The Implications of German Unification for Korea: Legal, Political and International Dimensions", in: *Korean Politics. Striving for Democracy and Unification*, ed. Korean National Commission for UNESCO, (Seoul 2002), 585-598.

neoliberal capitalism which icons led social scientists to new terminologies such as *McDonaldisation* or *Coca-Colonisation* is opposed by hybrid local cultures gaining strength. Regarding this phenomenon, Roland Robertson speaks about *Glocalisation*.²⁵⁾ Were the first generation Minjung theologians ahead of the Minjung culture movement and later used the artistic resources nowadays most of the small group of progressive theologians has lost contact with secular intellectuals and artists. Whereas the later have responded to the contextual changes in a variety of ways, theological reflection on these matters is still very limited. While there are at least some reactions from theologians to the socio-economic impact of globalization and empire,²⁶⁾ the cultural-religious side is neglected. To make these challenges more visible I introduce here a sample of more recent works by three former Minjung artists. I follow a categorization that is derived from their earlier woodprints²⁷⁾: *pictures from the political resistance* (1), *sketches from everyday life* (2), and finally *cultural-religious motives* (3).²⁸⁾

(1) Pictures from the political resistance

Hong Song-Dam has been one of the most prominent representatives of the minjung culture movement. Born and raised in Cholla province he took part in the 1980 Kwangju uprising.²⁹⁾ In 1989 Hong got arrested, was put into solitary confinement and severely tortured. In the 1990s he tried to cope with his prison experience in an artistic way, like he did with the Kwangju

25) Cf. Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time Space and Homogeneity Heterogeneity", in: Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities* (London 1995).

26) Cf. e.g. the contributions of Kim Yong-Bock and Kang Won-Don in *Madang*.

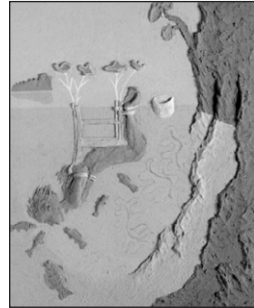
27) Cf. Volker Küster, Minjung-Theology and Minjung Art, in: *Mission Studies* 11, 1994, 108-129.

28) The first two categories both refer to the socio-economic and political dimension of the context, this categorization is therefore reminiscent of the classical typology of contextual theologies.

29) During a short democratic spring after the assassination of president Park Chung-Hee, who had launched a development dictatorship, the people of Kwangju, the capital of the most poverty stricken province tried to establish democratic rule in their city. The military crushed down on them with brute force.

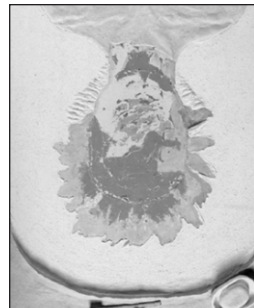
massacre in the 1980s. He switched however his technique from woodprint to oil painting.³⁰⁾ Born on an island surrounded by water the artist strives to gain back the positive memories of his youth after being exposed to water torture during his imprisonment. The guards forced liters of water down his throat or pressed his head under water for long minutes. In the series “The twenty days in water” (8 pieces; 1999). Hong describes the metamorphosis of the one tortured with water into a fish, which cannot live without water.

The first image of the series shows the victim sitting naked tied to a chair upside down drowning in water. Flowers are blossoming from the legs of the chair that stick a bit out of the water, together with his feet tied to the front ones. These flowers only grow in coastal areas. In the moment close to death, when the torture has reached a point where resistance fades, Hong recalls these flowers of his youth. In the early morning hours when fog is covering the ground up to ones knees, the flowers seem to drift on the sea. Even these beautiful flowers have forsaken him in his own perception. A rice bowl floats on the water next to the chair. While for Kim Chi-Ha rice as the basic food in Asia is a symbol of life, Hong Song-Dam has a much more ambivalent notion of it. One can only be tortured if he or she eats sufficiently. Rice then becomes part of the torture process. Fishes are swimming around the body. On the right hand a single tree grows on the cliffs. In the left upper corner one can see an island from a far. Probably reminding of the artists own home island Haui.



▲ (1; 650x530 mm)

The second picture shows his face upside down mirrored in the bathtub, with a piece of soap on a dish and two toothbrushes on the side. Hong was hung head first in his prison cell and drowned in the bathtub by the guards. At the bottom of the

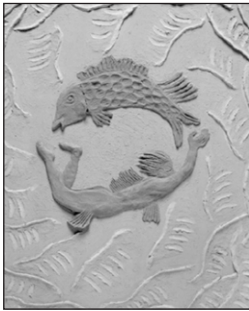


▲ (2; 650x530 mm)

30) The mural style of the protest years is resumed by Hong in a number of oversized oil paintings. After earlier tableaux denouncing the ecological crisis in more recent works he has created mytho-poetic worlds, mixing elements of Korean history and culture with fantasy.



▲ (3; 650x530 mm)



▲ (4; 650x530 mm)

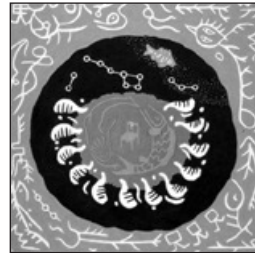


▲ (5; 650x530 mm).

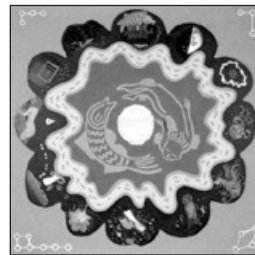
fishes still circle around the rice bowl, which color has changed from the yellowish of the preceding picture to pure white.³¹⁾

Hong Song-Dam has recovered from his trauma through his artwork. One of the torturers

next picture the upper part of his head is depicted with closed eyes as if he is dreaming of the tray above him with soup, rice and *kim chi* on it. A little fish is eaten up to the bone. The tray is reminiscent of the way Korean restaurants serve meals outside of the house. The torturers ordered food for the delinquent in order to keep him strong enough to bear the pain. A small streak on the top marks the water surface. In the forth picture the former prisoner has grown fins and is swimming with a fish. Together their bodies form a circle, reminisced of the *yin-yang* symbol. Only the face with eyes closed looms out of the water on the fifth picture The artist has painted flowers and trees on the forehead. His thoughts roam to the nature that only can be sustained by water. For the last three pictures Hong choose the shape of a *mandala*. On number six man and fish circle around the chair, with some of the bonds hanging over the backrest. On the seventh picture they are surrounded by depictions of memories from the artist's life. Close to death ones life passes by before the inner eye. The two are now swimming around a rice bowl. On the concluding picture the man has transformed into a fish totally. The two



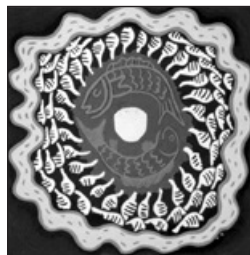
▲ (6; 1200x1200 mm)



▲ (7; 1200x1200 mm)

31) In the series "Meals" of 68 square paintings in mixed media Hong has created

who had been traced by an investigative TV program was not showing any repentance and even said that they obviously did not torture him enough because he is still politically active. While Hong Song-Dam has gone through a process of aesthetic self-reconciliation, mutual reconciliation and forgiveness have not even begun in Korea.³²⁾



▲ (8; 1200x1200 mm)

(2) *Sketches from every day life*

Kim Bong-Chun who also has been deeply involved in the struggle during the 1980s retreated like many others to the countryside. Always being interested in farmer's life and culture he specializes nowadays in pastoral scenes. Besides hand colored woodprints that he produces sometimes with a particular stamp technique he started with sculpture. The colored clay figures in a naive style depict mainly animals. By turning a storage house into a temporal gallery and opening farmhouses as inns, Kim organized a very successful art exhibition in his small village Munmak. The local people exposed the visitors to the country life. The artist is convinced that minjung culture will survive in the countryside. The farmers are still poor and suffer from hard work and low income. Many young people left for the metropolitan areas seeking better education and job opportunities.³³⁾

Turong

Already the name *turong* of the artist collective around Kim Bong-Chun founded in 1982 indicated his interest in rural life. The Korean word denotes the small earthen dam around the rice paddies, where people take a rest



▲ (9; 1983, 240x350mm)

variations on the rice bowl, given to him through a square whole on the bottom of his prison wall (cf. *Distributing meals*, in: East Wind, 67).

32) Cf. Chai Soo-Il, Die Überwindung der Gewalt aus der Sicht der Opfer Das Beispiel von Hong Sung Dam, in: Benjamin Simon and Henning Wrogemann (eds.), *Konviviale Theologie*, Festgabe für Theo Sundermeier zum 70. Geburtstag, Frankfurt a.M. 2005, 287-298.

33) Lately Kim is involved in cultural work with the Korean diaspora especially in Russia.

from their hard work, have food together and enjoy life. On an early woodprint under the same title farmers are sitting around a rice mat spread on the ground, with rice bowls, side dishes and cups on it. In the left upper corner a mother is breastfeeding her child. Next to her sits her mother-in-law watching her. Two young guys eating their rice are sprawling on both sides of the mat. At the bottom the grandfather and probably the child's father are sitting. They have put their tools, a spade and two sickles besides them. In the accompanying poem a wanderer is describing the scene. It is

noon and he feels hungry. The farmers invite him to join their meal. First he is hesitant but then enjoys their hospitality. Probably he is to be identified as the guy on the left side of the rice mat.

Eco-farming

A family is sitting on the *turong*. The father has opened a small canal so that water can flow into the rice paddy. Mother and child are letting ducks plunge into the water. They will catch the vermin and provide a little extra income. No expensive chemicals will be needed and the food will be pure. Healthy food makes the body healthy as well. Human beings and the earth form one body. In the back stand an ox and a small tree under two clouds. The rice paddy forms a microcosm.

Shade

In another color print from the same period a father rests under a shady tree, with his little daughter sleeping on his chest. Two pairs of

slippers and a rake are lying at their feet. In the poem that goes with the picture the father compares the treetop with a roof and the ground underneath with a traditionally heated floor (*ondol bang*). He wants to feel the heartbeat of his little daughter while they are



▲ (10; 1998, 200x270mm)



▲ (11; 1998, 200x270mm)



▲ (12; 2002, 193,5x782mm)

sleeping.

Avatar I

During the Soccer Worldcup 2002, hosted by Japan and Korea, the Koreans fervently supported their own team, that was even able to beat the Japanese. The fans dressed in red like the players on the field and called themselves “red devils.” Hong Song-Dam has produced a series under the title “Avatar” to deal with this phenomenon. The blue skin of the figures standing in several rows and their red dresses are reminiscent of the colours of the Korean national flag. They wear scarves with the subscription “Korea We all will be there for you.” The artist is suspicious of the glooming nationalism. A quite different assessment gives Kim Chi-Ha.³⁴⁾ He sees a chance to overcome the Korean “red complex”: The color red was the color of the King and later has been banned as the symbol of communism.

(3) Cultural-religious motives

Lee Chul-Soo started as well as a radical political artist in the 1980s.³⁵⁾ After the fierce years of struggle however he bought a farm in the countryside together with his wife. Nowadays Lee is a famous artist in Korea. In the early 1980s Lee sympathized with Minjung theology. Some of his works were used as illustrations for covers of church publications or theological books. Already then he produced critical prints about the attitude of the mainline churches towards poverty and oppression. Like Kim Chi-Ha, Lee turned more and more towards Asian cultures and religions, especially Buddhism.

Church

In the front of the picture crouches a man. His head rests on his forearms that are crossed on the ground, forming a square with the shoulders. His right leg is bent close to his body, the sole of the bare foot on the ground. The depiction resembles more a rock than a human being. A big church building dominating the upper half of the picture above the man seems to press him even more to the ground. The artist reverses one of the central ecclesiological ideas of Minjung theology, namely that the minjung church



▲ (13; 1983; 450x600 mm)

34) Interview with Kim Chi-Ha on 26 November 2005.

35) Cf. Lee Chul-Soo, *Collected Woodcuts*, Seoul 1989 (in Korean).

is outside the gate with the minjung, like Christ himself went outside the gate (Hebr 13,11-13). The church on the picture to the contrary keeps the minjung outside of its gate.



▲ (14; 1992; 480x420 mm)

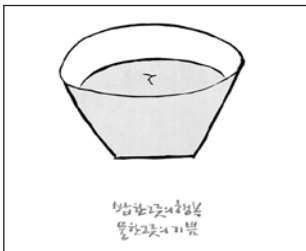
Christian churches, protestant and catholic alike. The artist thematizes his renunciation of Christianity in an ironic way.



▲ (15; 1987; 420x500 mm)

two parts. In the upper half the sun is rising above mountains and rain is dripping from clouds. The lower half is filled with the moon and stars. Sun and moon are located on a diagonal opposite to each other.

The whole composition alludes to the *yin-yang* symbol of cosmic harmony. Only the rice bowl itself is a reminder on human beings who are an integral part of the cosmos. Lee created this woodcut already in 1987 amidst the height of the struggle, anticipating the spirituality of life of the years to come. *Happiness of rice, joy of one bowl of rice* A rice bowl, containing water, is placed in the middle of a circle. Koreans used to drink water out of the rice bowl after they emptied it. The circle is a symbol of harmony, with



▲ (16; 2001; 420x500 mm)

the bowl in the center focusing the concentration of the viewer. Pictures that serve such meditational practices are known in Asia from ancient times as *mandala*.

Samsara

On the fringes of the yellow ball of the sun plants with green leaves are growing. Without the sunlight the plants cannot survive. Sun and plants are one. The leaves of one of the plants is turning red, beginning to fade. If the leaves fade however, the sun will also fade. The black dot in the center is the point of highest concentration the self.

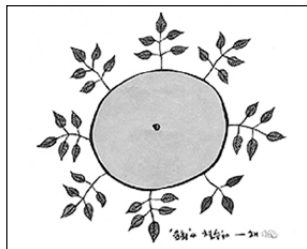
Emptied space

To draw a circle is to create a world. In Zen thinking “absolute nothingness” is paradoxically enough not “nothing” in the western sense. The circle is decentered. The self stepped outside, leaving a space without word behind. In the poem that goes with the picture the self is reflecting about the empty space. “I think this world is supposed to be filled with stories from all different walks of life.” “I know this world is big enough to contain stories from all different walks of life.”

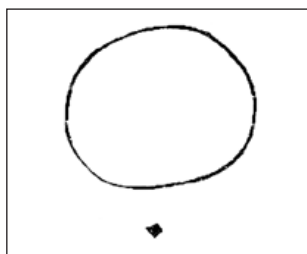
Lee Chul-Soo shows a clear tendency to simplify and minimize the forms of his prints. This does not mean however that content wise they become easier to interpret. The general frame of reference is his longing for harmony and oneness, virtues Lee found in Asian cultures and religions. Sometimes his prints and the accompanying texts and poems contain a certain paradox or irony neither unfamiliar to Zen Buddhism. They can easily serve as a kind of visual *koans*³⁶⁾

“Obuba” “Come on my back”

Next to the pastoral scenes Kim Bong-Chun is



▲ (17;1990; 370x375 mm)



▲ (18;1990; 250x300 mm)

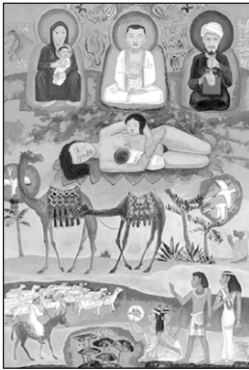


▲ (19, 1996, 210x270mm)

36) In Zen Buddhism the master responds to questions of the pupil, who is seeking the way to awakening, with koans, a kind of paradoxical, riddle like sayings..

also referring to Buddhism in his works. A mother is carrying her child the traditional way, in a special cloth on her back. Heads and shoulders of both of them are surrounded by a double halo. They look into opposite directions though. In the poem the artist is referring to the Mahayana teaching that all humans are Buddha. The love of the mother for her child cannot be divided from Buddha's heart. Paradoxically enough the disobedience of her child is also Buddha's act. Through Buddhism the life of the common people is for the artist open to transcendence.

Lotus of silk road



▲ (20, 1995, 1200x1650mm)

On the upper part of the colorful picture three key religious figures with halos round their heads are to be seen. The middle is taken by the Buddha in lotus seat dressed in white clothes. The mudra of his hands symbolizes ki. Above his head two heavenly creatures with lotus flowers are floating. To his right sits Mary with the child Jesus on her left thigh. She is dressed in a brown monastic dress with cowl. The space between her and the edge of the picture is filled with some star ornaments. On the left side of the Buddha kneels Mohammed with the Qu' ran in his right and a short dagger in his left hand. Ornaments reminding of Arabic calligraphy fill the gap on his side.

Before their eyes a naked woman with two children is lying on a blanket in the colors and shape of a lotus flower. In her right arm she holds a baby wrapped in white cloth that seems to drink from her breast. The other arm the mother has put around the neck of a little girl watching from behind her back.

Underneath or in front of them extends a desert landscape. Kim, who had the opportunity to travel the middle-east, filled the scenery with two camels, with colorful saddlecloth, birds, date palms and a monkey. At the bottom of the picture a herdsman riding on a donkey next to his sheep appears from the left. On the right ancient style Egyptian figures probably depicting a pharaoh with his wife and two female servants with lotus flowers in their hand and hair are to be seen. Next to them a little pond with lotus flowers is located. Kim envisions the peaceful exchange between cultures and religions along the Silk Road as model for the hybridization of

cultures and religious syncretism in a globalized world. The place from which this new civilization of peace emerges is Asia. It is grounded in mutual respect, an attitude that is searching for comparability rather than claiming the absoluteness of one's own tradition.

Where is Jesus Christ today? In search for a new Minjung theology

Due to the dynamics of the socio-economic, political and cultural parameters the question for the *Christus praesens* has to be asked time and again by Christian theologians. If one holds that Christ is preferably present in the poor and oppressed, as liberation theologians do, than in contemporary South Korea Christ is to be found for instance among the labor migrants. The images are strikingly comparable. Whereas in the 1980s the urban poor whom the government chased away from the "moonlight towns" searched for church asylum, during my visit in winter 2003/04 the labor migrants who are threatened with deportation did the same. This situation concerns however only a part of the churches' social welfare work.³⁷⁾ The *generative themes*³⁸⁾ of suffering and solidarity of Jesus with the poor lost the integrative power they had for Minjung theology in the social struggles of the 1970s and 1980s.

Already in the 1990s, the circle of Minjung theologians proposed "life" (*salim*) as a new generative theme, which is the precise antonym of the

37) Park Jong-Wha student of Ahn Byung-Mu and former Professor of Theology and General Secretary of his church, today minister of the oldest church of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) has made the medical care for labour migrants and an aid programme for North Korean child refugees an inherent part of his parish work. By permanently reviewing these projects with the members of his congregation he tries to find an adequate form of diaconic work on the parish level.

38) The concept of generative themes I owe to Paulo Freire, who developed it for his alphabetization campaigns in Brazil. The basic idea is that every community has particular generative words and themes that disclose its linguistic or thematic universe. That is where alphabetization should start. I have transposed this idea to the systematic reflection of contextual theology. Not only the particular contexts but also the Christian text has such generative words and themes. Cf. Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ. Intercultural Christology* (New York: Maryknoll, 2001), 32-35.

theme of “suffering.” During the final years of his life, Ahn Byung-Mu was especially concerned with the Asian principle of *Ki* or *Chi*, the power of life. Kim Yong-Bock is striving to start a university for the study of life. Huh Byung-Sub has founded a Green University.³⁹⁾ The students of the Minjung theologians even renamed their society of minjung ministers into “Life Mission Solidarity.” Chung Hyun-Kyung’s “survival-liberation centered syncretism” integrates the life enhancing elements of other religions.⁴⁰⁾ Her line of thought is followed by Jin-Kwan Kwon who sketches an interreligious pneumatology.⁴¹⁾ He rereads the “spirit languages” of different religions from a minjung perspective, abandoning what is oppressive and bringing into dialogue what is life centered. The solidarity with the poor and the oppressed is continued in these theological projects. But after the harsh years of the struggle for human rights, social justice and democratization, many protagonists of the minjung movement and Minjung theology seek spiritual contemplation. While minjung artists such as Kim, Chi-Ha or Lee, Chul-Soo have turned to Buddhism,⁴²⁾ Ahn Byung-Mu and Kim Yong-Bock left Seoul and moved into the mountains. They all share a growing interest in Asian cultures and values.

The concept of “life” that has been stretched a lot in the ecumenical discourse has become a metaphor for the increasing complexity of late modern societies. This holistic discourse will become concrete only in the way the generative subthemes of *nature*, *culture* and *religion* that determine it are tackled with theologically. The panorama drawn above with the help of visual arts can give some hints here.

To be sure, Minjung theology was more public theology than church theology,⁴³⁾ but it gave a lot of prestige to the Christian faith in Korea. As

39) Many former minjung activists have joined the Environmental movement. They are discussing the establishment of a green political party.

40) Cf. Chung, *Struggle*, 113f.

41) Cf. Jin-Kwan Kwon, “The Holy Spirit and Minjung,” in: *Third Millenium. Indian Journal of Evangelization*, 6, 2003, 33-44.

42) To many activists this turn to Buddhism also meant a turn away from Christianity. Kim Chi-Ha publicly declared, that Christianity has often served as an entrance gate to western culture and therefore he turned his back to the Catholic church. Cf. Kröger, *Befreiung des Minjung*, 18 fn. 11.

43) Jin-Kwan Kwon, “A Sketch for a New Minjung Theology,” in: *Madang* 1, 2004, 49-68, 56.

stated before, nowadays, both theology and the church have become alienated from the public discourse.⁴⁴⁾ According to the few progressive theologians,⁴⁵⁾ a passionate *theology of life* could induce a “new reformation” and break this isolation. If the term Minjung theology should gain acceptance as umbrella term for this emerging theologies then it will nevertheless carry a quite different connotation. Once confined to the experience of the Korean people, now its scope would be *glocal*.⁴⁶⁾ Minjung theology then would simply become the brand name of a Korean made theology. Already in 1988, Hyun Young-Hak answered the question about the future of minjung theology rather laconically:

The minjung theological way of looking at the poor people, Korean society, history, reunification issue and so on may change, even theologically. And whether the expression Minjung theology will stick or the name will change, that we do not know, but I personally don't care, so long as there is a new generation coming up and try seriously to deal with the Korean history and reality in the light of the biblical message.⁴⁷⁾

44) Kwon, Sketch, 50. Chai, Soo-Il, “Missio Dei: Ihre Entfaltung und Grenze in Korea,” in: *Missio Dei heute. Zur Aktualität eines missionstheologischen Schlüsselbegriffs*, Weltmission heute. Studienheft 52, Hamburg 2003, 115-131.

45) They have organized themselves around the last active first generation Minjung theologian Kim Yong-Bock in the Korea Association of Progressive Theologians and their Journal of Contextual Theology in East Asia *Madang*.

46) Cf. Kwon, Sketch, 61.

47) Interview with Hyun Young-Hak of 14 April 1988.

Religious Dialogue and Co-operation in the Context of Globalization: Global Ethic, New Liberalisms and Empire

Micah Eun-Kyu, Kim*

Introduction

Since the beginning of human history, until now, early in the 21st century, we are living in difficult situations. Looking briefly at the theme of imperialism, a major stream which still continues to be of influence in modern times, the imperial nations of European countries and Japan colonized most of Asia, Africa and Latin America for the last two centuries. Imperial nations blocked the independence of colonial nations by persecuting political oppression and accumulated a huge amount of wealth by economical exploitation. Also, imperial cultural superiority and the ruling ideology withered and deprived the indigenous religions and cultures of colonial nations, and consequently broke off those nation's historical and

This article was presented in the subject of *the int'l conference on the Ethical Dilemmas and the Possible Solutions in a Hight-tech Context*, sponsored by Beijing Institute of Technology, Dept. of Philosophy, Tsinghua University, Chinese Academy of Sciences, at Beijing, September 24-25th, 2005.

Micah Eun-Kyu, Kim is professor of Theology Department, Sungkonghoe University in Seoul. He received Ph.D. from Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. He teaches the Old Testament. Recently he is interested in inter-textual hermeneutics of religions, Taoism and Buddhism linking with the Old Testament. He is an ordained Anglican minister. e-mail: micahkim59@yahoo.co.kr

mental inheritances. Imperial nations brought on world wars and wrapped the world in flames, killed millions of people and gave deep wounds.

Although world wars have ended, local wars are still going on to this very day.¹⁾ America has become a super powerful nation.²⁾ Though the third world nations achieved independence, they are still under political and economical dependence and suffer in other deprivations. After the collapse of Soviet Russia, America expanded greatly its ruling territories. It has never been that one nation dominated all the world in world history. We can refer to the American empire-an empire which is making use of new liberalization of trade to force open military affairs, economy, finance and trade on a global scale for making the great mass of wealth.

First of all, competition in military expenditure and the threat of nuclear war are menacing all people.³⁾ While countries with strong power are making huge money through exporting weapons, poor countries have to spend more on their military budget than social welfare or education. The huge military power of the American empire ignored an official decision of UN and worldwide opinion, and invaded Iraq for getting oil resources and establishing power in the Middle East Asia in 2003.

The global village is, on the whole, faced with the crisis of the rapid increase of population, the lack of food, global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain, the diminishing of tropical forests, the increase in deserts, and a holistic eco-crisis.⁴⁾

The crisis of nature gives rise directly to a series of disasters, with a huge number of victims and a big loss of property. The tensions and

1) According to statistics, 108 million persons were dead, and a few hundred millions persons were wounded by wars during the 20th century.

2) Yong-Bock Kim, "The Politics of Jesus the Asian against the Empire," in *Madang : Journal of Contextual Theology in East Asia*, Vol. 1, No.2. 2004. 3-10.

3) It is officially or non-officially known there are nine countries possessing nuclear weapons. Russia 16,000, America 10,350, China 400, France 350, U.K 200, Israel 100-200, Pakistan 40-60, India 40-50, North Korea 6-8. America and Russia get 95% of nuclear weapons. Five among these countries are a permanent committee of the UN. They justify in their possessions, however they are very strict to other countries. Also G8 countries got massive bio and chemistry weapons in belonging to genocidal weapons.

4) A rapid increasing population causes to lack of energy, food, water, house. 800 millions persons of the third world are faced starvation.

conflicts between Christianity and Islam are continuing to arouse violence dependant on the ways of struggle by conservative leaders and fundamentalists of each religion for extreme resolutions.

Particularly, religious conflict is rising as a major issue of the 21st century. Religion can meet the needs of human beings, and it secures human rights and freedom and makes a peaceful world. However, the desert religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) take the head of breaking global peace. But religious tensions are rooted in political, economical, militaristic and geopolitical clashes of interests.

Now global issues cannot be solved by an individual, a society, or a nation, but only by worldwide co-operation. If it is not so, then the earth will be led to self-destruction, and as a result, all the human beings, nature, animals and plants of our world could disappear.

Therefore globalization is a very important concept and meaning in this era of the global village. It weakens the borders of nations, sees the whole world as one unit, and shows that the survival of the earth cannot come only from a particular self-righteous ethic and criterion, but needs to have wisdom and resolution with living together on the universal ethic and standard.

This article treats critically the context of new liberalism and empire, and the global ethic which gives a great influence on religion and the academic world in global times.

Global ethic

Global ethic

The Project for World Universal Ethic was recognised from what all people can sympathize in and the common values and universal ethics they can keep. It started from the Chicago World Parliaments of Religion in 1893. This conference gathered opinions about religious common ideas for a peaceful world with the hope of coming to an agreement of moral principle, namely that most of what religions teach is basically moral good.⁵⁾

Since the 1960s, world religions have showed big changes. Over the last two thousand years, Christianity adhered strictly to the concept of God's absoluteness and maintained an exclusive attitude regarding other religions as

5) "The Document" of the Second Vatican Council in Catholic.

idolatrous Christianity developed a stream of inclusiveness to other religions from the time of the Second Vatican Council. And it continues to change, now with religious pluralism overcoming inclusiveness since the 1980s. Thus came out not dogmatic approaches, but the demand for a new paradigm of realistic resolution in the contexts of war and violence of the world, tensions between strong nations and weak nations, ideological confrontations, and ecological and environmental situations. Namely, this put down those religious demands which emphasize its own absoluteness, raise trials to accept religious distinctions and differences, and understand each other. Dr. Hans Küng, a Germany theologian, mentioned “no peace among the nations without peace among the religions, no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.” in his book, *Projekt Weltethos*, 1990.⁶⁾ He added, “no better global order without a global ethic,” with asserting the need of a fundamental ethic emphasizing the inability of a new ethic for all human beings. This means we cannot expect any new world order as far as not to establish and share an ethic and norm on the global level.

Finally, when Parliament World Religions was held for one centennial anniversary at Chicago in 4th September 1993, religious leaders adopted the “Declaration Toward a Global Ethic” for the first time in religious history. They describe briefly the reason why global ethic needs in introduction as follows:

Hundreds of millions of human beings on our planet increasingly suffer from unemployment, poverty, hunger, and the destruction of their families. Hope for a lasting peace among nations slips away from us. There are tensions between the sexes and generations. Children die, kill, and are killed. More and more countries are shaken by corruption in politics and business. It is increasingly difficult to live together peacefully in our cities because of social, racial, and ethnic conflicts, the abuse of drugs, organized crime, and even anarchy. Even neighbors often live in fear of one another. Our planet continues to be ruthlessly plundered. A collapse of the ecosystem threatens us.⁷⁾

Theologians and major religious leaders adopted the “Declaration

6) Hans Küng, *Projekt Weltethos*, München, 1990.

7) Hans Küng, “The Principle of Global Ethic,” in *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic*. 1993.

Toward a Global Ethic” under the thinking that “peace without religions raises collision and war in different civilizations.” This declaration presupposes, “religious and ethical tradition are established on the various religions approaching different ways, what is helpful, and what is harmful to all mankind, what is justice or not, what is good, or what is evil.” And it expresses, “more clear and emphasize that religions already have common things for the happiness of all people.”

According to the basic great principle by which all human beings must be given their human rights, “each individual has a dignity not to deprive and infringe on other people, having nothing to do with age, sex, colour, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political position, nationality, etc.” On the other hand, it clearly says, “human’s dignity is an absolute basis not to be able to encroach on the whole of life, family and regional society, ethnic, state and religion.” If it keeps a new world order, it needs all the sympathy of humankind. This conference named the “global ethic” which emphasizes human dignity, human rights, broad-mindedness in differences on the centered idea of peace in religions, and it adopted the “Declaration Toward a Global Ethic.”⁸⁾

This was a slogan which was rapidly diffused, and became a new religious view in post-modern times opening a waterway for dialogue with religions. The concept of “global ethic” gave a motivation from seeing only within the nation to seeing the ethical responsibility of a whole global village. “Global ethic” greatly influenced the religious world. Hans Küng contributed so much to creating it. In 1984 he mentioned a simple expression, “no peace among the nations without peace among the religions.”⁹⁾

He said that a ‘global ethic’ is an urgent need, because without it we cannot get the opportunity to live without the space for ethics of difference, contradiction or struggle. So he suggested not one religion, one ideology, but norms, values, ideas, aiming for a global world.

He shows the destructive phenomenon of life in the global village according to a 1990 report:

8) Swidler, Leonard, ed., *For All Life: Toward Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic* (Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1999), 39-51.

9) Hans Küng, *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 440.

- * Then ations of the world expend 18 billion dollar per minute on war expenditure.
- * 1500 children are dying per hour through starvation or starvation related diseases.
- * one animal or plant species disappears per day.
- * Many more people have been arrested, tortured, or killed by political severe oppression since 1980, than were killed in the Second World War.
- * Foreign loans are increasing by the amount of 150 billion dollars imposing a heavy burden on the third world and its people.
- * A virgin forest the size of three quarters of the Korean peninsula disappears every year.

These are examples which show the real state of affairs of the inhumanity of modern times. Küng suggests that the dignity of humanity be accepted and inhumanity be denied. As a result of that, human society has to transfer to a human situation which demands a multiple, holistic synthesis from the inhuman situation. This is a realistic diagnosis getting an ethical request to inclusively recover the life of the earth.

He sees the realm of religion which cannot resolve political or diplomatic problems.¹⁰⁾ Religion is generally disregarded in the private sphere, however it influences all fields in society. Particularly Samuel Huntington predicted the 'clash between civilizations.' This is the expression based on religious conflict. Therefore Religious dialogue and co-operation are more important than in the past, because the religious belief of one person can influence all in the global context.

Even though the parliament of the world's religion adopted a 'global ethic statement,' it is not meaning to substitute a traditional religious ethic or teaching, or add a new ethic. This declaration is a meaning that all religions can approve, a value that non-religious people can support, a minimum common consciousness that all religions can not cancel, a norm, a moral standard." Küng tried to recover the religious ethic from the root in the devastating context of globalization. In the global ethic is reflected the philosophy, ideology and religious ideas in the beginning of 21st century for

10) Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

escaping the threat of survival of human beings.

Critical Examination to the Küng's Global Ethic

The 'global ethic' of Hans Küng contributed so much to dialogue and peace between religions, the academic world, and in fact still is making positive influences. I would like to criticize his thesis here. His position was a critic of both national socialism (communism) controls in individual life, and of capitalism which raises endlessly a desire for possession and which ties up humans economically. He presented a religious ethic showing an alternative global ethic. He only hangs on to a new religious ideology, namely a global ethic which disregards the fact that western countries are still ruling over and threatening the whole world by warfare, legal violence, exploitation of nature with a huge political, economical, cultural, and military power; in other words, capitalism and empire. His limitation is the conviction that the global ethic can resolve everything, every conflict, every tension in the global village. Of course his suggestion is proper to trying to resolve problems religiously, ethically, morally because he is a theologian and religious studies scholar.

However, his limitation has to be revised and added to even partly in the reality that his 'global ethic project' influences the whole academic world so much. When he visited my Sungkonghoe(Anglican) University in Seoul, 2003, he spoke on his thesis, 'New Paradigm of International Relations.' This is a recent paper, in here, and he has a good friendship with world leaders who are moving the world, and in dialogue with the IMF. There is a view of his modern history in his appendix where he explains that America made a new paradigm breaking down the old paradigm of Europe during the First and Second World Wars. Also he said that the new paradigm of America collapsed the Soviet Union and Berlin Wall. Of course he criticizes the American attack on Iraq. However, on the whole, his view of world and history is rooted in the first world, and he lifts up the contribution of an America based on power. On the contrary, he does not mention the character of the empire that America rules over and which binds the whole world tightly with strategy and tactics of a high level. His idea has stayed in the sense of sight of the first world from the time of making the global ethic until this day. A big problem is that the 'global ethic' focuses only on the slogan, 'peace between religions,' because western rulers can make use of

this to dominate their ideology for the world.

Because Hans Küng's slogan basically doesn't mention that the first world still continues to rule over the third world in political, economical, military domination, this can give an illusion of being able to restore world peace if it can resolve conflicts and tensions between religions. His slogan 'peace between religions' doesn't say the essence (the ruling order of powerful countries), but phenomenon (religious peace). He doesn't treat the bottom of the sea, but only the surface. If his logic is accepted and spread widely, religious people, including non-religious, can focus only on religions and not the background of the huge order of capitalism and empire of the first world. It can be logically developed that the ruling power gets to ride the small rock (conflicts between religions) for keeping the essence.

This is closely related to the fact that most western orthodox theology goes in gear with idealism such as non-political, non-social trends except for the German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer who participated in the resistance movement against the Nazi regime during the Second World War.¹¹⁾ This is not only in western theology; for example during the Japanese imperialism period, the Kyoto school which led the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity kept silence toward society and history.¹²⁾ They were only interested in an ideal subject and philosophy, with no critical view toward imperialism and war in Asia.

The positions like non-political, non-historical and non-contextual dialogue and meeting between Christianity and Buddhism reinforced imperialism and the expansion of colony. As a result of it, this ideal thought approved and justified them in domination ideology. This is an important teaching dialogue with religions in the future.

Therefore I really ask again, "If it accomplishes a peace between religions, can it achieve peace in the world?" Of course it can partly attain peace, but I see a pessimistic view. If this slogan doesn't consider political, economical and military contexts, namely capitalism, neo-liberalism and the hegemonic empire, it in opposition can make results which justify the ruling

11) During two world wars, many theologians, like Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann were locked in non-political, non-historical, and individual existentialism.

12) Kyoto School was the represented school to link with western philosophy on the basis of Buddhism in Japan. Nishida Kitaro, a famous scholar in 1920s, dialogued 'emptiness,' 'absolute nothingness,' etc., ideas with western philosopher, Echardt, Nietzsche, Heidegger, etc.

ideology of powerful countries. So this slogan, 'peace with religions' can have the possibility of limiting its non-historical, non-social, ideal subject. I think that 'peace with religions' today is important for dialogue with religious doctrines, but it necessarily has to consider with the context of globalization and empire wave-covered global village, otherwise it falls down in a non-historical subject and world religions can make a reverse function in going with the tide of ruling power countries again.

New Liberalism and Empire

New Liberalism

To get a concrete reality of the slogan which is the keyword of the global ethic, "no peace among the nations without peace among the religions," the global ethic has to be based on the new liberalism and empire in the context of globalization. Otherwise, this slogan will be not only an abstract motto, but will also carry the possibility of becoming a dominant ideology reinforcing the world ruling system of America and western Europe, because the global ethic is a product of globalization and new liberalism. World market rules over global capital and new liberalism arouses a desire from individual to big company, and influences all people, society and government.¹³⁾ Today in the world huge money is vividly moving through international channels and supported by the rapid development of communication technology. According to this, the third world is legally ruled by political dependence, economical exploitation, and cultural domination in front of the power of huge money. From these, human life and the natural ecosystem are ruled, controlled, and threatened by the power of capitalism of the first world. Historically, it has never been that one nation, the American empire, rules over the whole world. It controls world capitalism and spends most of the world's resources including nature. Therefore the people of the third world are living in more difficult situations, even the lowest living standards.

Religion is also misused in the process of globalization and makes use of capitalism. Yong-Bock, Kim tells, "It is in fact religion which misused the ruling ideologies of new liberalism and empire and justified the political

13) Globalization and Christianity research team, *Globalization and New Liberalism* (Seoul: Sungkonghoe University Press, 2000).

power system. Religion supports letting individuals push to free competition in society, and a free economic market.”¹⁴⁾

According to Seung-Ho Park, globalization expresses new liberalism as being like freedom (ex-regulation), private property (private management), open-door policy and softness.¹⁵⁾ These policies of liberalism are making a huge capital system and super-national capital (IMF, IBRD, WTO), and regional block (EU, FTA). Merger companies cross the border in spite of the fact that these are the products of competition between capital and between nations. So, it seems that these look not like competition, but co-operation, compromise, and control. Therefore there are more problems of the character of capitalism rather than capital itself, namely, new liberalism, the world monetary system, the empire character of nation. These are the proofs of the peak in the crisis of capitalism.

As a result, the profit of capital is accumulated by the first world, and the labours of the first and third world are exposed in the crisis of lay-off according to unstable employment in front of the huge power of capital named “flexibility of labour markets.” Farm workers, labourers, poor people in the world, are victims under the context of globalization. Divisions such as those between nations, regions, sexes, individual abilities and school backgrounds are generally increasing in the relations of dominance and exploitation. These contents sink into the mind of labour, and make infinite troubles, competition and disunion in the global dimension. Consequently new liberalism deteriorates the quality of our life to become the objects of economic domination and exploitation, oppression and alienation. It forces markets of the third world to open markets which flow off the first world’s desire for getting wealth in a brief instant.¹⁶⁾

This is the policy and logic of the legal economical ‘neo-imperialism’ which brings the poor globally except in the first world. Most of the world nations submit to the super-national hegemony. America stands on the peak, and Europe and Japan are in the centre. These nations settle down the new

14) Yong-Bock Kim, “Religion Society Thought” in Theological Institute of Sungkonghoe University, *Beyond Dialogue and Learning Each Other* (Seoul: Malgeun-Ullim Press, 2004), 36.

15) Seung-Ho Park, “Globalazation and New Liberalism,” in *Globalization and New Liberalism*, 11-59, 16.

16) Soo-Dol Kang, “Global Capitalism and The oppressed of Korea,” in *Power of Labour* (Seoul, 2003).

liberal market relating to political, economical, military, and cultural hegemony in the world. New liberalism in the context of globalization blows like a gale which has globalized the capitalism system at high speed since the 1980s. In a word, it makes a whole world one market, one factory, one benefit space.

If the dialogue between religions focuses only on religious peace in this context, it will hide the essence which breaks the peace, and can only show the peace outwardly.

Empire

How do we see the character of world capitalism at the beginning of the 21st century? There are many points of views about this. While imperialism ruled over the crossing of the boundary of nations, the new liberal globalization from the beginning of the end of the 20th century doesn't get a border, however, the character is showing the same ruling way as in the imperialism period.¹⁷⁾

When I summarize the empire of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri,¹⁸⁾ they see the new liberalism and globalization as the act of empire. The view of seeing new liberalism as the act of the empire understands it as the act of one side of capital, and in the construction of global market and network according to the processing of globalization. On the basis of these, a new form of ruling system appears in the forms of a whole global order, new ruling ideology and ruling structure. In here empire is the ruling power which controls the political power dominating effectively the whole global exchange.

Hardt and Negri suggest the present political structure is 'empire,' and say the shift is from imperialism to empire. In an empire there is no more border, as in the past there is no more outside. The empire doesn't make divisions, but acknowledges, manages and controls the present differences. The empire sovereignty is organizing and controlling by the flexible network. Therefore the contradiction of empire is difficult to perceive it is

17) Won-Don Kang, "Empire and Minjung: There is no Place for Empire!" in *Madang : Journal of Contextual Theology in East Asia*, Vol. 1, No.2. 2004. 31-44.

18) Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000).

not regional, but global.

The American empire with western countries rules over the five oceans and the six continents not only economically, but also politically, culturally, militarily. Particularly in the part of the military it controls all over the world with high technology and space science. The possibility of bringing war between empires is low and even disappeared in history like the world wars of the 20th century. The problem is the reality that the American empire intervenes, and invades the third world nations by its military power. Despite the anti-war movement, America attacked Iraq for depriving it of oil resources. America has all the hegemony and develops an initiative about the North Korean nuclear weapons of North Korea surrounding the Korean peninsula with political and military power. America exposes the character of empire power in North East Asia.

Anti-movement to New Liberalism and Empire

At the end of the 20th century, the anti-war and peace movement spread with the development of networks. The labour and farm worker movement in the world are heading to struggle against the constructing of the globalization of capital, the world monetary system and empire hegemony. As capital demolishes the borders of nations for making a global single market, the anti-war and peace movement and struggle of world labour also develops with international simultaneity. The political situation of the Korean peninsula surrounded by the nuclear weapons of North Korea is closely related with new liberalism and the policy of empire. The fate of the Korean peninsula is in the hands of the political and military strategies of America. We, South and North Korean people, don't want a war brought about by the American empire power.

After 9/11, the mood of anti-war, anti-America spread out to the world, and became an increasing anti-empire movement. 800,000 people participated in the anti-war and peace movement in September 2003 in London and at the same time in New York and Washington (200,000), Paris, Seoul, Tokyo, and Berlin. Palestinian people still continue to struggle against Israel which is supported by America. Islam countries also participate in these movements. In South Korea the anti-war, anti-America movement spread out so fast and widely. We, South Korea, came to develop a resolution to be a little independent in these moods. We steadily overcome

the red-complex mood and became independent from empires. Basically the democracy and independent government of the third world can get the resolution for escaping the shadow of empire power.

Religious dialogue and co-operation in the context of Globalization

Analysis of the phenomenon of religious power

Great religious traditions talk about the truth in the history of human beings. They teach how human beings live in the world, nature and cosmos. The universal truth is based on love, charity, perfect virtue, mercy, benevolence, justice, peace, etc. For realizing them, humans do not harm neighbours; they bestow a favour and do good as if they were doing it to themselves. These are the ultimate goals whatever religions point to. This is the most fundamental basis which human beings have, beyond whether God exists or not. In fact, if human beings do not keep this basic ethic, there is no meaning in saying if God exists or not. Because religions were born in different geographical, cultural, historical, ethnical or language backgrounds, it seems to be different. However, they mention the same truth if we ask an ultimate question. A positive contribution which religion gives is a social practice of love, benevolence, mercy, justice, life and peace. Particularly the Old Testament teaches social justice, equality, freedom, the rights of the powerless, historical consciousness, and the kingdom of God which means the new ideal world, etc. So dialogue and co-operation between religions are a supreme order on the general basis.

Today, in the context of globalization, in the context of not being able to resolve small size units in small areas, religion has to show new co-ordinates, diverse ideologies, and universal, comprehensive values, and to bind individuals, society, and the world by peace and love.

But, because religion and religious power tend to be more conservative, fundamentalist, and competitive, and to have material faith and consciousness in the capitalist society, they are causing violence between individuals and between religions. In the coming 21st century, it seems that religious tension, terror, violence, oppression, killing and warfare are increasing between Christianity and Islam, Judaism and Islam, Hindu and Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. All of these religions justify and suggest

only their own conviction on the basis of fundamentalism. When religion becomes a religious power, then it becomes corrupted and aggressive to other religions; it tends to stress material blessing and to be individualist and not social. This religious power which gets much money and a political position in the vertical hierarchy system is easy to link with the nation's power for justifying violence and war in the name of truth. The basic reasons are as follows: absolute authority of scripture, fundamentalist hermeneutics, rigidity of religious system, lack of leadership, ethnic and national separation according to religion, territorial conflicts, etc. So religion doesn't show new ideas, new paradigms, or new values under the context of limitation of religious power. Therefore the major religions of the world are going to the opposite side or back to the past, even becoming harmful to civil people.

A more serious problem is that conservative religious power doesn't adapt to new changes actively. Such religion, particularly, has little understanding of the essential problems of world economy and politics, capitalism, new liberalism, empire, and offers only individual material blessing. Instead, religion is well acquainted with capitalism's survival method and empire thought, and is full of the religious territorial expansion labelled as 'propagation,' and 'mission.' Religion is making a legal ruling ideology and at the same time makes use of the means to rule over the world.

Religion is eager for its territorial expansion by compromising individual desire - selfishness, large profit - rather than resisting and struggling against the oppressive structure of society and religion in the capitalist system. Consequently, religion doesn't feel social suffering; it averts its eyes away, and has lost the role of 'light and salt.' The result is that religion is buried under material blessing in capitalism, ignores society and history, and forgets and abandons the individual's mission and responsibility in the context of globalization. Moreover, the rich believe in religion in order to get more wealth and safety, and on the other hand, the poor believe in being comforted in an isolated situation from society. So people who have religious belief interpret the same truth by their own selfish motives according to nation, society, class, gender, etc. This is particularly so in the capitalistic society.

Religious dialogue and co-operation

In the context of exposing the problems in globalization, what religious positions show a new ethic and value for opening towards the future?

Firstly, religion has to give up its exclusive attitude toward other religions, and to have an attitude of being able to accept the truths of other religions. To do this, religions need to exchange mutual study of the truth in scriptures, share their religious experiences, recognize the common and different faiths and ideas, and interchange diverse values.

Secondly, religion has concerns about society, history, coexistence and the prosperity of human beings rather than being supported by the ideas of capitalism and the faith that blessing brings money and material wealth. Religion has to analyze clearly the problems of capitalism, new liberalism and empire. On the other hand, religion has to take an interest in global issues such as ecological concerns, the environment, disputes and war, and nuclear weapons. School education and religion have to teach the peace of education and spread out the peace movement for living together (相生, *sangsaeng*).

Thirdly, religion has to struggle against globalization, namely, new liberalism and the power of empire. For this it has to link international NGOs, and actively participate in international organizations of united labour, farm workers and the people of the third world. As China and South Korea also sink into the wave of new liberalism for the economic growth, labourers' rights are violated without resistance by long working hours, low income and personnel reduction. Religion has to work actively to get human rights for the weak.

Fourthly, religion has to express the objection to the regional tensions which tend toward the political conservative and right wing, military competition in North East Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan). These nations have a common culture and religion of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism in their background of using the Chinese language. Religions including Christianity in North East Asia have to unite and co-operate for living together through international networks.

Finally, religion generally has the thought that the ideal nation or ideal world, namely, the Buddhist paradise or the Kingdom of God, is close to socialism. Even though capitalism is superior to socialism in the present time, when we see through the essence of new liberalism and empire,

religion has to make efforts to re-establish socialism in nations in the middle and long term for the future. However, this socialism is not only in the level of political, economical structure and social classes, but it also has to be at the high level such as moral and religious genuine function, and the mental and spiritual dimension of the individual. So religion has to embody the ideal world. This means there will be social justice, peace, equal society, and no discrimination beyond selfishness and desire in the world.¹⁹⁾

Conclusion

The concept of borders is disappearing due to the development of transportation, science and technology, and communication networks in the period of the global village and so we have to find mutual coexistence of wisdom, ethics and values. As the oxygen made from a blade of grass influences the whole world, and as air pollution from a factory in one nation has a bad effect on neighbouring countries, and even as the whole global village experiences disasters and gets cancer, the global village has to find resolution altogether.

The declaration of global ethics brought about the motivation for the global village to gather wisdom together. The global ethic showed a new view of values for global responsibility and rights towards human prosperity, happiness and peace in the times of the global village.

However, I commented that it is difficult to achieve a global peace only

19) Francis I. Arinze, *Religions for peace*, Darton: Todd Press, 1985; Carrie Gustafson & Peter Juviler, *Religion and human rights: competing claims?* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999); John B. Taylor, *Religions for human dignity and world peace* (Geneva: World Conference on Religion and Peace, 1986); Homer A. Jack, *World religions and world peace: the international interreligious symposium on peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977); Jacob K. Olupona, *Religion and peace in multi-faith nigeria* (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1992); John Ferguson, *War and peace in the world's religions* (London: Sheldon Press, 1972); Leonard Swidler, *Religious liberty and human rights in nations and in religions* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986); Robert Traer, *Faith in human rights: support in religious traditions for a global struggle* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1991); Arvind Sharma & Katherine K. Young, *Feminism and world religions* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999).

to resolve religious conflicts. When religious conflicts come up to the surface of the water, we have to consider the contradiction of capitalism, the inequality between nations due to new liberalism, the legal exploitation of international huge capital, and the difficult life of labourers and farm workers. Religion has to spread out the peace movement with linking NGOs to dissolve the vertical empire ruling system. Religion has to get a vision of a new socialism as a similar religious ideal nation.

Religion has to foster the practical abilities of inner discipline, and open its eyes to its neighbours, social concern, social justice and global concern. Religion has to create religious values and a religious ethic harmonized with the new age, and remedy the abuse of religious power, and walk at the head of the parade to make a peaceful solidarity in the global village.

China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan in North East Asia have to make a new ethic and value of living together on the common basis of Confucian values, Buddhism, and similar culture. These countries have to reduce political, military, territorial tensions and have an international solidarity for life, peace and justice.

Most of the scholars in the world predict that China will ascend as a central nation among the political and economical stages of the world in the 21st century. I expect that China will not repeat the failed history of western imperialism in 19th and 20th centuries, and will not follow the abuses of capitalism, new liberalism, and empire by introducing capitalism on the basis of socialism. I hope China will get a horizontal relationship with the third world, display its new leadership, and show an alternative plan in the context of globalization.

For this, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity have to struggle against the huge waves of globalization, need to get dialogue and co-operation with each other through international solidarity for life, peace and justice.

Saeng-myung Feminism : an Attempt to Localize Eco-feminism

Young-suk Yi*

Introduction

This research aims to introduce a “*Saeng-myung* feminist” paradigm, while exploring the question of what a feminist insight centered on life might be.

In this era of globalization, when exploring the lives of women in one locality through the perspective of “difference,” the level of “gendered life” is one dimension, and the level of the “difference in the experiences of women of different societies” is another. The understanding of both the reality of women in a particular society and the practice of women as agents of action requires both the difference between men and women and that between women of these analytical elements. We need to apply to the global/local the perspective that takes into account both the differences between women, and between men and women, especially in this era of globalization. This will enable us to highlight the conditions of the local women’s life, and also materialize the experiences and practice of women as agents of action.

On the other hand, the cultural industry of the west has been creating “universal” consumerism of western products in the local area through the expansion of communication technology brought on by globalization. Thus,

Young-suk Yi has a Ph. D. in Sociology from the University of Oregon, and is a Professor at the Hallym University, Korea. Currently, she is dedicating her time to *Saeng-myung* Feminism in her attempts to localize ecofeminism in the context of Korean women’s experiences and culture.

the unique local cultures are homogenized with the west, and are being eroded by consumerism and western consciousness that is incompatible with the lives of the local people and the visions of the community. This phenomenon of incompatibility also takes place in the academic world. The structure of knowledge in relation to the engendering of women is not an exception to this.

The negative academic effects from west-centerism make us internalize the perspective of western women (which is isolated from the experiences of Korean women) as something that is universal. This renders difficulties in having an independent view of Korean women, and as a result, can cause us to advocate inappropriate theories. Gender theories that do not verbalize the experiences of Korean women do not allow Korean women to be the subjects (agents). Instead, they are objectified simply by reconstructing a framework of general concepts. Practice based on the west-centered theory, perspective and analytical framework that is not compatible with the Korean situation, cannot be inclusive when establishing policies on women (for example, health policies for women), to Korean women's specific desires, needs and also the cultural specificity of examining the conditions of life.

The term "life" (*saeng-myung* in Korean) used in *Saeng-myung* feminism is not limited to a biological definition. *Saeng-myung* is at once a biological entity and a point at which social power relationships are activated. This means that the conditions of life are formed not only through nature, but also through social construction. Life is directly and indirectly related to biology, history, economics, culture, and social relations.

In a patriarchal society, it is not only the conditions of life that are gendered by gender discrimination. The perspective on women and interpretation of life are also gendered in a socially unequal way. In addition to these general characteristics, gender inequality is another main factor determining the conditions of all aspects of life including the areas of reproduction and production. The reality of life in society is not gender-blind; it is a systemized gender relationship between men and women.

Therefore, *Saeng-myung* feminism presupposes that "life is gendered according to social structure"; it is a feminist approach in the sense that it fuses the understanding of characteristics of life with values of gender equality. The main importance of exploring life from a feminist perspective is that life is an entity in and of itself, and it is a location where social

relationships are created. Life is gendered through unequal male/female relationships on both of these levels.¹⁾

Thus, I propose *Saeng-myung* feminism as a theory that localizes global eco-feminism by partially reflecting the experiences and realities of Korean women, while at the same time containing a universal concept that can be contributive to women of other regions. Localizing global eco-feminism highlights the specificity of the socio-cultural context of Korean feminist practices and the characteristics of Korean women's experiences.

The Issue of Global/Local and the Differences between Women

Eco-feminism rejects the globalization of environmentalism that tries to view the world through one universal framework. This is because it puts importance on diverse local ecological characteristics. Therefore, in forming solidarity between eco-feminists of the North and South, eco-feminism allows the countries of the South to open up space so that their own voices can be found in their respective regions. Also, the South does not accept as a universal discourse the relationship between women and environment, and the experiences and issues of the Northern eco-feminists.

This is an example of the relationship between Korean women and nature, and of how the discourse on life is applied, suggesting two things for the environmental movement. First of all, it emphasizes the importance of the specificity of local regions and Southern countries against global hegemonism. It also focuses on the differences of women in an area based on the experiences of women in that area, thus allowing local women to become agents of the world environmental movement. Therefore, just as women of the North and South demand the dismantling of masculine universalism through solidarity against global environmentalism, the Korean women's environmental movement needs the ideas of environmental conservation that reflect the specificity of the culture of local societies, and also the knowledge and ideology of environmental conservation that enlivens the culture and specificity of local women.

1) Against this background, "life" as used in this paper has nothing to do with the "life" stipulated by pro-life anti-abortionists, and I confirm that I do not agree in any way with their arguments.

The Search for *Saeng-myung* Feminism

Saeng-myung Feminism as Localization of Eco-feminism

To examine the feminist perspective on life, it is necessary to introduce eco-feminism, which discusses similarities in the oppression of women and of nature. Eco-feminism was first introduced to Korea in the 1990's. Eco-feminism was formed through the efforts of women to save Earth through self-reflective resistance movements against the history of control over the environment by men in the west (until very recently), and also through a new feminist perspective on women and nature. The core of eco-feminism developed by western eco-feminists is the systematic discussion of the relationship between patriarchal sexism whereby men oppress women and the destruction of nature through indiscriminate development brought on by humans.

According to Young-suk Yi's (2001) research, Korean women environmental activists appear not to have fully embraced eco-feminist theory. Even those with a feminist perspective who have a definite consciousness about unequal gender relationships say, "In the past, I thought eco-feminist theories were too unrealistic. Even now, I am not sure. Eco-feminism seems too abstract. The reality of Korea is too different." Not all Korean environmental activists reject eco-feminism. However, according to Yi's (2001) research using in-depth interviews, many women environmental activists are uncomfortable with eco-feminism. At a workshop of national environmentalists, the general secretary of the Korean Women's Environmental Network, Mi-Young Lee stated that despite the significance of ecology and eco-feminism within the Green Discourse of the western world, Korea experiences difficulties in accepting this theory, because of its different culture and traditions. It is thus alienated from real-life activism in Korea, due to eco-feminism's alien experiences.²⁾ These problems reflect that Korean women environmentalists have either not been able to accept their body as a topic of their movement, or dismissed it as unimportant.

This indicates that a feminist perspective in discussions on the environment is not necessarily the same as an eco-feminist perspective.

2) Mi-Young Lee, "Looking at the Past and Future of Korean Women's Environmental Movement" (2004), 2.

There is a sense of non-familiarity that emerges out of socio-cultural differences between the Korean perspective on the environment and western theories on relationships between women and nature, when the latter are not filtered through our own language, and when the everyday experiences of western women and their relationships with nature are applied directly to Korean environmental activists.

In fact, the formation of eco-feminist theory takes place by reflecting on the situation of individual women dealing with specific examples in their own country as against most macro-theories, which a theoretical framework formed through a high level of intellectual abstraction. Ecological theory that lacks detailed analysis highlighting the co-related roots of social hegemony will remain abstract.³⁾

The specific roots of Korean social hegemony refer to the historical, cultural and social background of our society, which has been concretized in women's experiences. Warren⁴⁾ compares the process of forming eco-feminist theory with quilt-making. Just as each piece of fabric tells us of the quilt-maker's personal life and life journey, each eco-feminist has a unique perspective depending on her individual cultural, social, historical, local, racial and state background.

This is the context in which homogeneity, differentiation and universality are formed among the different pieces of fabric. Global feminism, however, has the task of forming solidarity through global unity while maintaining diversity, despite having to "unite women in, through, and despite the differences."⁵⁾

Until now, it is true that feminist theories and eco-feminism from the west have provided us with a strong analytical framework for the understanding of women's issues. I am aware of the fact that western feminism in its criticism of science and technology also criticizes the western concept of development, opening up space for discourse that takes into consideration the lives of non-western women. However, I propose to go further and use a different concept that highlights the differences between the experiences of western and of non-western Korean women.

3) King, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology" (1989), 23-24.

4) "Toward an Ecofeminist Peace Politics" (1994).

5) Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (2nd Ed.) (1998), 242.

Main Elements Constituting the Perspective of Saeng-myung Feminism

The main framework for discussion on the perspective of *Saeng-myung* feminism is constituted through two axes the principle of life and the principle of gender equality that are related to the general conditions of life. At the intersection of these two axes, the feminist perspective of life is formed through the understanding of oppression against women by anti-life social conditions, and of “life stratified by unequal relations.”

Discussion about “life” can be more clearly understood when we depart from the abstract term and focus on discussions of the “body.” The “body” as a social construction incorporates Foucault’s idea⁶⁾ of body as a locus for power, and this idea of locus is placed as a definite territory within feminism. Just as the body is a social construction, life is not only an anatomical entity but is also a social construction that is formed differently according to political, economic, and cultural institutions. The phenomenon whereby life is gendered manifests the various levels of control and violence involved in women’s lives.

Violence against women not only takes the form of direct abuse against the body, but permeates diverse areas of life such as fashion trends that suffocate the body, beauty standards that induce dieting-to-death, risky and sometimes deadly plastic surgery to “improve” face and bodily shape, unpaid domestic labor guaranteeing meals 365 days a year, low-paid and non-permanent women’s labor under terrible working conditions, the ideology of purity and sexual violence, and the instrumentalization of biological reproductive functions through the intrusion of bioengineering technologies into women’s bodies. All of these are simultaneously conditions that effect biological life and conditions that gender life in an exploitative way for women.

Therefore, from the perspective of *Saeng-myung* feminism, the concept of women’s life itself can be discussed on two levels. One is the understanding of “socially gendered life” (social construction: fashion, purity of ideology, low pay, unpaid domestic labor). The other is the understanding of “gendered life and woman’s body as the locus of oppression” (the phenomenon whereby the social construction is realized through biological life and body: capitalization of women through reproductive technology, aesthetic surgery, sexual violence, prostitution and

6) Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality* 1 (1978).

battery). “Life” is a concept that is more inclusive than “body” one that includes biological life. The former (“socially gendered life”) is a discussion of life on the metaphorical level; it attempts to manifest the social context and structure in which life is placed and also to manifest the fact that the structure is gendered-i.e. why life is discriminated against and oppressed. The latter (“gendered life and body of women as the locus of oppression”) looks at the reality of women’s bodies as a specific locus of realization of life, more than just in terms of biological analysis.

The Point at which Eco-feminism and Saeng-myung Feminism Differ

How, then, can we have the most appropriate insight and vision of life as we approach the relationship between nature and women?

1) “Ecology” and “Life”

It is inevitable that the focus of environmental movements and methods of resistance differ according to the level of industrialization, socio-economic structure and culture of each society. The discussion by the Third World women tells us of the relationship between economic development, nature and everyday life (fuel, water, food, etc.), and women’s marginalization and oppression. The research of eco-feminists, based on the relationship between nature and women, deals with the issues of ecological destruction, nuclear weapons and militarization, chemicals, genetically modified food, replication in bioengineering, and so forth.

The understanding of women’s experiences in eco-feminism characteristically takes a descriptive approach. The reason for this can be found in the analytical tendency of eco-feminist theory, whereby it does not seem to have conceptual devices that deal directly with the social dimension of life nor with the gendered dimension. In my opinion, in conducting research it is not easy to apply in depth the concept of “ecology” centered in nature to the phenomenon of gendered life, which is specific even to the empirical level.

The problems of Third World women from a *Saeng-myung* feminist approach can be conceptualized as follows.

In the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, the capitalist expansion process in the Third World brings problems to

agriculture that are directly related to the subsistence activities of women. This so-called process of development has deprived or downgraded women's roles and status. Thus women's formal economic activities and their labor related to social reproduction have been unequally "gendered," which implies that the problem is one of "socially gendered life." At the same time, the deterioration of the environment by development has caused problems for women's biological reproductive functions the problem of "gendered life and body of women as the locus of oppression."

This type of approach has the ability to conceptualize and analyze women's lives in an integrated fashion by joining together the entity of women's problems and the social topography of the problem as expressed through gendered life.

When we focus on life, we can see the anti-life social structure against women, and at the same time the oppression of the environment. If we focus on "ecology," oppressed women in Korea are less visible. "Life" in Korean language has stronger implications than "ecology." In the East, when we say "life," it is a subject (agent) in itself that includes entity, essential energy, social locus and fate, and it has a multi-layered characteristic.⁷⁾

In Korean culture, the concept of "life" is dynamic: it implies "ki" (氣) energy, destiny, the bare political-economic relations of subsistence, health, love and birth, resentment (Han in Korean), and the most important core. When we say "life," we hear the breathing, the distress, and the agony of women who struggle to live but are imprisoned in reality so that they can neither escape nor move.

Strangely enough, when we say "ecology" in Korean, the word does not have a dynamic meaning, and it approaches closer to a stationary physical meaning even though it is not identical to that in English. In Korean, when we say "life" instead of "ecology," it can be a concept for socially dynamic relationships including power relations, the gap between rich and poor, the relationship between men and women, and between nature and humans.⁸⁾

7) Ki-sang Lee, *Philosophy in Korean Language* (2003), chapter 9.

8) The legacy of the Chinese theories of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu also plays a part (Kaltenmarx, 1969; Nan, 1991).

2) The Epistemological Premise of *Saeng-myung* Feminism

The meaning of “gender justice” in *Saeng-myung* feminism and *Saeng-myung* feminism’s methodology can be found partially through a discussion of the *Saeng-myung* feminism’s epistemological framework.

The main epistemological structure of eco-feminism can be introduced as thus⁹⁾

(1) The relationship between nature and women can be divided into two. One is that women are innately closer to nature, and the other refers to embodied women who are socially constructed.

(2) The former emphasizes feminine values such as caring.

(3) All oppressive ideologies imply the logic of hegemony that is maintained and strengthened by patriarchy.

(4) Eco-feminism recognizes the importance of maintaining the diversity of the ecosystem and consequently disseminating power, and problematizes the uniformity of culture whereby similar wants and desires are globally circulated by the consumer industry.

(5) Eco-feminism emphasizes the dismantlement of the dualistic epistemology that posits gaps among nature, culture and humans.

Saeng-myung feminism shares similar premises, but we need to highlight how these premises are qualitatively different in *Saeng-myung* feminism. The main epistemological structure and qualities of *Saeng-myung* feminism comes from the premise that “life is the subject.”¹⁰⁾

Life is the Subject (Agent)

In the western tradition, there has been a tendency to approach nature from a mechanistic view. In Korea, nature has been regarded as more or less a communicative being.¹¹⁾ For example, the tree has traditionally been experienced as the protector of women, a conversational companion, a power-giver to discouraged women and a living entity that protects the village.¹²⁾

9) This is a summary of the core epistemological structure that is shown by eco-feminists such as Merchant (1990), Braidotti, et al. (1994), Spretnak (1990), Warren (1994), and King (1990; 1995).

10) I originally borrowed this notion from Dr. Yong-Bock Kim, who is leading the study of “life” in Korea.

11) Kyu-tae Lee, “The Korean Perspective on Nature” (2000).

12) Ilh-young Park, “Thoughts of Life in Shamanism” (2000).

Life as a subject in *Saeng-myung* feminism sees self-liberating power coming from life.¹³⁾ For women, this means that we are able to give birth to ourselves, using our own power through the strength of our own lives. This means that women are agents of their own lives with the power that comes from within us. Therefore, in *Saeng-myung* feminism, women are victims but at the same time have the power to overcome; we have the power to reject control and oppression, and become subjects (agents) of social change. This can be the basis on which to understand the “liberating motherhood” of Korean mothers.

Secondly, the premise that life is the subject in *Saeng-myung* feminism also means that life is not an object in human hands. This has significant implications for the movement for a gender-equal society, and also for our method of research. Eco-feminism considers nature and women as having different qualities in similar situations. However, eco-feminism does not mention the shared characteristics of life that exist in nature and in women. In *Saeng-myung* feminism, nature is the subject (agent), and women are also the subjects (agents) because life itself is the subject. Life is the essence of nature, humans, and all other living organisms. Thus, to say that women protect nature does not mean that women are the subjects (agents) and nature the object, but that women support the recuperation of life’s subjectivity. It means that women support the recuperation of life’s spontaneity, and of its liberating and autonomous powers. It has significant implications for approaches to counseling and healing.

Thirdly, through the premise that life is the subject (agent), *Saeng-myung* feminism can avoid the essentialist debate on whether nature and women are similar or dissimilar. It also enables the liberation movement of both genders, where the lives of both women and men can universally meet. In *Saeng-myung* feminism, men’s life is also a subject and thus presupposes the universal life of both genders, which then can be used to enable further the questioning of gendered life.

Fourthly, because of the premise that life is the subject (agent), gender research from a *Saeng-myung* feminist perspective requires an integrated approach, with life placed as its core. The relationship between life and women (humans) cannot be separated as seems possible in the “ecological”

13) This should not be wrongly interpreted to mean that women can stand up again after having been beaten, as if nothing had happened. My presupposition here is the autonomy of life and the inner strength of life.

discussion of nature and women. *Saeng-myung* feminism focused on life must examine life and women as one unit, and therefore needs an integrated research method that focuses on women and nature as both aspects of life, life-giving and life-participating, since it is impossible to capture the conditions of life if life is fragmented and divided.

Co-Influence

Saeng-myung feminism places importance on co-influence. One of the characteristics of life is also energy, so therefore it co-influences and interacts. *Saeng-myung* feminism places importance on the interrelatedness of humans and nature, and also interrelatedness among humans. However, compared to the “interrelatedness” of eco-feminism, the “interrelatedness” of *Saeng-myung* feminism refers to the co-influential relationship through which energy is actively exchanged.

Just as has been mentioned while comparing and describing “ecology” and “life,” “life” has a dynamic nature. In Korea, *Ki* is understood as the flow of energy, as something that is not unilateral in relation to objects.¹⁴⁾ The theories of China’s Lao Tzu are considered to be the originator when it comes to interrelatedness however, if we compare “*Salpuli*” with Chinese traditional dances, we can see that the Korean culture has internalized the actions that relate and control energy, and the relationships that come out from the depth of our bodies.¹⁵⁾

14) Myun-hee Han, “Environmental Ethics Centering on *Ki* and ‘the Whole Value System’ ” (1997). Economic ability is, in reality, a strong factor in the flow of bilateral energy or influence. However, first of all, the phenomenon where the tendency of differentiation between economics, culture and politics cannot be ignored shows us that the interaction of energy is expanding and that we cannot ignore the implication of the flow of energy having gotten bigger. Secondly, on a micro-dimension, especially within the primary group (in meaningful relationships) not only does economic power exist, but also the dynamics of diverse energy, communication, human interaction and technology exist as well.

15) I have found particularly in the Korean dance “*Salpuli*” how the dealing of energy is more developed in Korea than in other cultures of East Asian countries.

Ways in which Principles of Gender Equality are Fused with Principles of Life

In what ways do the principles of life and of gender equality come together? Is it the same as the way in which oppression of nature and oppression of women are fused in eco-feminism?

Nature's condition is as important as women's condition in *Saeng-myung* feminism, which, however, does not necessarily require nature as a point of reference. This makes it easier to analyze the anti-life and unequally gendered phenomena of modern society. Eco-feminism assumes that the way nature is oppressed is similar or the same as the way women are oppressed. By this, eco-feminism discusses life with nature as an intervening variable, that is, the main idea of eco-feminist analysis is that the oppressive relationship of nature is similar in form to the oppressive relationships in human society.¹⁶⁾ When nature is placed as an intervening variable for the analysis of women's issues in the First and Second Worlds, the conceptual road is lengthened to the point that analytical strength is lost when it comes to the issue of the complex structure of modern society. Because the conditions of gendered life are different according to the characteristics of society and its problems, it is not always necessary to discuss anti-life phenomena via nature. Although it is not stated plainly in eco-feminism, *Saeng-myung* feminism recognizes that the core that cuts through the discussions on nature is a discourse on life. *Saeng-myung* feminism seeks to look directly at the reality of gendered life through women's issues themselves, i.e. how society which is anti-life is oppressive to women, whereas eco-feminism discusses women's issues using a method that places nature as the point of reference highlighting the similarity in the oppression of women by men and the oppression of nature by humans. The former type of approach can be applied to the analysis of nature, because in nature, life is also the subject (agent).

If we specifically take Korea as an example, we can focus on how the lives of women are suffering in industrialized cities. We can conceptualize the phenomenon of unequally gendered life as the capitalization of women's bodies as engenders of life is where the principle of life intersects with gender inequality. Thus from the specific experiences of Korean women, we come up with an operational definition: the anti-life fad of aesthetic

16) For more details, refer to Diamond and Orenstein (1990).

surgery correlates the oppressive conditions endured by women in the male-centered labor world with social “representation” of women’s bodies.

The concept of unequal gendered life and the operational definition just mentioned are differentiated from eco-feminism epistemologically, methodologically, analytically, and in the alternative policies it proposes. However, this does not exclude existing similarities between *Saeng-myung* feminism and eco-feminism.

Next, *Saeng-myung* feminism has similarities with socialist eco-feminism that focuses on women as a social construction. However, *Saeng-myung* feminism and socialist eco-feminism are different in their criticisms of patriarchy. First of all, because *Saeng-myung* feminism does not have nature as a point of reference, it is easier to analyze the multi dimensional gendered life of modern society. Secondly, because it presupposes life as a subject (agent), it has a framework that enables an integrated approach to both women and life with regard to “gendered life” and to women and nature both related in that they have and are life. The latter is possible because women and life are not “different categories” as is the case with women and nature in eco-feminism.

Sensitivity for Life

How does *Saeng-myung* feminism seek to bring life-justice to the gendered life of women? In other words, what in Korean culture can provide a link between gender-justice and life-justice? *Saeng-myung* feminism proposes, as the answer to this question, “sensitivity for life.”

Life sensitivity has to do with the disposition to embrace, protect, and help the emergence of life no matter how it may be manifested, as well as the desires, needs and struggles of each one’s life. This sensitivity is not only a matter of superficial “feelings” but is also cognitive and motivational, therefore, it is psychological and existential. Life sensitivity is a personal disposition and also a group disposition. Life sensitivity is not just a matter of personal opinion apart from the political and physical reality, but likewise it is a community oriented understanding and reality.

The Feminine Principle within Global Theory and Life Sensitivity in the Local Context

Some in the western and global feminist world try to solve the problems in women's daily life by investigating the relationship between women and nature. How do Korean feminist environmentalists deal with the women-nature relationship in western and global eco-feminist discourse?

In the case of Korean feminist environmentalists, western and global eco-feminism has contributed to a change of the approach to environment and gender issues. However, data reveals that western and global eco-feminism has not reached the needs, demands, and problems of Korean women. Present discussions regarding eco-feminism indicate that its understandings do not provide foundations firm enough for Korean environmentalists. This does not mean that the majority of them reject eco-feminism. But it cannot be denied that a large number of Korean feminist environmentalists have disagreed with different understandings of eco-feminism.

At a symposium organized by the Korean Women's Studies Association and the Korean Women Link in 1995, the analysis of feminist environmentalists was to make clear the understandings that grounded their actions. One of the most discussed issues was the discrepancies that existed between theories and their practical application around the question of whether women and nature show essential affinity.¹⁷⁾ The discussion about the relationship between nature and women, that is whether women show affinities to nature or not, has resulted in divided opinions among feminists.¹⁸⁾

Shiva¹⁹⁾ views the feminine principle as a requisite for "life subsistence economies." According to her, unlike the dual relationship of man-women and human being-nature in western eco-feminist thought in Indian cosmology, person and nature (Purusha-Prakriti) are "a duality in unity," and "inseparable complements of one another in nature, in woman, in man."

²⁰⁾

17) Korean Women's Studies Association, Research Committee, "Research Trend on Women" (1996), 230.

18) Braidotti et. al (1994), 117, 133. Tong (1998): chapter 8; Sturgeon (1997a). For discussions on essentialism see chapter 4 of Braidotti et al. (1994) and chapter 6 of Sturgeon (1997b).

19) *Staying Alive* (1997).

According to Shiva²¹⁾, the feminine principle cannot only be seen as a characteristic of women, but also as energy and a creative principle in men. "The unity within the dualism" of Indian perception, ruling between nature, women, and men, is not the same dualism that rules in western perception on nature. Though I have some disagreements with the Indian understanding of the relationship among nature, women, and men, I agree to men's tendency of caring. Gloria Steinem also displays a similar standpoint. In her visit to Korea in 2002, she stated that to be a human incorporates the feminine being, thus acknowledging certain feminine characteristics to men as well.

Life Sensitivity is the Foundation of the Community of Nature and Human beings, Man and Woman

Life sensitivity is the disposition that can interrelate between human beings, between nature and human beings and among nature, human beings, and inanimate objects by bringing together and activating responses to the others. Life sensitivity is not a new in Korea and East Asia, but is a continuation of traditional understandings of life, which plays an important role in folk-wisdom and our traditional culture. Our understanding of life is in contrast to the life concept of the west, greatly influenced by the Creation myth of Christianity²²⁾, which has evolved a more instrumental concept due to developments and influences of modern technology.

Life sensitivity is rooted in the principle that "life is the subject (agent)" and that the foundations of community include where nature and human beings, man and woman, live in interrelationship with nature. This understanding is an integral element of Korean culture and its understanding of life, its folk-wisdom, traditional culture and understanding of reality as made obvious by the language usage. First I will present the understanding of life in our culture. I will explain how life in Korea and East Asia embraces entity, essential energy, social locus, history and fate.²³⁾ Life for us is a multi-layered concept that goes way beyond physical existence. Second, I will explain the meaning and implications of life as

20) Shiva, *Staying Alive* (1997), 40.

21) Shiva *Staying Alive* (1997).

22) Ki-Sang Lee, *Philosophy in Korean Language* (2003), 355.

23) Ki-Sang Lee, *Philosophy in Korean Language* (2003), 228.

agent of the gender relationships.

1) Life Sensitivity as Presented in the Roots of Folklore Tradition and Life Concept

First, Korean culture includes the experience and wisdom to overcome suppressive social situations through a perception of nature and the world that differs from the patriarchal tradition.²⁴⁾ Our sensitivity towards life within folklore tradition is marked by the folk belief (*sokshin*)²⁵⁾ This belief acknowledges the right to live and awakens the belief that Nature and human being are destined to live together.²⁶⁾ One example of folk belief that respects nature's right to live and responds to the pain and needs of nature is as follows:

- When you pick a persimmon from a tree and put it in fire, all the other persimmons will fall off.
- When you cut the upper part of a tree, you will go to hell.
- When you use too much water to wash yourself, the cause of your death will be drowning.
- When you urinate near a spring, you will be struck by lightning.
- When you cut an old tree or a tree used for community ritual it will bring death upon you.

These examples illustrate the belief in the importance of a life in harmony with nature, when "life is the subject (agent)" to nature and human beings.

As a localized supplement to the feminine principle, life sensitivity emerges from the nature-friendly local traditional culture in Korea. Life sensitivity not only refers to the needs of human being but also embraces Nature with flora and fauna, and other objects, sympathizing with their

24) Jae-Hae Yim, *Ecological Perception in Folk Culture: The Third Folklore* (2002).

25) *Sokshin* is a folk belief without any particular objective (Yim, 2002), 345, but nevertheless reflects cultural characteristics..

26) Jae-Hae Yim, *Ecological Perception in Folk Culture: The Third Folklore* (2002), 329-357. Jae-Hae Yim & Yoon-Sook Lee, "The Culture of Salim for Mutual Life-giving and Mutually Being-Subject" (2002), 16.

needs as well.²⁷⁾

2) The Feminist Implications of Life Sensitivity for Conviviality

Through the premise that life is the subject (agent), *Saeng-myung* feminism can avoid the essentialist debate on whether nature and women are similar or dissimilar. It also enables the liberation movement of both genders, where the lives of both women and men can universally meet.

Life sensitivity does not only react in a macro level towards the oppressive social structure, but also facilitates the performance of reproductive labor for caring. The major requisite for a society without any gender discrimination is the role of social reproduction, thus, the participation of men in domestic labor and child rearing. Life sensitivity awakens one to the social structural problems of the anti-*Saeng-myung* [life], to the need to participate in the daily demand for care and also awakens the caring labor (including rearranging and cleaning) which women perform in reality. Thus, life sensitivity tries to overcome the macro social structural problems which oppress the life of women. It also aims at the pursuit of personal self-commitment of both men and women, not only arguing for the public sphere of social resources to be mobilized. It is here that the feminist implication gains its meaning.

From a global/local point of view, life sensitivity does not only reflect the characteristic of Korea, it also connects the differences related to the feminine principle and the symbiotic world view on nature, practice, and the problem of life engendering. Thus, it opens a wider possibility for men to participate actively in the environmental movement and reproductive labor.

Conclusion

The search for *Saeng-myung* feminism shows that it needs to be approached as something that should be mutually supplemented and developed with eco-feminism. At the same time, it should be promoted through a strategy of differentiation from eco-feminism. The differentiation strategy is, in fact, accepting the major premises of the former liberating elements of western

27) Oriental medicine is particularly prominent within this context, as its elemental principles are based on the belief that the body and mind are conversing with each other (Yim, 2002), 219.

eco-feminism, while at the same time observing the differences between women, highlighting and reflecting the values and importance of Korean women's life context and culture.

It is essential to examine the relationship between life and nature within the local socio-cultural context. Thus, as the central focus of action, the space that the women inhabit and the experiences of these local women differ from individual to individual, creating new forms.

Saeng-myung feminism proposes an epistemological frame centered on recognition of life, the method of research, and "sensitivity for life." In this process, despite the fact that *Saeng-myung* feminism highlights the issue of "gendered life" which eco-feminism has approached only in a somewhat indirect way, we should be careful not to lessen the deep understanding of the relationship between nature and women which is the strength of eco-feminism by emphasizing the social dimensions too much.

For reference, the areas where *Saeng-myung* feminism is applicable to practice are: environmental movements, research on women's bodies, life community movements, cultural movements that incorporate the values of life and women, counseling, training of sensitivity for life, etc.

References

- Braidotti, Rosi, et al. (1994), *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Diamond, Irene & Gloria Feman Orenstein (Eds.) (1990), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1978), *The History of Sexuality 1*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Han, Myun-hee (1997), "Environmental Ethics Centering on Ki and 'the Whole Value System' " in *Environmental Ethics*. Seoul: ChulHak-kwa-HyunShil-Sa. [Korean Literature].
- Kaltenmark, Max (1969). *Lao Tzu and Taoism*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- King, Ynestra (1989), "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology" in Judith Plant (Ed.), *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.
- King, Ynestra (1990), "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the

- Nature/Culture Dualism.” in Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (Eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- King, Ynestra (1995), “Engendering a Peaceful Planet: Ecology, Economy, and Ecofeminism in Contemporary Context”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 23, Fall/Winter.
- Korean Women’s Studies Association, Research Committee (1996), “Research Trend on Women,” *Women and Society* (no. 7). [Korean Literature].
- Lee, Ki-sang (2003), *Philosophy in Korean Language*. Seoul: Chisiksansupa. [Korean Literature].
- Lee, Kyu-tae (2000), “The Korean Perspective on Nature,” in *The Koreans’ Environmental Culture*. Seoul: ShinWon-MunHwa-Sa. [Korean Literature].
- Lee, Mi-Young (2004), “Looking at the Past and Future of Korean Women’s Environmental Movement” (Workshop material for National Environmental Activists). [Korean Literature].
- Merchant, Carolyn (1990), “Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory,” in Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (Eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Nan, Huai-chin (1991), *Tao & Longevity: Mind-Body Transformation*. Dorset, Great Britain: Element Books Limited.
- Park, Ilh-young (2000), “Thoughts of Life in Shamanism,” in UriSaSang-YunKuSo (Ed.), *Doing Philosophy with Life*. Seoul: ChulHak-kwa-HyunSil-Sa. [Korean Literature].
- Shiva, Vandana(1997), *Staying Alive*. London: Zed Books.
- Spretnak, Charlene (1990), “Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering.” in Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (Eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Sturgeon, Noë (1997a), “Ecofeminist Antimilitarism and Strategic Essentialism”, in Author, *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory, and Politics Action*. New York: Routledge.
- Sturgeon, Noël (1997b), “Introduction”, in Author, *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory, and Politics Action*. New York: Routledge
- Tong, Rosemarie (1998), *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (2nd Ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
- Warren, Karen (1994), “Toward an Ecofeminist Peace Politics” in Karen Warren (Ed.), *Ecological Feminism*, New York: Routledge.

- Yi, Young-suk (2001), "Gender and Locality in Korean Women's Environmental Movement," *Women's Studies Review*, 18, December. [Korean Literature].
- Yim, Jae-hae (2002), *Ecological Perception in Folk Culture: The Third Folklore*. Seoul: Dang-dae. [Korean Literature].
- Yim, Jae-hae & Yoon-sook Lee (2002), "The Culture of Salim for Mutual Life-giving and Mutually Being-Subject" (Dialogue), *Salim*, no. 157. [Korean Literature].

Korean Feminist Ecclesiology : A Wholistic Approach

Mee - Hyun Chung*

Introduction

It was during my study abroad that I for the first time found out that there were Protestant convents. One was located in the suburbs of Basel in Switzerland where I stayed for study at that time. I was surprised twice when I discovered this place. First, because I previously thought there were only Catholic convents, but here was a real Protestant one which was reformed and different from a Catholic one. But this convent gave me another shock in that even though it was composed of 100% females, among whom there were many nuns professionally trained in theology, and even though the abbess of this convent was a Doctor of Theology, there were two male ministers who took charge of the ministries related to the proclamation of the Word and the liturgical services. While my first shock was a sort of affirmative surprise at discovering this unusual place, the second shock came from disappointment that there still remained an anti-feminist theological structure in that place even though it was an alternative

Mee-Hyun Chung is the Head of the Women and Gender Desk in Mission 21, Switzerland and a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and Vice President for Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians(EATWOT). She received Dr.theol. from Basel University in Switzerland. She has taught courses at both Undergraduate and Graduate level at the Ewha Womans University Seoul, Korea. E-mail : meehyun.chung@mission-21.org / www.credo.or.kr

community to a Catholic convent. The rules of this Protestant community were not extremely strict, and above all were open towards society. However, to my frustration, women were totally excluded in the ministries of the Word and the liturgical services, remaining just as passive participants. Seemingly I am witnessing such a contradiction and limitation as seen in Korean situations too, where it's extremely difficult to find a female minister, not only in most of the churches in Korea where it's estimated that approximately 70% of church members are female, but also in the Christian schools which contend that they have some understanding of feminist theology or feminism.

It is very burdensome to the author in the present situation of 2001 when although female ministers are legally approved in the Korean churches and the absolute majority of the church members are female, they are not grafted into the real field of ministries. Because of this I want to talk about an alternative ecclesiology of feminist theology. Why is it so burdensome? The answer is that many proposals suggested as alternatives even until now have had many difficulties in their practical acceptance in today's established churches. An accepted alternative also may have its own contradiction or limitation as the Protestant convent mentioned above showed. However, the author will try to make a picture of the church that can be pursued by using feminist theology. I am writing this article with the hope that the suggestions given here will be gradually accepted in open future-oriented churches.

Theological Dimension

Kerygma, Koinonia, Diakonia, Didache

Various definitions can be given for what a church community is. The author will define it as a place where the Word of God is proclaimed (Kerygma), where there is the possibility of the fellowship of a faith community in which the Sacraments are shared (Koinonia), and also where there are services toward society (Diakonia) and education in church (Didache). Churches can be healthy and beautiful when these four factors are responding to each other with harmony and balance. However I'm afraid that now in the Korean churches the harmony and balance of these factors is being broken with only one or two of the factors being highlighted. Especially from the perspective

of feminist theology these factors that uphold and sustain churches are affecting both female ministers and female laity in the structural division of churches according to the sex role.

Traditionally the proclamation of the Word has been considered to be the monopoly of man. The core of the Christian message is resurrection. To proclaim and celebrate the event that "He is a victor because He is a victim" (*victor quia victima*) has been the most important element in the Christian faith. Women were the first witnesses of the resurrection (Mt 28:1-10, Lk 24:1-12, John 20:11-18), but nevertheless the public position of proclaiming the Word was, from the New Testament period on, already given to male disciples. It has been sufficiently pointed out that even though females comprise over 70% of the church members, they are as yet excluded from the position of proclaiming the Word, so that what is being proclaimed is male centered.¹⁾

There is an important point to be considered theologically and historically as to the female right to proclaim the Word and the laity's right to proclaim the Word. Recently European theologians have reevaluated the reformation of John Huss to be 'the First Reformation,'²⁾ which at once proceeded Luther's reformation by 100 years, and whose contents were superior to the latter in the fact that they really had a reformation spirit by trying to reform from below. After John Huss suffered death at the stake by the Council of Constance on 6 July 1415, the followers of Huss, so called 'the Hussites,' declared the Four Articles of Prague (1420)³⁾; 1) the free preaching of the Word of God, 2) the communion of the laity in which they can take both the bread and the wine, 3) the poverty of clergymen and the secularization of the property of the church, 4) the punishment of public crimes including simony. Here what the author exceptionally tries to pay attention to is the first and the second article. When it was said that the Word of God could be freely proclaimed by every one, it meant the right of preaching by lay persons with no sexual distinction. It means that it was the

1) Cf. Christian Women's Peace Research Center, *Preaching that Women Want*, (Pyongwhasa, 1992).

2) Mee-hyun Chung, "The First Reformation", *Sinhaksasang* (Theological Thought), Autumn, 1996, 165-91.

3) Jan Milic Lochman, translated by Won-bae Kim and Mee-hyun Chung, *Living Heritage* (The Theological Institute Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, 1996), 66-71.

picture of the Hussian reformation in which the right of preaching of female laity was approved and proclaimed. It is also noticeable that the reformation claimed the right of the laity to receive the cup in the Eucharist, and actually took it into practice, though it had been believed to be the privilege of the clergy only to take the cup until that time. It is the heritage of 'the First Reformation' that enlightened the importance and value of the laity and cast doubts on the distinction between the clergy and the laity. This heritage attracts the attention of feminist theology.⁴⁾

Whenever we speak about an alternative ecclesiology of feminist theology, the thing most frequently pointed out is the problem of the dualistic hierarchical order between clergymen and laity. This sort of pointing out the problem and criticizing was also discovered in Karl Barth, a reformed theologian who has been harshly criticized by feminist theologians in general. Barth begins with the problematic definition of laity. He said it was a very old, but wrong distinction. "Is there anyone but 'Lay' (Laien)? Anybody else? I am a lay, too. 'Lay' merely means 'one who belongs to the people' (*ein dem Volk Zugehöriger*). None of us has any choice but to belong to the people. I mean the people of God including the whole human race. We all exist together as God's people. One may study theology, and the other not study it, but the former who studies theology is not better than or different from mere lay persons...."⁵⁾ In discussing an ecclesiology from the perspective of feminist theology, the clericalism which has been pointed out many times must be corrected with the viewpoint of Barth. This does not mean to get rid of the functional distinction between clergymen and laity, but to remove the hierarchical authoritarianism by understanding their functions

4) It is not surely universal that the Hussian reformation is recognised as the 'the First Reformation.' In general it is common in the non-professional sense that the history of the reformation should start from Luther's reformation. From this viewpoint the pietism of German is called 'the Second Reformation' as the reformation of the reformation after Luther's reformation in the church's history. Recently The Times (Nov 23, 1992) called the approval of the ordination of females in the episcopal Church as the second reformation. All of these seem to regard Luther's reformation as the beginning of the Reformation, and in this case the affirmative features found in the Hussian reformation, especially some theological heritage esteemed highly in the light of feminist theology will not be able to shine forth their light.

5) Karl Barth, translated by Mee-hyun Chung, *Last Witnesses* (Handl Press, 1997), 38-39.

as serving each other, rather than dominating.

I would like to add one more thing in placing emphasis upon the necessity that females must also be in charge of proclaiming the Word.

There are two kinds of interpretation of the Bible, interpretation of the Bible being the core of the proclamation of the Word. One is *Eisgese*, which is an interpretation process of reading into the text. This is called as 'purposeful interpretation' or 'intentional interpretation.' The other is *Exegese*, which is an interpretation method of reading out of the text. This is to interpret the text itself, *Auslegen*.⁶⁾ Traditionally the Bible has been interpreted from the masculine perspective. Females are excluded or degraded as sinners in a way which has become a very negative stereotype of women. With their dualistic provisions about the role of females, they've spotlighted the feminine roles as being those only of providing services. This is a sort of *Eisgese*, in which male theologians and ministers have interpreted the Bible according to their intention and purpose. It is likely that we can also make the same mistake as this even when we try to interpret the Bible with the intention of feminist theology. If the perspective of feminist theology is not able to read the context out of the text and the meaning of it, but only to read the purpose and intention of the interpreter into the text, it is once again reduced to the dimension of *Eisgese*. The biblical interpretation method of feminist theology should seek after the biblical principle (*Schriftprinzip*) of reformed theology ("Let the Bible interpret the Bible") consciously with a feminist perspective, and therefore it should read out of the Bible (*Exegese*) and proclaim the Gospel.

Another important task of the church is service (*Diakonia*)⁷⁾ and

6) Susanne Heine, translated by Mee-hyun Chung, *Women in the Early Christianity* (Ewha Women's University Press), 1998, 51, 70, 87-88.

7) The concept of service is primarily said to be connected with the understanding of ministries in the New Testament. The understanding of spiritual ministries in the New Testament was changed into the hierarchical and monarchical understanding of a few clergymen and a multitude of laity as the early Christian community came to settle down. But the ministries must be understood in the sense of how Jesus taught his disciples with his own example. Jesus told them that if they would like to be great, they should be servants (Mt 20:26, Mk 9:35), and not lords who oppress their people (Mt 20:25, Mk 10:42). Attention must be paid to the fact that in the New Testament the word for ministry is never used to mean rule, honor, or commander (in Greek *τιμῇ* or *αρχῇ*), but just *διδασκαλία* meaning service.

fellowship (*Koinonia*).⁸⁾ The problem is that although people know that these two factors are important tasks and responsibilities of the church, they are actually heavy burdens to some particular members of the church.⁹⁾ Generally women who are in total charge of domestic labors are the ones responsible for similar service and fellowship during both weekdays and Sundays in the church. They take double burdens; domestic and physical labors in their home and the same labor as this in their churches. In reality, if women were not to take these functions in the Korean church, it could not maintain its present state any more. We have to seriously consider the fact that there are so many Korean women in the churches who are greatly stressed with the burden of taking care of the communal meals served in the churches. This coercive labor of women in the churches for fellowship and service needs to be lessened, with fresh and different ways to replace this communal meal being developed according to the situation of each church. Also according to the situation of each church, the dualistic distinction in the church by sex roles must be rectified as the process toward the democratization of the church goes on.

As to the church education (*Didache*), which is one of the important tasks of the church, Sunday school education and adult Bible study can be mentioned. The problem is, like in the proclamation of the Word, that Bible studies are degrading and usually against women as a whole. In most of the cases referring to women in sermons or Bible study, the models given are about those who are obediently serving. Therefore from the perspective of feminist theology it is necessary that church education from children to adults must be reformed.¹⁰⁾

8) Christian Women's Peace Research Center, "Peace-making People", No. 16, 1993, 46-90.

9) Democratization Conference of Church Females (for a sexually equal community in the church), "Is the church community good enough?", 1995, 9-10.

10) "What should we do with church education? (prospecting 21st century church education from the perspective of sexual equality)," *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology*, No. 39, Autumn, 1999. This is not to be microscopically treated in the dimension of local churches, but must be discussed in the sexually discriminated structure of the theological seminaries in Korea at large. Especially as to the problem of women being excluded from theological education, jobs in seminaries and the pastorate, you may refer to Aae-young Kim, "Feminist theology demanding the reformation of the Korean church,"

Our present task is to make the four factors mentioned above to be in harmony and to help the church be born again as a healthy and equal community, in which the principles of female ministry should be put into practice and overcoming traditional patriarchal ministries.¹¹⁾

Creative tension between the Petrine and Johannine traditions.

When there were three kingdoms in Korea (i.e. Koguryo, Baekje and Shilla), the Church made an important decision at the Synod of Whitby in the British Isles, which was to determine the future direction of Western Christianity. At that place two kinds of mission were being discussed. One is the way of the Celtic mission, which is rooted in John who was listening to the heartbeat of God in the arms of Jesus Christ at the final feast (John 13:23). This is called "Listening for the Heartbeat of God."¹²⁾ The other is the way of the Roman Catholic church, which is based upon the supreme authority of Peter, to whom Jesus declared, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosened in heaven" (Mt 16:18-19). While the former put stress upon the goodness of creation and the image of God rather than original sin, the latter emphasized human sinfulness and the authority of the church. The Celtic mission was derived from Iona which made much account of the Johannine tradition, and was imported through Aidan of Lindisfarne. On the other hand the Roman Catholic mission, asserting the Petrine authority, was derived from Rome, and was received through Augustine of Canterbury.

The Synod of Whitby raised the hand of the latter, for the result of which the forthcoming Christian community came to be dominated by the

270-298, *Feminist Theology and the Korean Church*, Korean Theological Institute, 1997. 270-98

11) Mee-kang Yang, "A ministry seeking to overcome patriarchalism and to put feministic principles into practice," *Possibilities of Female Ministry and its Dilemma (International Symposium of Female Ministry)*, Hanil Theological Seminary Christian General Institute, 38-55.

12) J. P. Newell, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God. A Celtic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press), 1997.

authoritarian pattern of mission of the Roman Catholic church. The Celtic way of mission was debilitated in history but has not entirely disappeared. In recent times it is being rather newly spotlighted.

J. P. Newell, a Scottish theologian who has insisted on recovering Celtic spirituality, told us about the tragedy of the Synod of Whitby. "The tragic outcome of the synod was not that it chose the Roman mission but that it neither made room within the Church for both ways of seeing nor declared that both were firmly rooted in the gospel tradition."¹³⁾ This means that after the decision of the Synod of Whitby, although both traditions were rooted in the Gospel, the history of Christianity afterward would enforce the Petrine tradition and neglect the Johannine one. While the latter accentuated the methods of meditation and contemplation, the former emphasized positive actions. Both John and Peter ran toward the empty tomb of Jesus, and they witnessed his resurrection. These two apostles can be said to be the male counterparts of Mary and Martha and they also symbolize the tension between meditation and action.¹⁴⁾

The most characteristic thing in the Johannine tradition is to look at God from one's whole life and to stress the inter-relatedness of all creation. The light of life exists among all creation, not restricted to a certain space or a certain person. Philip Newell said that the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew, each of which became the basis of the Johannine and the Petrine traditions, emotionally made different approaches.¹⁵⁾ For example, when depicting the woman who was pouring the perfume on Jesus, the Gospel of John tells about the smell of perfume and the intimate activity of the woman when she was pouring it on Jesus and wiping his feet with her hair, while the Gospel of Matthew just reports this affair with no emotion or intimacy. Emotions and positive regard of the body and sexuality can be found in the Gospel of John, while in the Gospel of Matthew sinfulness is

13) J. P. Newell, *ibid*, 94.

14) J. P. Newell, *ibid.*, 95. It is true that it's difficult to say John is the very beloved disciple, because there are a lot of debates among New Testament scholars about the issue. However what is important is the fact that he must have been the representative of the Johannine community. Refer to the following books about the relationship between Peter and the beloved disciple; Joonsuk Suh, *Interpretation of the Gospels* (Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1991), 265-88, Deug-joong Kim, *Theology of John* (Concordia, 1994), 189-203.

15) J. P. Newell, *ibid*, 96.

stressed much more. John and Peter have different ways of their own to listen to God, and accordingly the Gospels reveal these tendencies. While John has the contemplative image in which he listens to the heartbeat of God in creation and life, Peter has the extroverted unifying image in which there are found sincere activities as well as the authority of the established church. Both traditions are rooted in the Bible. However, after only one of these two missions was accepted at the Synod of Whitby, the direction of Christianity was fatally influenced. If both ways had been taken into consideration, the creative tension existing between these two would have had a more positive influence.

E. Schweitzer, the New Testament theologian, explained about the pattern of the Johannine church as follows. "The church as John understood it was entirely different. To John, all ministries, organizations and systems were to a greater degree trivialized. To him there was no holy place set apart. He let the Holy Spirit free. One who is spiritually born again need not be bound by the laws or rules. The Johannine church like this is composed of completely free people, people who are living with the out-pouring of the Spirit with no need of special ministries and institutions."¹⁶⁾ A Johannine community like this suggests a new church model against the institutionalized and dogmatized church which stresses more its hierarchical order. The ecclesiology of the Johannine community provides an alternative against clericalism and distorted churches. It represents anti-institutionalism, anti-authoritarianism and anti-formalism, not being a slave to church ministries, systems, or institutions.

Therefore it symbolically represents the personal relationship between Jesus Christ and the community, just like a shepherd and sheep (John 10:7-16) or a vine and branches (John 15:1-17). There is no distinction by ministries or hierarchy, but the charismatic community emphasizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Like this the Johannine ecclesiology provides an important biblical reference point for an alternative ecclesiology of feminist theology. In addition the Johannine community gives an opportunity to taste an emotionally juicy spirituality by relating Jesus Christ to the image of water, which is the important fountain of life (John 4:14, 7:38).

Up to now the Christian tradition has excessively stressed the sinfulness

16) Soo-kyung Ahn, "A woman who made the Johannine community come into being-John 4:1-30, 39-42," *Peace-making People*, No. 21, Summer 1995, 54.

of human beings.¹⁷⁾ But now, as Matthew Fox says, we should impose more meaning on “Original Blessing”¹⁸⁾ rather than on original sin. This does not mean to deny original sin at all. I tried to reveal the problems of church history, in which sinfulness has been emphasized and the authority of the church has oppressed human beings, undermining the dignity of men and women and their original goodness. I also tried to rediscover what we have lost. This is newly examined from the reflection that the Petrine tradition with its stress upon the authority of institutions has been excessively highlighted, while the Johannine one has been lost. This reflection is a significant factor that can be grafted on feminist theology.

The relationship between the church and the state faced a totally new phase after the Constantinian turning point. The fact that the church became close to the state authority meant that above all the church came to be regarded as the owner of the ruling status.¹⁹⁾ After Christianity became the national religion of Rome, as proclaimed by the Roman emperor, Theodosius, Christian theology which emphasized sinfulness was abused to make people powerless and dependent, as the Christian church settled down and developed in the empire. So there came into being some political connections between the theology of sinners and the political authorities. However we must not start from the teachings of the institutionalized church connected to the political authorities, but from the original order which Jesus Christ restored. Jesus Christ has accomplished the works of restoration and reconciliation by transforming the creation into its original state. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (II Cor 5:17). The history of men ruling over women and the history of man ruling over nature can’t be the true picture of creation. And now in addition to the Petrine tradition emphasizing sinfulness and institutional authorities, we should take into account the Johannine tradition which although it has been neglected in history contains many affirmative factors from the perspective of feminist theology,

17) Cf. Mee-hyun Chung, “Seeking Our Lost Goodness: Understanding Pelagius in Relation to Celtic Spirituality,” *Korean Journal of Systematic Theology*, No. 6, 2001, 213-236.

18) M. Fox, *Original Blessing. A Primer in Creation Spirituality* (Santa Fe: Bear & Company), 1983.

19) Cf. Wolfgang Huber, translated by Shingun Lee, *The Church*, 1993 (Korean Theological Institute, 1993), 144.

especially its moist spirituality, in seeking after an alternative church community.

From the Gospel to the Law

A Korean author, who made a study of why young people would not go to church in Korea discovered that one of the reasons is that in the churches they are being excessively treated as sinners.²⁰⁾ In general Western Christianity emphasizes the grace of forgiving and resurrection, while the Korean churches tend to place their stress upon sinfulness, suffering on the cross and judgement. Each has its own merits. But if the churches oppress the autonomy of people and haunt them with dread by emphasizing their sinfulness and the law instead of declaring the good news of the Gospel, it must be corrected.

There are three kinds of law that the Old Testament tells about.²¹⁾ They are the ritual law of the OT, the criminal law and the sentential law of the OT, and the moral law of the OT. What is related to us living today is the third law, that is, the moral law - the Decalogue.

The function of this law can be divided into three categories. First, there is the political use of the law, which takes the role of preventing sins. It functions like an outward coercive tool or a bar to prevent sins. Second, there is the educational or persuasive use of the law, which makes people conscious of their sins. Third, there is the didactic use of the law, which becomes the rule of the life of the reborn. The first and the second uses of the law have been emphasized by the Lutheran church, which understands the gospel from the law. The third use of the law has been emphasized by the Reformed church, which understands the law from the gospel.

The author is on the side of the Reformed understanding. Those who believe in the good news brought to blossom by Jesus Christ will follow the law which becomes the milestone of their lives so that they go in the right way. Therefore the law is not to be recognized as a precedent of the gospel or as the prerequisite or the tool for the gospel, but to be understood as the rules that can be observed after receiving the gospel. It is not to keep the Lord's Day and to give their tithe by the binding law, but it leads people by

20) Man-jae Lee, *77 Reasons not Willing to Go to Church* (Kyujiang, 1997), 172-74.

21) Horst G. Pöhlmann, translated by Shingun Lee, *Abriss der Dogmatik*, Korean Theological Institute, 1989, 50.

the gospel into thanksgiving, praising God, worshipping, and giving their offerings freely. Man-centered clericalism has a strong tendency to bind human beings before the authority of the church by primarily stressing the law, rather than the joy and freedom of the gospel. This kind of attitude should be rectified by feminist theology in applying a methodology that observes the law by putting priority on the gospel.

The Exterior Aspect of the Church

In suggesting an alternative ecclesiology of feminist theology, I would like to give some proposals about church buildings as one of the ways to put into practice feminist theological insights even if these are about exterior things.

Acceptance of Korean Architectural Aesthetics into Church Buildings

Architecture is the most persuasive and spatial symbolic medium and system which can concretize the spiritual world and transfer meaning through symbols.²²⁾ But the devastation of modern physical civilization revealed in architecture has been manifested in most of the Korean church buildings.²³⁾ Generally Korean churches are a coarse imitation of Western Gothic buildings. Most of the church buildings in Europe which are boastful of their architectural beauty now were built in the Middle ages through a long term of building and have been preserved by continuous repair works, containing the spirit of the West. We've been foolish enough to receive the Western Christian culture with no filtering due to the idea that Christianity is a Western religion. The result of this has been directly reflected in the architectural culture of Korean churches. Consequently the buildings which are designed following the form of the traditional Korean house are likely to be regarded as a temple or a shrine, not as a church. So that's why it is extremely difficult to find a church designed according to the traditional Korean house form. But a future oriented church must take account of the Korean emotion and spirit as well as harmony with nature when it is about to design future church buildings. "Some people point out that even the

22) Suk-jae Rhim, *Material Civilization and the Role of the Classics* (Bookhouse, 2000), 87.

23) *ibid*, 85-100.

attempt itself to mix the indicative religion like Christianity with the Occidental vagueness is beyond success. But the attempt to mix two incompatible factors can be understood to be an original idea. In this sense it is a two-edged sword.”²⁴⁾

Of course. I'm not arguing that we unconditionally affirm the Korean traditional architectural patterns. For example the Korean traditional house style since the Chosun Dynasty was influenced by Confucianism, which developed with the Confucian factors of patriarchalism, hierarchical order and hierarchy among female family members, some of which, as we know, contain negative elements to be overcome. I think we should combine our old architectural aesthetics with the efficiency of Western architecture and also harmonize religious mysteriousness with daily usefulness for our local community. This will be the new type that church architecture should try to pursue in order to realize both symbolism, religious mystery and daily usefulness.²⁵⁾

Symbolism of the Maru (living room)

If I am required to ask what is comparable to the symbol mentioned in Church as 'Hot-house'²⁶⁾ told by L.M. Russell, it is likely I will use the Korea maru. A Korean traditional house has an existential view of space which watches itself, including its surrounding space, as a self complete microcosmos. It also has an open structure for the arena of communal life. It insists on the communality as 'we' rather than the concept of individual possession or individual consciousness. Unlike the Western style of architecture which strictly divides with walls or doors, it is very open and available, according to situation, by using flexible doors (Jangji doors. A Korean traditional house utilizes the maru (living room) and ondol (warm floor) as natural manipulators of temperature in order to be adaptable to

24) Suk-jae Rhim Discussion of the Korean Abstraction (Bookhouse, 2000), 162.

25) Suk-jae Rhim, Criticism of Korean Contemporary Architecture-the story of post-industrial society and contemporary architecture, Yekyung 1998, 53-67; Suk-jae Rhim, *Our old architecture meets the Western architecture* (Daewon, 1999).

26) L. Russell, "Hot-House Ecclesiology: A feminist Interpretation of the Church", *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, January 2001, 48-56, quoted by Sook-ja Chung, "About Being Church movement of WCC," *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology*, No. 45, Spring, 2001, 65.

both cold and hot weather. The maru shows an open southern culture, while the ondol a closed northern culture. Especially the maru is the place where people and god, person and person, and human and nature get together. Then, maru was the meeting place of god and people where ancestral worship and family celebrations such as weddings and funerals were performed. Besides, the maru takes the functionally intermediate role between person and person, connecting the main room, the bed room and the guest room. Additionally the maru is also the meeting place of human and nature because it is open toward the madang (the front yard). As we observe, maru, occupying the center of a Korean traditional house, has been the most precious space and a space in which we can seek after the getting together of god, humans and nature.²⁷⁾ Henceforth the image of the *maru* has such a positive value in that it can be the meeting point between Korean culture and church architecture.

Churches with Windows

Some people have pointed out that one of the problems of the Korean churches is that they are not open communities, but closed ones. In order to cast off this unopenness, we need some 'windows' in a verbal and symbolic sense. The author tries to provide these windows with three dimensions. For this I will apply the ideological principles of Hildegard, the most well-known feminist theologian of the Middle Ages. Let me explain this with three types of windows.²⁸⁾ a) a window opened toward the heavens, b) a window opened toward the yard, c) a window toward the garden. The first is the relation between god and human. This is the religious dimension. The second is the relation between person and person. This is the social dimension. The third is the relation between human and nature. This is the eco-natural dimension. If a church does not emphasize just one dimension, but maintains its openness to these three dimensional windows, it can sustain a really harmonious church community.

A certain church in Seoul was built by a famous architect symbolically

27) Myung-duk Park, *Rediscovery of the Korean Traditional House*, Housing and Culture, 1995, 15-17, 23-25.

28) Cf. W. Piechota, Gott fängt Gespräch mit dem Menschen an. Hildegard von Bingen zum Prolog des Johannesevangeliums, in: RKZ, 133.Jg., 1992, S. 369-373.

following the form of a catacomb, and this has to a greater degree impacted on Korean church buildings. There have appeared some buildings with no windows or with tiny ones since that time on.

I've heard that a Western theologian was indicating that this was related to the lack of openness and unsociality of the Korean churches. Most of the Korean churches place their emphasis on the vertical relationship between God and the individual. However, future oriented church communities must seek after an open attitude toward society and nature based upon the relationship between God and us as community.²⁹⁾ Like this, the windows in church buildings will have to symbolize the opening toward heaven, the yard and the garden, as well as to do such practical functions as ventilation and lighting. Moreover, in the church buildings some eco-feminist theological ideas should be reflected. For example, we can save energy by manipulating the air conditions not with artificial methods but with natural ones. When we properly use the functions of windows and walls, and utilize the direction of the sun in preparation for the change of weather we can also lessen the pollution of air and have some control in preventing environmental destruction.

Eco-natural Buildings

It has been found out that the church buildings emphasizing the Petrine tradition make people feel pressured, and pursue magnificent forms of stone-built architecture. On the other hand the buildings emphasizing the Johannine tradition stress eco-natural methods, in pursuit of harmony with nature and using wood. As mentioned above, we need to get over the inclination toward one theological tradition and this kind of effort should be represented in the exterior architectural patterns. In the case of an urban church, it could prepare a minimum space for its members to enjoy creation and feel it, even though it is not available for financial reasons to possess a perfect garden. In particular it is our reality that because there is not enough land in Korea, we can not satisfactorily take into consideration the getting

29) To be an open church toward the local people and society, the Korean churches will have to change from a church to follow after a minister here and there into a parish church. To go to a far away church makes it difficult for people to have intimacy to the region the church is located in. Moreover it consumes too much cost, energy and time for travelling.

together of human and nature in our architectural culture. It has been the same case in church architecture. However we must try to recover the Korean-styled garden which emphasizes harmony with nature and is eco-natural. It must not be the Western way of stressing artificiality, but the way of recovering natural taste.³⁰⁾ That is to say, we need to build a church which would take into account even every tree that has been already planted, emphasizing the intimacy with nature like the Korean architecture which pursues an eco-natural building accommodated to nature, so as to make it recover some eco-feminist theological spirit.

Circularity and Festive Spatiality

The author thinks that church buildings should accommodate the sensitivity of feminist theology³¹⁾ and that the circle which displays egalitarian fellowship and is the symbol of feminist theology is to be affirmatively accepted in church buildings. To get over the masculine symbols such as pyramidal, curvilinear and rectangular structures and to follow the circular structure is the feature of the architecture of feminist theology. It is desirable for a building itself to be circular. However, this costs much, much more than a rectangular building and it demands much land. But if we take into consideration this sort of sensitivity and need, we will be able to find out some realistically available ways to apply to the situations of local churches. It will be fine at least to make the seats in the church in the form of a circle for worship.

We can also learn good wisdom from a Korean traditional house where a small space is efficiently utilized, teaching us that a church, even if it is not a big one, can utilize a small space. For example the main room in the Korean traditional house has various functions; at night it becomes a bedroom and at daytime a living room and at meals changes into a dining room. It is possible because we do not use a fixed bed, but a movable bed and movable equipment. This kind of harmonious function in which it's possible to open and close furniture or equipment can be applied to the activity space in the church community. We don't have to use heavy chairs

30) Dong-oh Chung, *Korean Garden-a study of Korean trees* (Minum), 1986, 25-26.

31) Cf. R.R. Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 146-47.

in the church and make the space fixed, but we can provide portable chairs which can be easily moved so that the space has flexibly and can be transformed for diverse needs. In this case the Occidental spatial beauty will be enlivened, and then we can try a variety of worship offered with our body and seek after some changes in our worship forms. The loss of the festivity of worship is often due to the church buildings. Henceforth we need some transformation in our space for the festivity of worship.³²⁾

The Interior Aspect of the Church

Circularity of the Church Structure

The church must recover its circularity. This is applied to its interior side as well as to its exterior one. It is good for a church to recover its circularity, not its vertical ranks such as in hierarchies and in generations, as has been already pointed out in liberation theology.³³⁾ That means to make dialogue and mutual communication possible and to overcome the pyramidal structures between hierarchies. It also means that new opportunities are given for people to discuss and talk with one another about the text after the sermon, not just listening to the preacher as one-way communication. In a small church we can try a conversational or dialogical sermon. It is also recommended that the church members sit in a circle in their worship, facing each other and developing an egalitarian community.³⁴⁾

The Church Seeking for the Unification and Unity of Local Churches

We must overcome denominational divisions and seek after a unified worship service. It is indispensable. For a diversity of ecumenical and unified worship services experimentation is necessary, for example between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches, and between

32) Keun-won Park, "Festival worship and church building", *Kidogkyosasang* (Christian Thought), Jan., 1992, 205-15.

33) Leonardo Boff, translated by Kwae-sang Kim, *Ecclesiogenesis* (St. Josef Press, 1987), 58.

34) Sook-ja Chung, "Church reformation and worship culture," *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology*, No. 41, Spring 2000, 61.

different Protestant denominations. We should not compete for new members of the church in the same regions among churches having various denominational backgrounds. Instead we should resuscitate the feature of the Christian community for the local society going beyond antipathy and jealousy against other religions and working hand in hand with them for common social responsibilities.

Many Parts in a Body (I Cor 12)

In this future-oriented church, diversity will be naturally enlivened, and the particular characteristics of a local church will need to be alive, casting off old stereotypes. In the New Testament the concept of charisma L.³⁵⁾ means the various manifestations of the Holy Spirit, among which love is said to be the most important charisma according to the Pauline epistle (I Cor 12:31, 13:1). The Bible says that all the community members who are baptized are charismatic. It's because each of them has a particular function of their own for the good of the community (I Cor 7:7, 12:7, I Pet 4:10, Rom 12:4-5). But in Korea the churches tend to think highly of the charisma of the pastor in charge.

It is understood to be a dominant and authoritarian leadership, which is far from the biblical concept of charisma. We need to recover the original meaning of charisma that the Bible witnesses to.

Overcoming the Dualistic Structure

The event of Jesus Christ has, as was symbolically revealed by the curtain of the most holy place being torn apart, removed the dualistic separation between secular and divine. It means that the world itself is the theatre for us to give our glory to God (*theatrum gloria dei*), and the church community should do its role in civil society. The Korean churches tend to dualistically separate between the pulpit and the pews. Up to now in most churches the pulpit was considered to be the place for men alone and was thought to become holy and pure when men take off their shoes. It is only for uplifting the authority of the pulpit as the place of the proclamation of the Word.

There is no need to say that this place should not be the sanctuary of men only. The opportunities for women to stand at the pulpit must be

35) Boff, *ibid*, 62-63.

enlarged. We also must be reminded that the place to listen to the Word is a holy place no less than the place to proclaim the Word.

Korean styled Church Music

We should develop such church music which casts off the Orientalism containing the structure of the conqueror and the conquered. However it does not mean to follow Occidentalism or Fascism. I mean we need a certain worship and a certain church music to awaken our national spirit at this point when we are going through the tough seas and the waves of globalization. Feminist theology has to get over the remnants of the missions which were based upon the fundamentalism that had erupted in the similar context of 19th century imperialism and capitalism. Through the perspective of feminist theology which urges the abolition of the structures of oppression in hierarchies, races, and sexes, it is recommended to try to revive the Korean traditional music that had been despised under the influence of Japanese colonialism.³⁶⁾ In Korea, praise and worship meetings (which had begun at one of the mega-churches in Seoul), have become very popular among young people. These meetings have many positive influences in themselves. However there is a problem that these meetings may let our young people become too accustomed to Western culture and become buried in the vertical relationship between God and themselves and that they will have no regard for the community and its social problems. That is to say, it can make them focus only on their privatized faith.

Korean music is in tune with the breath, and the Western one is in tune with the heartbeat. So the composition of Korean music is slow. In this sense, the Korean music and the Korean musical instruments will be helpful for meditation. The pace of worship services, particularly in the Protestant churches, is too fast and so the music in use is not good enough for meditation. Protestantism has contributed to the growth and the

36) Ministers of the *Minjung* (people or masses in Korean) church have made lots of efforts to recover the Korean traditional music including 'Pungmool' (a kind of Korean traditional folk music), but they are often rejected by fellow Christians due to the fact that they resemble the dance performed during the exorcism of a shaman. In spite of these difficulties, we need to strive without ceasing to explain why we should introduce traditional music like that into worship.

development of capitalism by emphasizing labor, diligence and activities, whereas it has relatively weakened the value of meditation and rest. To our contemporaries who have been accustomed to rapidity and speed, the value of meditation is being re-evaluated. This fact needs to be kept in mind by the Protestants.

Korean feminist theology should continuously make an effort to reinterpret the communal characteristics through sexual equality, *Minjung*-orientation and positive female spirituality in the han (grudge or heartburning in Korean) background of Korea. These elements which have been transmitted by the Korean folk religions and the *Minjung* culture criticize both the dualistic patriarchalism of the Western culture and the authoritarian Confucian one found in the Korean churches.³⁷⁾

Recovery of Festivity

The worship services that an alternative church community of feminist theology seeks after should not be isolated from our body and life, but emphasize 'incarnational spirituality.' We must take into consideration the body and the female which have been neglected in the Christian worship services and liturgies and must re-estimate the sensitivity and the gestures of the body. By doing this we will have to sacralize our daily experiences and to evaluate our body and material goods in the affirmative sense.

In this context the church calendar focused on the life of Jesus Christ is always to be taken into account in worship, and diverse worship in which church members can positively take part, not just as on-lookers, should be attempted. Offering their bodies in praising God also has to be striven after in this worship. Celebrating the freedom newly discovered by us in Jesus Christ is a significant part of the celebration of the special seasons of the church calendar. "The true meaning of festivals is to reflect the gift of freedom given to us, and to refresh and strengthen our hope between life and death."³⁸⁾

For example, one of the ways to try a festive worship service is to

37) Chun-ja Yoo, "Understanding of ministry from feminist theology-the ministry of God's people," *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology*, No. 20, Winter, 1994, 85.

38) J. M. Lochman, translated by Won-bae Kim, *Vom Sinn der Feste* (The Theological Institute Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, 1993), 5.

introduce *Kangkangsullae*³⁹⁾ so that people can positively participate in the worship services by restoring the communality based on Korean culture and by giving praise with our body. Kangkangsullae was initiated as a women's group dance. If the space permits, Kangkangsullae is a good heritage of Korean culture which can be received in the festive worship in the sense of feminist theology.

A Concluding Remark

In this article the author tried to give some suggestions for an alternative ecclesiology from the perspective of feminist theology in the microscopic sense, so therefore it is not an attempt to look at feminist theology as a way of reforming the church and the society in the macroscopic dimension.⁴⁰⁾ Specially I paid attention to the Johannine ecclesiology which thinks much of the un-authoritarian intimate relationship between God and creation and upholds an open attitude toward society, overcoming the closed authoritarianism in the Petrine institutional churches. I pointed out some general problems found in the architecture of Korean churches, worship forms and church music (which have followed the Western churches), and emphasized that feminist theology can help the newly oriented Korean church toward creating a de-colonized Korean Christian culture.

No church can ever be perfect and ideal in her form, because she is a community of men and women. Therefore the ecclesiology which feminist theology pursues is not a fixed noun or a fossilized dogma, but it rather prefers a verb expressing 'becoming' and 'dynamics.' The Christian church has her meaning of existence here on earth until the kingdom of God is accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. The church is a pilgrim's community (*communio viatorum*) living with the eschatological vision.

To seek after an alternative ecclesiology from feminist theology is not to organize a church community only for the people having feminist consciousness, but to pursue the ever reforming church (*ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*). In a wholistic view of Christian ecclesiology,

39) Jung-hoon Lee, *Story of the Traditional Culture for Christians* (Handl Press), 151-68.

40) Cf. Soon-kyung Park, 'Feminist Theology, Church reformation, Society reformation', *The Journal of Korean Feminist Theology*, No. 42, Summer, 2000, 38-67

movement with the name of Jesus Christ should be also included more than it is. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). This would mean that ecclesiology could be focussed on both institutional and other dynamic transactions. The reformed churches have the obligation to make an effort to constantly reform and renew themselves. I believe that it is an inescapable demand of our age to the reformed churches that they must be in pursuit of an wholistic ecclesiology from the view of feminist theology.

Exiles and Exotic Intruders: Christians in Britain

Werner Ustorf*

In this paper I want to explore where the Christians are going in this country. To say that they are going is already a statement of some kind because there are those who think that Christianity is going nowhere in this country except downhill. The *schadenfreude* of decline easily suits a Church that is determined to rethink Christianity only within its liturgical boundaries. But what does this old religion look like from the scholars' point of view, in the perspective of world Christianity, and, finally, from the grass roots level in Britain? In this paper I am arguing that Christians in Britain may be heading for two distinctive kinds of Christianity - namely, on the one hand, an immigrant community, and an exilic community on the other. I have organized my thoughts in three sections. *Firstly*, I will discuss the matter of church decline in Britain. *Secondly*, I will address the issue of immigration from the Christian South - and this is where the phrase of *exotic intruders* has its place. And *thirdly*, I am asking what happens to the indigenous pockets of British Christianity, caught between intruding Christianity and a mainline culture that has long gone somewhere else. This is the moment we will have to speak about *exiles*.

Werner Ustorf is professor of mission theology at Birmingham University in UK. He is interested in History of Christianity and Christian Mission, Missiology. His recent publications are 'Sailing on the Next Tide,' in *Missions, Missiology, and the Third Reich* (2000) and *Bremen Missionaries in Togo and Ghana 1847-1900* (2002). His currently working is on Christian Missions and Political Religions. Email: W.Ustorf@bham.ac.uk

Church Decline

There is no way to deny that the Church in Western Europe has been marginalized.¹⁾ But I find the language of *death* that has been used in places, and often triumphantly, more than a little dubious. I am asking myself whether the smugness with which Britain's (and sometimes: Europe's) churches are declared for dead might conceal an implicit desire to take over their inheritance. People die; institutions lose their function. Therefore, it is not the Church with a capital C that dies. It is rather that churches, as inherited social forms of Christian organization, are increasingly losing their usefulness. But this is very different from, say, the end of Christianity. The problem is partly one of perspective. Much of our social understanding has been shaped by a particular theory: for a century or so the "master narrative" of the secularization theory was dominant in sociology, history, and the political and religious sciences. This theory says roughly the following: due to modernization there is a long-term and inevitable historical decline in the social significance of religion. This is the big picture, though certain short-term processes, such as periodic religious revivals, may interrupt the general trend, whereas others, such as technology, urbanization and industrialization, may also accelerate it. Of course, as must be expected, this theory exists also on street level, as a complete disregard for all things religious, or in a brutalized version according to which religious ideas are harmful bacteria of the mind. It must be said that the secularization theory has also been applied in places not generally but unilaterally, for example with regard only to Western Christianity but not one's own religious tradition. The mechanism is well-known: my enemy's enemy is my friend. But let us return to scholarship:

In a time of the "return of religion" to the public square, both at home and away, the secularization theory is in more difficulties than usual and

1) Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (London: Macmillan, 2000); Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001); Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: OUP, 2002); Robin Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (Ashgate, 2003). H. McLeod and W. Ustorf [eds.], *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000* (CUP, 2003).

there are indeed attempts to modify or even deconstruct the secularization hypothesis altogether. There are also alternative approaches such as the *rational choice theory* or the application of the model of supply and demand to the so-called *religious market*. I cannot go into these areas here, but I will return later to the market model.

What then is the big picture the scholars have painted for us so far?²⁾ Two points are to be made. Firstly, it is important to remember that Christianity is not a territorial religion and that church decline is not a new experience. Let me explain this: Christianity is a serial religion - this means it moves in a series of phases through time and space. It interacts with local cultures and their histories without privileging any of these cultures - not even Jewish culture, from where it came, and not Greek or Mediterranean culture into which it entered first. To put this into a biblical framework: circumcision is not a Christian requirement. This means that the new variants of Christianity around the globe do not need to be "circumcised" by the character Christianity had acquired in a previous territory. New variants of Christianity will formulate their own understanding of the Bible and the tradition of the Church. A church in a new territory, therefore, always means a new church and a new theology. Sometimes, this is hard to accept - in particular for Christians in the West who were used to the idea that their version of Christianity was the only legitimate one. Theologically, however, we have to be clear here - there are no cultural privileges in Christianity. Christianity is not a territorial religion, rather the whole world and all of humanity is its horizon.

Historically, however, the characteristic of Christianity is its alternation of phases of advance and recession. Sometimes both at the same time but in different regions. For example, when one of the oldest sections of Christianity receded in North Africa and Palestine and vacated the place to

2) Brierley, P., *The Tide is Running Out* (London: Christian Research, 2000); Richter, P., and Francis, L.J., *Gone but not Forgotten: Church leaving and returning* (London: Darton, 1997); Riddell, M., *Threshold of the Future* (London: SPCK, 1998); Davie, G., *Religion in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Bruce, S., *Religion in Modern Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 1995); Lynch, G., *'Generation X'* (London: Darton, 2002); Woodhead, L., and P. Heelas, *Religions in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2002); Woodhead, L., and P. Heelas, *The Spiritual Revolution: why religion is giving way to spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

Islam, the western, northern and eastern European cultures developed their specific variants of Christianity and finally became part of the new heartlands of the religion. At the same time, the Baghdad-based Church of the East, which unlike the Church in the West did not associate itself with state power and was soon living in the midst of Islam, embarked on its non-imperialistic or dialogical expansion into China, together with the Muslim merchants, and the Buddhist missionaries from India, namely along the Silk Road. Christianity is a religion that advances and recedes - like breathing in and out. It is therefore able to vacate even the place of its origin. Jerusalem, at least in terms of statistics, cannot be called a Christian city. Palestine, the symbolic home of the narratives of the New Testament, is now almost devoid of Christians. Their share in the population, despite the most intense missionary enterprise the last two hundred years have seen, is around 1.5% and falling-this is a percentage way below that of the huge subcontinent of India. It is not so difficult then for us to put the current recession of Christianity in parts of Europe, the old heartlands of Christianity, in a wider perspective. In the last two hundred years as well, Christianity has seen a growth outside of Europe, particularly in Africa and Asia, that is unprecedented in Christian history. Today, the statistical average Christian is not to be found in Rome, London or Washington, rather in Lagos, Mexico City, or in Manila. He or she would be a non-Westerner and a person of colour, perhaps a young mother, possibly unemployed, rather poor by British standards and of the Catholic persuasion with strong charismatic and Pentecostal leanings. I will come back to this scenario later. The point is that world Christianity is currently changing beyond recognition, namely into a religion of the South, and that growth and decline are, and always have been, part of the Christian story.

The second point scholars make is that there has been church decline in the West for quite some time. It was not unknown in the 19th century either as the history of the bible societies and home mission organizations clearly demonstrate. But most scholars today would agree that since the mid-twentieth century, the 1960s in particular, this decline has accelerated and acquired a new dimension. In Britain, Church membership peaked in the 1930s around the 30% mark, was rather stable until the 1960s and, then, rapidly fell to 12%. This general downward trend continues (affecting all mainline denominations, though some "new" and other churches show 'growth'). It seems that, within a generally shrinking church life, there is a

kind of migration from mainline to New and Pentecostal churches. General church attendance has fallen since to something like 7%, and some researchers predict the wipe-out of Christianity in Britain by the middle of the century. I suppose, we all have learned to regard statistics, and particularly the predictions based on them, with the necessary degree of skepticism. However, scholars have found a bit more than just statistics, namely powerful cultural, social and religious processes that may affect Christianity's and other religions' future in the UK.

Surveys seem to indicate that people leave the Church not necessarily because of a loss of interest in faith but primarily because of a loss of interest in the Church. This seems to support the "believing without belonging" hypothesis of Grace Davie (1994). Interestingly, arch-secularists such as Steve Bruce, also accuse the churches as having lost the supernatural and spiritual. How could this happen? Some scholars think that the churches have actually lost nothing, but that the society around them is on the move. It is the religious life that is *mutating* whereas the churches remain what they always have been. Could it be then that the churches as institutions are hit not by a crisis of faith, but by a *cultural trend*? Some say that the churches were caught unawares by the new trend of overcoming the traditional division between the "secular" and the "religious." Others say that there is a move towards a more personal pursuit of the meaning of life. This line of thought is further developed by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead (2002 and 2005): they think that the mutation of religious life in Britain consists primarily of a switch from *submission to a transcendent God* to a form of *spiritual experience where the divine is immanent and transforming*. The first kind of experience is to be found in the Church, the second outside, namely in the area of alternative spirituality. They predict (2005) that in the next fifty years this mutated type of religiosity ("holistic spirituality") will be as strong or perhaps will have replaced the traditional "congregational domain." We will see later that these two forms of experience are also to be found inside the Church.

My position is that one cannot and must not escape from the questions our culture is asking. It is better to admit that Christianity in its traditional shape does not have the answers to some of the questions than to offer orthodox answers to questions nobody is asking. So, what are the questions? I will be looking at immigrant Christianity first and then at the older main-line Christianity.

Exotic Intruders

In his recent book on the *Coming of Global Christianity*,³⁾ the American historian of religion Philip Jenkins drove the following powerful message home

- that world Christianity was concentrating in the global South,
- that southern Christianity had religiously little in common with that of the global North,
- that the future of global Christianity would be more conservative and traditional, perhaps even “fundamentalist,” when compared to that type of Christianity that had grown in the West and took its cue from liberal theology and Vatican II,
- that the Christian South was also in a process of political radicalization,
- that for the foreseeable future, the Christian imagination of the South would have serious and direct political consequences: in practice, some form of crusading theocracy engaged in a series of violent conflicts with Islam, but carried out with modern weapons,

Let us take a closer look at what Jenkins has to say. His first step is to distinguish between a “northern” and a “southern” form of Christian experience. As the specifically *southern* experience he characterizes the acceptance of the whole package of orthodox Christian belief and the expectation of God’s direct intervention in a life that is troubled by alienation and demonic forces. On the other side is his characterization of the *northern* Christian experience as a process of pick and mix, with the modern liberal mythology acting as the decisive element and therefore inevitably leading to the abandonment of Christian belief. Jenkins, in other words, tells us without much fuss who, in his view, is responsible for the decline of the Church in the West.

Of course we can disagree with this kind of simplistic differentiation. For example, a sociological or cultural definition of northern and southern could be seen as more adequate and helpful than the geographical fixation. But we need to listen to what Jenkins actually wants to say. His book is a condemnation of Western culture as moribund and a broadside directed against “Northern liberals” and their “dilettantish kind of cafeteria religion”

3) *The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2002).

(197). He criticizes the tolerance of homosexuality in the Church or the admission of women to the priesthood and juxtaposes all this with the exotic and perhaps frightening but genuine Christian article in the South.

There are of course numerous Christian groups in the North that are rigorously evangelical and whose faith we must regard as orthodox. Orthodoxy, however, is not necessarily equivalent to the obedience to Christ. The orthodoxy of their beliefs, for example, did not prevent many Christians and academic theologians to support Hitler and his political religion of Nazism.⁴⁾ In other words, geography and orthodoxy do not seem to be sufficient criteria for a qualitative distinction between Christians in the North and South. But Jenkins is right that non-liberal Christianity is increasingly outgrowing the liberal tradition. For Jenkins, the theological liberalism of the North is now already irrelevant. At this point, demographics play a decisive role:

He assumes that in Britain for example, traditional Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon type will die out within the next few decades - mainly for demographic reasons. Today, half of London's churchgoers are Black already, mostly belonging to Pentecostal or African Independent Churches (97 ff.). And Jenkins did not fail to observe that one of these very successful and self-confident Black churches have already asked the Anglican Church in Britain to "die gracefully" and hand over its buildings to the new Christians. Jenkins predicts that by the end of this century, Whites will form a minority within Britain and that its religious future is "Brown and Black." The kind of Christianity then to be found would be only of the *southern* type. It would be precisely this mixture of orthodox, fundamentalist, slightly superstitious, exorcist and politically radical beliefs that he described in his book. This is a consequence of the predicted mass immigrations triggered by poverty, environmental catastrophes, and the strong population growth in the South and, on the other hand, the rapidly aging populations of the North. Non-western immigrants would reintroduce Christianity into an overwhelmingly ethnic population the majority of which would be partly secular, partly Muslim. Christianity would become the strange faith of exotic intruders. Standing at the vantage-point of the year 2050 and looking back, as it were, Jenkins can see that the liberal-Christian dinosaur will go extinct. So why not send it to the scrap heap of history right now?

4) Cp. my *Sailing on the Next Tide. Missions, Missiology, and the Third Reich* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2000).

Before answering this question we need to look at his nightmare scenario⁵⁾ according to which a dominant, but also fundamentalist and even “reactionary” and “fanatic” Southern Christianity⁶⁾ will somehow gang up and merge into an “axis” of global *Christendom*. This prediction implies that passionate religious identification takes precedence over any allegiance to the secular political order, such as that of a nation-state. We have heard this before, of course, from Samuel Huntington and a number of other scholars.⁷⁾ The focus of loyalty, it is said, is not the individual state, but the overarching unity of an imagined sacred empire. However, few of the examples quoted by Jenkins could be classified as a politicization of the sacred. He has thrown rather heterogeneous political phenomena into a single conceptual basket: politicians manipulating religious bodies, self-styled messiahs meting out apocalyptic violence, Church leaders challenging the political authorities in the area of human rights, or churches offering a kind of parallel administration in states where the infrastructure has collapsed. Such examples, valuable as they are individually, are not or, to be more cautious, not yet supportive of his thesis of a global southern trend towards a “political ideology” of Christendom or the emergence of a violent “theocratic Christian state.”⁸⁾ These are, so far, nightmares, projections perhaps. But why are they used in his book?

The answer is that Jenkins has more than a religious interest in world Christianity. He addresses his ideas explicitly to “our political leaders and diplomats.”⁹⁾ In other words, this influential study is not simply the academic exercise of a disinterested historian, it is meant to have an impact on the discourse on policy and strategy of, in the first place, the leading world power. He is one of those applying a market model to religion and is asking how Christianity can “dominate the religious economy” (212). He criticizes the churches of the West for paying too little attention to the possibility that Christianity’s battle for supremacy in the world market of religion might be won or lost in the mega-cities of the South. He predicts that a religion that “builds there today is very likely to be profiting richly in

5) *Nightmare* is a term used by Jenkins himself.

6) Jenkins used these terms in *The Next Christendom*.

7) Cp. for example S. Rudolph, *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Bolder, Colorado: Westview, 1997).

8) *Next Christendom*, 141-159.

9) *Next Christendom*, 13.

a decade or two.” But why should this be of any interest to political leaders?

The answer, in my view, is this: the continuation of the role of the US as a leading world power is dependent on more than oil and military force. As an empire that is shaped and continues to be shaped by Christianity (thanks to Mexican-Catholic immigration) it requires an uncompromising religious vision and must bring this to bear in the global religious conflicts of the future. The main conflict, according to Jenkins, will be between Christianity and Islam. This conflict may result in global wars that will originate in the Third World. The super power, because it can no longer rely on Europe’s collapsing Christianity, must look for the big battalions of the Christian South. In order to do so it must be ideologically in agreement with southern Christianity, marginalize liberal forms of Christianity at home, and support southern Christianity in the urban centres of the Third World.¹⁰⁾

There you have a nice job description for Christian mission. Mission agencies and mission bodies have in fact discussed the book with greatest interest, fortunately rather critically, as far as I can see. For Christianity here is hi-jacked for the secular-religious messianism of the self-appointed new people of god, the United States. To reject this invitation, Christian theology needs to consult its rich historical memory. If there were only one reason to continue with the critical power of theological liberalism this one would be a sufficient reason.

Exiles

Whatever Jenkins thinks of the *northern* form of Christian experience, in this section I would like to listen to what the people themselves on the ground level of Christian life in Britain have to say. We have already established that the churches have moved to the margins of mainstream culture. We can also assume that, on the ground, things tend to be fuzzy, contradictory, discontinuous and pragmatic. This is the place where the initiative lies for rethinking, rebranding and disbanding Christianity, but we can hardly expect clear-cut images, partly because the demarcation between church and culture is floating and perhaps multi-layered. Wherever Christianity is alive today its

10) Interestingly, Tony Blair after the no-vote in France and the Netherlands on the European Constitution and addressing his imminent talks with George Bush is said to have made the remark “Africa is worth fighting for. Europe, in its present form, is not.” Quoted in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 5th of June, 2005, page 1.

shape is precisely a negotiated mix of the Christian tradition and the religious or spiritual space people have carved out for themselves. It is this negotiation between the teaching of the Church and people's experiences and narratives that also defines the content of words such as God, Jesus or Spirit. I believe that Church and theology can learn from the people. People's stories, experiences and, even, misunderstandings, generate many of the common ideas of a good life, of justice and salvation. Is it not hard to understand that these ideas would also be fermenting the new wine in the Christian wineskin. The recycling of the Christian hope can take place within the churches themselves, but there needs to be sufficient spiritual space to do so. I will give four examples, all taken from recent missiological research.

First example: is a study of an ordinary *liberal* type inner city United Reformed Church in Birmingham.¹¹⁾ The result is the discovery of a quite surprising and strong presence of the supernatural and of "spiritual experience." And this is one of those places where according to the sociologist Steve Bruce the supernatural and spiritual is supposed to be so watered down and, if present at all then only in "almost homeopathic concentrations" and "undetectable to the untrained eye."¹²⁾ We probably have to think again. Currently, around 76% of the British population acknowledge that they had some sort of spiritual experience, compared to 36% in the mid-70s. Spirituality is a major growth industry in the late 20th century while at the same time church attendance had continued to dwindle. One is tempted to think that the divine is more likely to be encountered outside of mainline Christianity than within it. There is probably a movement away from the institutional and ritual to the individual in encounters with God. However, the people involved in this research were all churchgoers and committed to their religious institution, and therefore they are examples of significant spirituality within the Church. The church is and is not a spiritual place. It might not always provide the experience, but it gives a framework for its interpretation. In other words, the contradistinction between church and spirituality is questionable. The research showed that the real issue was how spirituality was located within the communal, liturgical and dogmatic expression of the church. And there

11) John Burgess, *Perceptions of God in the Particular: a case study of the relationships between spiritual experiences and expressed faith among members of a Birmingham church*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2005.

12) Bruce, *Religion in modern Britain*, 15.

indeed was the rub. It seems that the members of this congregation were very much spiritual, but their spirituality was not really acknowledged within the ecclesiological framework. This is a serious problem, because the research found also that spiritual experience was the meeting point of the doctrinal life of the church and the individual faith life of the believer. In fact, the people themselves did the theological processing of spiritual experience. If this is recognized by the institution - and, in this case, it certainly was not - people's theological expertise can become an essential element of renegotiating Christianity.

Second example: a study of the so-called *youth congregations* in England.¹³⁾ This research was conducted entirely within that part of the Church that can be described as evangelical and charismatic and that is now searching for ways of mission that are appropriate for the culture of a post-modern age. What is the specificity of these experimental forms of Christianity that now hope to resonate with popular youth culture? The point is that they all tried to include what the American missionary anthropologist Paul Hiebert called "the excluded middle,"¹⁴⁾ namely, the world of ancestors, spirits, invisible powers; the mechanisms of coping with the stages of life, suffering, misfortune and death; and the search for protection, guidance and healing. This world of everyday needs is often excluded from mainline Christianity. These youth congregations reject the institutional church and organize themselves through cell-structures, almost along tribal lines, with a network of teams allowing everyone to participate in leadership. Worship is informal, with a strong emphasis on spiritual experience, and, whether in the form of a rock concert or something more meditative, it is highly charged. The membership structure is also informal; you belong when you are there. There are no prerequisites, though it is expected that, over time, members agree with the core beliefs and values. These core beliefs are surprisingly traditional, and Jenkins would be delighted to hear that. However, the research shows also that the youth congregations failed to make any substantial missionary inroads into the unchurched population. What they did achieve was to keep the children of

13) Cp. John Hall, *The Rise of the Youth Congregation and its Missiological Significance*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2003.

14) First published in *Missiology* 10.1 (January 1982); see also now P.G. Hiebert, R.D. Shaw, and T. Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion. A Christian response to popular beliefs and practices* (Baker Book House, 1999).

church attenders in the Church, which itself may have halted or slowed the decline.

Third example: is taken from a research into one of the deprived estates of Cardiff. It is based on a very long theological conversation in a small congregation there about life, Church, and God.¹⁵⁾ The result is an urban theology that is emerging “from below” and one that contains a number of surprising details. It is a theology of exile in which the Church has been driven away from the centre, where the space outside the Church is theologically fertile, and where God has become strange and unfamiliar. None of the triumphant God-talk of the Christendom era, which still dominates our hymnody, liturgy and ecclesiology, can be used in this situation of exile. Instead, a rethinking is taking place and an exploration into the nature of God has been started. The dominant experience is that God has stepped out of the Church, and that, in order to discern his footsteps, believers and their theology need to follow. It is intriguing to discover that we are here dealing with an experience that takes a form that is inverse to that which Western missionaries overseas went through: the experience that God was already active before their arrival. This example from Cardiff wants to tell us that God is there, even when the Church has gone.

Fourth example: relates to the history of Christianity in the city of Wolverhampton.¹⁶⁾ Although the Anglicans of Wolverhampton have inherited a particular image of a “Christian society,” the contemporary context in which they live is very different from that in which this inherited model was developed. There is now a feeling of discontinuity, displacement, loss and vulnerability. The research found that the current experience of change was informed by the biblical stories of exile. We have heard this loaded term before. The Christians of Wolverhampton have woven these stories into their own narratives of survival and come up with four responses to exile. These can be classified as the Remnant, Restoration, Assimilation, and Renunciation (or, Pilgrimage).

1. A *remnant community* re-groups around a remembered identity; it is inward looking and past oriented and prioritizes group survival.
2. The *restoration community* wants to regain lost ground and considers

15) Peter Cruchley-Jones, *Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land?* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2001).

16) Mark S. Hathorne, *Building God's City in Wolverhampton. A study of local churches in mission*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2004.

alliances in order to recover influence and make their view of God predominate in society again.

3. The *community seeking assimilation*, however, would look outward and see God at work in the world outside. Its mission is to “translate” the Christian message and be intelligible and acceptable in a changed historical context.
4. The *renunciation* community, finally, is on a pilgrimage to God’s future. That is they are, together with others, on a way where God takes the lead.

However, it is important to remember that all these responses are woven into the particular narratives of each community, and that the same community exhibits these traits. These are varieties of stories of the loss of the homeland and the immediacy or remoteness of God’s Kingdom. They are constantly re-told and changed, very different from a systematic theological discourse. In other words, Wolverhampton’s Christians offer a plurality of answers as to what God is doing. They are on the cutting edge of the transition from Christendom to pluralism and, as communities of exile, they develop adaptive strategies to their new environment and redefine their individual identity and purpose. Let me emphasize that it is not just people outside the church who are capable of creating meaning. As with the other examples, the church is not to be written off as being devoid of the spiritual imagination. Social marginality can actually be a position that is conducive for asking big questions.

Conclusion

I am suggesting that two concurrent processes will shape the formation of Christian identity in Britain. They represent two culturally distinct and very different kinds of Christianity, and the bridging of the gap between the two will very likely be a major task. The exotic intruder scenario is the first process and it relates to the phase of the global advance or growth of Christianity in the South. The exile scenario is the other process and it belongs to the phase of the recession or the decline of Christianity in parts of the North. There may be a crossing-over in both directions and from one side to the other. In particular, northern Christians may feel the pull to join

the victorious super-ego of the Christian South. The inclusion of some Episcopalian congregations in the United States in the Anglican Church of Nigeria or Dr. John Sentamu's recent appointment as Archbishop of York are illustrative of these powerful new dynamics. Both these processes, intrusion and exile, could have a positive spin-off, namely helping Christianity in Britain to relocate itself. This relocation would include a new distinction from mainline culture, a critical conversation with the old dream of a powerful Christendom, and, hopefully, an increasing weariness to be enlisted in projects of political dominance.

What is going to happen in British Christianity may also be very important for the theological understanding across the continents and cultures. If Christians can learn from each other in Britain, they can anywhere. It is up to us to prove Jenkins' doomsday scenario of global spiritual incommunication and his dualism of faith here and thought there to be wrong. Britain's Christian experience is not irrelevant, it is rather a genuine location from where to ask fundamental questions such as what God is doing in Britain and the world.¹⁷⁾ This is what matters, not frantic efforts to regain a place for our religious community close to the centre of public life or mimicking Starbucks, Ikea or Classic FM. What God is doing in Britain is again an open question. So far, the attempts of the Church over the last century or so to rechristianize or reconvert Britain were all gloriously disappointing. So much of our self-important theology, liturgy and hymnody is credible behind church doors only - they belong to the little world of the sanctuary, where God is available in equal measure at all times as if God were packaged up and poured out like shampoo. This god is no longer strange, but also, it seems, no longer real. Is God more often in the church than the rest of us? I am uncertain about the answer. God has become a stranger. There is ignorance as to the future of British Christianity in the breathing-in and breathing-out process of this vast religion, which we thought we knew, but which has grown so unfamiliar to us. Is more church or more Christianity really the answer to the situation? Exile does not need to be understood as punishment, even if it hurts. In fact, we remain in the core story of the faith when we read the times with faithful uncertainty.

17) I am using here thoughts that play a role in the conclusion to Peter Cruchley-Jones (ed.), *God at Ground Level* (forthcoming).

Abstracts of Recent Doctoral Dissertations

The Non-Existent Existing God: An East Asian Perspective with specific Reference to the Thought of Ryu Yŏng-mo

By Jeong-hyun Youn Th. D.

This thesis is an interpretation of the religious thought of the twentieth century Korean theologian, Ryu Yŏng-mo, a pioneer figure who sought to re-conceptualise a Christian understanding of the Ultimate Reality in the light of a positive openness to the plurality of Korean religions. Ryu Yŏng-mo considered that it was possible to present an overall picture of harmony and complementarity between the three traditions of Korea and Christianity and this is endorsed by the present thesis.

The starting point of this thesis comes from my own experiences during forty-seven years of my life in the context of the pluralistic religious society of Korea, and my fourteen years of parish ministry. My experiences among the faiths show the necessity of overcoming conflicts within the inner self of the individual, who daily encounters other faiths in the context of the multi-religious, pluralistic society.

This thesis is aimed at providing a religious rationale for inter-faith dialogue. Using the principles of 'Change' (易, i) and 'Yin-ying' (陰陽), this thesis lays out a methodology for envisaging harmony and mutual complementarity between traditions. The effect of some central concepts from within Confucian, Buddhist and Taioist tradition on the Christian thought of Ryu Yŏng-mo's is then analysed.

In this respect, the thesis argues that the Ultimate Reality is not only both personal and impersonal as well as both transcendent and imminent, but also neither personal nor impersonal as well as neither transcendent nor imminent.

Essentially, therefore, this thesis accepts that Ryu Yŏng-mo's equating of the Christian idea of God with the 'Great Ultimate' (太極) in Confucianism, with 'Nothingness' (無) in Buddhism and with the 'One' in

the thought of Lao-Chuang (老莊思想) of Taoism is a legitimate equivalence to make and that this does indeed pave the way for a potentially fruitful dialogue between Korea's main religions.

The University of Birmingham, UK. 2003.

e-mail : youngreg@hanmail.net

The Comparative Study between Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung : In terms of the first cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party in China and the first movement for unity in Korea

By Kyong-nae Lee Ph.D

This paper concerns the comparative study on the representative political leaders in China and Korea, Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung, especially focusing on several significant political actions in their old age, i.e., the cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party in China and the cooperation between the leftist and rightist as well as the cooperation between the south and north in Korea.

This paper argues that the tasks that China and Korea are facing in the new era are "unity" and "democracy." That is because today China and Korea are in the current situation that filling the "division" that was left by invasion from outside powers and contradiction on minds, rapid economic development, wealth gap between rich and poor, as well as the increase on the requirement of civilian rights. Based on what is stated above, the author is keeping an eye on Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung who are exercising leading executive efforts on the establishment of modern countries.

The motivation, purpose, structure and research methods and original points are stated in the Introduction chapter.

This paper contains five chapters.

Chapter One gives the basic points, containing two sections. The first section reviews the early half period of 20th century in the macro view and

delivers the understating on the history during this period. The second section simply checks the history of united front, according to which the author explains the “cooperation” conducted by Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung as: first, the united front established between different political parties; second, the movement that was lasting for the nation unity; third, in the opinion of conquering the split of the nation and maintaining peace in East Asia.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively discuss the “cooperation” movement led by Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung in the view of “activity.” The two chapters, in terms of hermeneutics, clarifies that Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung syncretized various thoughts and experiences that they went through, meanwhile, understands Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung form their own standpoints in the view of post-colonialism and “immanent criticism” methodology. From the “action” points analyzed by these methodologies, the following features can be explicitly drawn: first, both of them received traditional education, and then exposed themselves to the socialism in West Europe being influenced by the Christianity and modernism education in West Europe, however, they did not separate various thoughts and experience, but syncretized in themselves; second, they did not take in the new thoughts and practice unconditionally, but accepted after re-explanation combined with the nation situation and their own opinions; third, as a result of these reasons, they were able to flexibly achieve and push the cooperation, and also seized the dominant power during the cooperation; fourth, however, the flexibility was not firm enough that cannot conquer the domestic and overseas intensified conflicts. Therefore, the cooperation could only break from each other after they died.

Chapter Four discusses the political thought of Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung in the view of “thought.” This chapter analyzes political thoughts in accordance with the clarification method of Asia Focus and Three People’s Principles issued by Sun Yat-sen, i.e., Nationalism, Democracy and the People’s Livelihood, after that, reviews the origin for each thought. From the “thought” points analyzed by these methodologies, the following features can be explicitly drawn: first, they actively accepted West European political thoughts and applied them into the national situation at that time; second, they did not ignore traditional thoughts, but re-explained them; third, the ambiguity that they could hold a variety of

opinions or even totally opposite opinions existed.

Chapter Five comprehensively analyzes Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung in comparison in the view of “activity” and “thought.” This chapter uses the “centripetal force/centrifugal force” model to compare Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung from a variety of sides, including situation structure, relationship structure and thought structure, and several similarities are concluded: first, from the side of situation structure, both of them were facing the necessity of reinforcing the power for unifying the divided country. Meanwhile, influenced by contradiction between the minds of the emergence of Soviet Union and the oppression of Capitalism countries, they found their “cooperators” in China and Korea. Under the domestic and overseas conditions, the cooperation was successfully achieved. However, the targets of the two parties failed to reach an agreement by cooperation, so that the contradictory points between the two parties accumulated all the while, that was why the cooperation broke down in the end; second, from the side of relationship structure, the messy and divided status in China and Korea at that time ignited the aspiration of people and many political groups for unity, therefore, the political power led by Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung met the requirement of the time and functioned effectively. Nevertheless, fighting for dominant power happened inside the revolutionary force of Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung due to the tough resistance of comprador groups and foreign groups, which hindered the cooperation; third, from the side of thought structure, both of them communicated with various political thoughts by the golden mean thought, but they failed to adjust those thoughts well as Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung forced that one thought must be chosen from two.

On the other hand, the substantial reasons for the differences appeared in the comparative research between Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung are: first, the colonist experience; second, the degree in which Soviet Union and imperialism countries conflicted. On account of the two reasons, Lyuh Woon-hyung was under a much worse situation than Sun Yat-sen in the self-construction of modern countries, which can be well demonstrated by Lyuh Woon-hyung's being assassinated dramatically.

Based on what has been stated above, the history illumination brought by Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung which enlightens us are discussed in the conclusion chapter: first, on the issue of nation unity, the “cooperation” movement conducted by Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung has meant a

lot to us that it has brought us the lesson that we have to gain independence at first, and need more tolerant attitude instead of tough mind; second, on the issue of democracy, it has brought us the lesson that the basis of cooperation and unity was “civilian”; third, on the issue of people’s livelihood, Sun Yat-sen and Lyuh Woon-hyung sought the balance development on economy and equal distribution on wealth, whose goal was to solve the problem of people’s livelihood. From this point, we can learn that the real goal for the economic development and wealth distribution in current China and Korea is “human being,” not only limited to improvement of national power and stable system; in the end, on the issue of Asian and world peace, the author believes that, nowadays, when the cultural and spiritual values become more and more important, the so-called by Sun Yat-sen “benevolence/arbitrariness” culture and moral model can gain a better insight into re-finding the Asian values based on the average cultural values worldwide. Moreover, Lyuh Woon-hyung actively participated in the Chinese revolution for the liberation of oppressed people, which can be evaluated as a precedent that efforts should be put by East Asian areas into developing a peaceful international relationship of the 21st century.

Nanjing University, China. 2006.
e-mail: firestar3@hanmail.net

A Study of Gandhi’s Thought Regarding Non-Violence : from the perspective of Chri

By Won-Kyung Rim Ph.D.

With the extreme violence occurring around the globe in recent years, it is quite possible that calls for the use of ‘non-violence’ as a method to counter violence could be interpreted as both idealistic and unrealistic. The core of such criticism is that arguments for non-violence may lead to the irresponsible avoidance of situations requiring specific actions by rationalizing the problems of violence? However, the philosophy of non-violence espoused by Gandhi was based on the recognizance of existing

realities and thus, the research into his philosophy and its implementation process proves that the above criticisms are not always valid.

Gandhi's non-violent resistance took place in India, which was then under foreign colonial domination? From the outside, his resistance by non-violent means was a movement against foreign colonial domination. Internally, it was a resistance against the structural oppression and discrimination that pervaded Indian society? In this context, it can be said that the starting point for Gandhi was his clear perception of the serious societal injustices and inequalities that existed in India. Consequently, the movement of non-violent resistance he led was not based on idealistic thoughts based on an ignorance of existing realities, but a movement based on the accurate understanding of the existing oppressive political and societal structures. Gandhi had clearly understood the structural injustices that prevailed in Indian politics and society and how these injustices impacted the individual. He also correctly recognized how those structural injustices were being rationalized. Having always stressed the organic relationship between the individual and society, Gandhi considered the reform of the individual as the starting point of the reform of the whole of society. This is the reason why Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence started with the self-purification of the individual. He understood well that due to the imperfection and weakness of humans, the reform of an entire society had to commence by first purifying the individual. Gandhi never underestimated human weaknesses and therefore, always stressed the need for meditation and the continued need for prayer to seek divine guidance.

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and its implementation can be considered as balance and compromise among various religious beliefs and philosophies. This thesis seeks to discover and comprehend the roots of the religious philosophies and the understanding of God that made possible Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.

Gandhi's religious philosophy was formulated by the acceptance and reinterpretation of the spirit of mercy in Hinduism, the pursuit of rationality and logic of Jainism, and the spirit of self-sacrifice and love in Christianity. It should be pointed out that the acceptance of the spirit of mercy originating from Hinduism was a very important basis that allowed the implementation of Gandhi's philosophy? The trend in the Hinduism not to ostracize and accept the existence of other religions paved the way for the acceptance of people with other philosophies or ideals? Gandhi persistently taught to accept with

patience even those enemies who committed acts of violence? In reality, non-violence can only be possible when an enemy is accepted and dealt with unlimited patience and mercy. Indeed, non-violence can be practiced by constantly reminding oneself of the value of human life and the optimistic belief that an individual's actions shall ultimately directed towards good. This positive belief in human beings that was deeply enrooted in the mercy of Hindu philosophy was above all the main factor that contributed to Gandhi's philosophy.

The optimistic view of humans went through the process of rationalization through the Jainism that stressed the importance of logic in everyday life. The asceticism that was stressed in Jainism was not only training that sought one's spiritual perfection, but also a starting point for reforming one's current reality. Thus, asceticism had not only a religious meaning but also a way in successfully achieving non-violence in society. In this context, Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence started with one's self-purification but continued with the pursuit of reform of the whole society.

The Hindu philosophy of mercy and the Jaina's stress of logical pursuit was further strengthened by the spirit of self-sacrifice rooted in Christian philosophy based on the sermon on the mount and crucification of Jesus Christ? The idea of self-sacrifice is indeed deeply enrooted in Gandhi's non-violence. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence is fundamentally rooted in religious spirituality motives, which strongly emphasized the concepts of self-sacrifice and love. Self-sacrifice is a concept that can be possible only within the context of religious thinking and its implementation through religious acceptance. Nonetheless, the reason how such religious spirituality did not end with just personal spiritual pursuit and religious beliefs but also as social reform movement was a result of the acceptance of rational human logic and its implementation based in Jainism. Moreover, the acceptance of self-sacrifice and love for one's enemy emphasized by Christianity made it possible for pursuing the philosophy of non-violence? Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance thus came to existence by accepting and reinterpreting not just one but several religious philosophies.

Furthermore, understanding and interpretation of God provided the basis for his thinking on non-violence? Gandhi's understanding of God was a mixture of the understandings of God in Hinduism, Jainism and Christianity.

The two roots of Gandhi's understanding of God in the Hinduism could

be divided into two segments. The first one is the Brahman of the Advaita Vedanta School and the second is the personal divinity of the Ramanuja method. Brahman is considered the origin of all living things, providing life to all existing life forms. Advaita Vedanta interpreted this as the essentially advaitic one of absolute non-dualism. According to Vedanta scholars, Brahman exists inside all humans and cannot be separated from the atman. Based on Brahman philosophy, Gandhi was able to formulate his thoughts on the sanctity of human beings. Consequently, all humans were considered to have divinity inside them and thus, could not be separated from God. Due to this belief that God existed inside all humans, Gandhi was able to formulate his philosophy of respect for human beings, which did not accept the violence, discrimination and oppression towards all human beings. Moreover, this helped him find the basis to argue for human equality and strengthen his belief that hatred against fellow men was unacceptable.

Another important flow in Hindu thought that helps to understand Gandhi's view of God was the Rama faith. Unlike the Brahman faith, the Rama faith considers God to be personal divinity. This was understood to be that God was interactive in its relations with man. In other words, God was seen as speaking to man whilst man was seen as replying to God. Such an interactive relationship was seen as an important element in allowing humans to pose questions concerning the situation they found themselves in and to remind humans of their responsibilities. Gandhi described this as the inner voice that guided his non-violent resistance. God was seen as the inner voice. That God did not stay indifferent from the difficult situation faced by Gandhi, as an individual, and India as a nation. That God showed the path towards implementing the pursuit of justice under unequal and unjust circumstances. Indeed, it was a God that maintained active relations with man. Therefore, the asceticism, vows and self-sacrifice demonstrated by Gandhi in his non-violent movement could be seen as his response to his inner voice

Gandhi interpreted God as a good God fighting against and prevailing over evil. Indeed, God was seen as not just good, but the belief that God would ultimately prevail made it possible to conduct the struggle. Gandhi's non-violence originated from such a belief. God was considered to be the truth and vice-versa. Non-violence was seen as the only way to attain the truth.

Satyagraha was a social reform movement based on not only religious

spirituality but an independence movement. In order to reform the whole of Indian society, Gandhi first initiated an ethical reform movement by posing the question of truth. However, in implementing this movement, ethical questions were constantly reaffirmed through religious conviction and therefore, also showed the characteristics of a religious movement. The satyagraha movement can be assessed a way of life which obligated people to resist all types of violence and oppression that occurred in society. As a result, satyagraha was not a passive resistance movement, but a proactive and radical resistance movement.

Violence can never be countered through another form of violence. If the existing authority or power is based upon the oppression and discrimination of the people, more strength is required to counter that oppressive power. According to Gandhi, a power greater than violence and capable of stopping was spiritual power. The spiritual power does not depend on physical power or systemic power and thus can transcend such powers. That power can even transcend collective egotism. That is the reason why man could choose non-violence to counter violence.

According to Gandhi, *swaraj*, the true independence that India needed to seek, was not only political and economic independence from colonial rule but the whole of India being created by self-determining people. Indians had to first break the oppressive structures that pervaded in Indian society before doing away with the political oppression that existed. It was therefore, necessary to first stop the oppression caused by the caste system in India. Gandhi firmly believed that if India were to obtain independence without first achieving internal reforms, a new oppression would simply replace the former colonial system of oppression.

Gandhi, who stressed internal reforms, was strongly critical of industrialization and capitalism brought over from England. These had further increased poverty by weakening India's traditional industrial structure. In addition, human values were further eroded because of the progress in industrialization. Consequently, Gandhi argued that India should not copy the industrialization brought over by England but re-discover its traditional glory and subsequently recover its humanity. As a result, true independence would include political struggle, economic freedom and spiritual self-determination.

Gandhi's non-violence is similar to Christian traditions of peace in terms of its methods in opposing aggressions by states, and non-violent

resistance to such aggression. Both are also similar in their strict adherence to non-violence in efforts to reform discriminatory and oppressive injustices that may pervade within states. Gandhi was convinced that non-violent resistance was the only alternative for mankind to choose in its efforts to overcome injustice. Non-violent resistance was seen as the only way for humankind to become one. The society in which mankind would become one was that in which the importance of lowest individual, the poorest individual and the weakest individual would not be ignored. That society would be one in which all individuals are respected. Gandhi understood such a society to be good land.

Gandhi's non-violent resistance was a social movement that encompassed important aspects of Christian ethics such as non-violence, human rights and social justice. If families, society, nations or the whole of mankind fails to unite, there will be no way to resist widespread violence. This is because violence is not just the problem of an individual or a nation. Violence threatens humans in all fields such as politics, society, economics, science & technology, culture and religion. Under such circumstances, theology needs to factor in all these problems and seek out the structures of violence. Consequently, Christian ethics must more proactively study the meaning of non-violence? through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In this contest, there is requirement to carefully consider the meaning and implementation of the non-violent resistance led by Gandhi. There should be a realistic dialogue and not a conceptual one on how Christian ethics could overcome violence through spiritual strength and the power of love. The subject of non-violence is certainly not a conceptual or an idealistic one. It is a theological issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

Ewha Womans University, Korea. 2004.
e-mail : wkr0407@hanmail.net

Donated by

Charles Lee, Jean-Hyun Chung, Yang-Soon Choi,
Yeon-Jin Chong, Yeup Yoon, Sun-Duk Lee, Ki-Heung Chun,
Keun-Sang Kim, Kyeong-Moon Kim, Kyong-Soo Lee

Contextual Transformations - Minjung Theology Yesterday and Today

Volker Küster*

It were younger Korean theologians themselves who introduced the distinction of generations in Minjung theology. While the differentiation between first and second generation is evident age wise and in terms of content, the third generation is not so easy to delimit in neither way. They still have to come of age theologically by addressing the contextual challenges under the impact of globalization. In this case generation is therefore meant more thematic than biological, which at the same time makes the transitions more fluent. Whether in the end what comes out of it still should be called Minjung theology is an open question. In this article I ask in what ways the generations differ and how precisely the ever-changing context has affected them in their doing theology.

This article is a preprint of the concluding chapter of my forthcoming book Volker Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion. Minjung Theology Revisited*. It has been slightly revised to be readable on its own. I thank the editors of *Madang* and the Korea Association of Progressive Theologians for organizing a small symposium around this text at the Anglican Sungkonghoe University in Seoul on Dec. 1, 2005. **Volker Küster** is professor of Theologische Universitaet Kampen in Netherlands. He is interested in interculture theology, inter-religious dialogue, the third world theology, hermeneutics, and mission theology. His email is vkuester@hotmail.com

The discovery of Christ among the minjung The first generation

The proceedings of a conference in 1979 (Oct. 22.-29.), co-sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCCK), with the harmless title "The People of God and the Mission of the Church" has become something like the manifesto of Minjung theology.¹⁾ While some of the speakers were invited to write a contribution specifically for this conference and have never published in this line of thought again, others had already made their mark as Minjung theologians in the course of the seventies. To this nucleus belong Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996), Suh Nam-Dong (1918-1984), Hyun Young-Hak (1921-2004) and Kim Yong-Bock (*1938). David Suh (*1931) stood in their shadow for some time.²⁾

Despite the individuality of each of these theologians, there is a certain amount of commonalities that bring a milieu to the fore in which Minjung theology thrived. Denominationally, Minjung theology is a protestant affair. This is true despite the co-operation with the Catholic Church, especially in the political and social field and despite the lasting influence of the Catholic poet and lay-theologian Kim Chi-Ha (*1941) on Suh Nam-Dong. Its strongest supporters Minjung theology had in the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK; kor. *Kichang*), the most ecumenical oriented among the diverse Presbyterian denominations.

It is striking that the leading Minjung theologians have their roots either in Manchuria or North Korea (Ahn, Hyun, David Suh), or in the structurally poor Cholla province (Suh Nam-Dong and Kim). Without exception they have studied, at least temporarily, abroad. The elder among them still finished at least part of their education in the country of the colonial power Japan (Ahn, Suh Nam-Dong and Hyun), the younger ones studied mostly in

1) Cf. *Minjung Theology. People as the Subject of History*, rev. edition (New York: Maryknoll, 1983); Volker Küster, *Theologie im Kontext. Zugleich ein Versuch über die Minjung Theologie*, Nettetal 1995.

2) In the wider circle the brothers Moon Ik-Hwan (1918-1994) and Moon Dong-Hwan (*1921), Lee Woo-Jung (1923-2002), the grand old dame of the Korean women's movement and the pastors Park Hyung-Kyu (*1923) and Hu Byung-Sub (*1941) - the later ones more because of their practical engagement than their theological contributions - are to be mentioned.

the US (Hyun, Kim, David Suh).³⁾ Suh Nam-Dong graduated in Canada. Ahn was the only one to go to Germany, led there by his interest in Bultmann's theology.

Through bringing the Christ event and the Korean concept of *han*⁴⁾ into a fruitful interaction, Minjung theologians came to a new perception of suffering in the Korean context that was unique in the Asian sphere up till then. It is to the credit of Minjung theology to have articulated God's capacity to suffer as well as tracing his presence in the suffering people of Asia. Compared to the two extremes of contextual theology in Asia the Indian theology which is abundant with tradition and determined by its dialogue with Hinduism and Philippino theology which is strongly oriented towards Latin American liberation theology Minjung theology is the first synthesis between the socio-economic, political and cultural-religious types of contextual theology⁵⁾ in the Asian context. Dalit theology in India has followed its path by criticizing the older dialogue theology for neglecting the cast issue.⁶⁾ In contrast to Latin American liberation theologies, first generation Minjung theologians kept their reservations toward historical materialism. The cause of this reticence should not be considered a submission to official anti-communism, but is grounded in the personal experiences of this generation the flight and expulsion from North Korea and the destructions of the Korean War left deep scars. This becomes impressively clear from the memories of a contemporary witness:

3) Here parallels can be discerned to the development of the military and administrative elite. Whereas Park Chung-Hee even served in the Japanese army, the younger generation is clearly oriented towards the US.

4) Like the term "minjung" itself Minjung theologians deemed "han" untranslatable because of the specific Korean experience that lies at its ground. For further reference cf. Volker Küster, *The Priesthood of Han. Reflections on a Woodcut by Hong Song-Dam*, in: *Exchange* 26, 1997, 159-171; id., *A Protestant Theology of Passion. Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, in: Pieter N. Holtrop et al. (eds.), *Passion of Protestants*, Kampen 2004, 213-228.

5) For this typology cf. Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ. Intercultural Christology* (London 2001), 24-28.

6) Dalit is the name for the casteless. Cf. M.E. Prabhakar (ed.), *Towards a Dalit Theology* (Delhi 1989); *Indigenous People: Dalit. Dalit Issues in Today's Theological Debate*, ISPCK CTE 5, (Delhi 1994); Arvind P. Nirmal (ed.), *A Reader in Dalit Theology*, Madras.

I grew up in North Korea and my father was a Presbyterian minister in Pyongyang. When the Korean War broke out, he was taken in by the North Korean secret police. Later we found his body floating in the Taedong-river.⁷⁾ He was shot by the North Korean soldiers. We buried him in the North, in Pyongyang, and we came down to South Korea with the retreating South Korean and US Army. Because of this experience in my family, I have a lot of hatred towards the North Korean Communist system. [...] Under this very oppressive regime, Christians and their leaders were almost helpless. The only things they could do were either to resist or to give up Christianity. My father took the position of total resistance.

More than 600.000, some people even estimate a million North Korean Christians took refuge in South Korea. If South Korean Christianity has any ideology, then it is anti-communism which is very emotionally, existentially and experientially motivated. Therefore South Korean Christians resist or reject any kind of learning or understanding of Marxism, or of the developments in Eastern European countries, Russia, or China.

This is the kind of situation in which some people, I included, try to talk about peaceful co-existence with North Korea and about the recognition of the existence of Christian communities there. But I have an internal struggle to fight. The North Korean regime is the murderer of my father, and I am trying to make peace with my enemies. On top of it, I am a Christian and I ask myself: how can you really love your enemy in a true sense? And how can you talk about peace and peaceful co-existence without repentance for the hatred of your own brothers? This internal struggle is at the same time a theological problem. South Korean Christians cannot talk about peace or reunification without repentance for the deep-seated hatred towards the brothers and the sisters in the North.⁸⁾

David Suh (*1931) is an eloquent interpreter of Minjung theology, who has affiliated himself early on with this movement.⁹⁾ Halfway through the

7) One of Korea's main rivers, flowing through Pyongyang.

8) Interview with David Suh of 15 February 1988.

9) "I was told by my friends that I am more or less the spokesperson of the Minjung theologians. I interpreted what my friends were doing theologically for the Western world. This is why I have more writings in English than in Korean" (interview of 15 February 1988).

eighties he took on the problematic issue of Korean reunification. This theme had consistently been fraught with risks in the minjung movement, and hardly been addressed theologically up till then.¹⁰⁾ Again the theological language is serving to articulate the aspirations of the Korean people. Suh calls the Korean Christians to repent that they fell into the trap of the ideology of national security and economic development. This has been a sin against God.¹¹⁾ The question of peace and reunification gets uplifted to the level of status confessionis. Suh was one of the key speakers at the 1988 NCKK International Consultation on Justice and Peace in Korea in Incheon (April 25-29.). The NCKK had declared 1995 as the jubilee year for Peace and Reunification, after fifty years of division the two Koreas should be reunified.¹²⁾ Suh interprets the division straight forward in Christological terms. The "cross" of division from which the people are suffering will be overcome in the "resurrection" of reunification. Referring simultaneously to the traditional festivals *hanshik* and *chusok*, the spring and autumn festival respectively, Suh intertwines the Christian language with traditional ancestor veneration. Many refugees to the South are longing to visit the tombs of their ancestors located in the North on these days. This effort to once again make Minjung theology the talk of the town did not find international resonance. Even among Koreans its theological sophistication was questioned.

The supporters of Minjung theology remained a disappearing minority among Korean Christians. It lived its heyday undeniably during the CCA-conference in 1979. At this point in time the critical, theological potential, which had been developing from the early seventies on, culminated. Despite the exterior political pressure a phase of consolidation ensued. The Minjung theologians (Ahn, Suh Nam-Dong, Hyun, Kim and David Suh) met on a monthly base at Ahn's institute. Some of the progressive thinkers

10) Cf. David Kwang-Sun Suh, "Penitence for Peace. Toward a Theology of Reunification," in: *Korea Scope* 6, 1986, 75-79; id., "The Theology of Reunification: A Korean Theology of the Cross and Resurrection," in: id., *The Korean Minjung in Christ* (Hong Kong 1991), 177-188.

11) Suh, *Penitence for Peace*, 59.

12) Cf. Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace, February 1988, in: *Reunification. Peace and Justice in Korea. Christian Response in the 1980s*, ed. Christian Conference of Asia (Hong Kong 1988), 87-96 (also: www.warc.ch).

of the secular minjung movement attended as well. Only after the expelled professors were rehabilitated these informal roundtable talks gradually dissipated.

On the base of their ecumenical contacts and their international fame, the Minjung theologians gained a certain political influence in the church, which has not least found its expression in important church documents.¹³⁾ They also played a considerable part in politics. Some among them belonged to the closest circle of Kim Dae-Jung's advisors. His Peace and Democratic Party (PDP) got in a serious crisis after the defeat in the elections of 1987. That it was united and managed to catch up with the government party in the parliamentary elections of 1988 was mostly to the credit of some prominent dissidents from the sphere of Minjung theology joining the PDP. Pak Young-Suk, wife and political companion of Ahn, and Moon Dong-Hwan attained leading positions in the party and were members of parliament (1988-1992). Moon became the chairperson of the parliamentary commission researching the Kwangju-massacre (1988-89).

Building the minjung church The second generation

In these same years some young ministers, mostly students of the first generation Minjung theologians, founded little minjung parishes in worker-neighborhoods and slums. They saw themselves in the tradition of the UIM centers,¹⁴⁾ some of which had turned into churches in the meantime. But they were operating on a much smaller scale with an average of about 20 members each. These parishes tried to organize themselves and find a theological voice. To strengthen their position over against the established churches and to intensify the exchange of experiences, the Council of minjung churches in Korea was founded. This self-organization was necessary, not in the least for economic reasons. Until today there is no central organ for the joint and equal payment of pastors' salaries. It is up to

13) Next to the 1988 *Declaration on National Reunification*, here the *Theological Declaration of Korean Christians* (1973) and *The Declaration of Democracy and National Salvation* (1976) have to be mentioned.

14) Cf. *Presence of Christ among Minjung. Introduction to the UIM in Korea*, Seoul 1981; In, Myung-Jin, *Rethinking the Work of Urban Industrial Mission in the Presbyterian Church of Korea in the Light of Minjung-Theology*, PhD Dissertation Seoul/San Francisco 1986.

the parish involved to take responsibility and thus dependent on the parish's financial situation. Many of the young minister's families lived below the poverty line. The theological main theme was ecclesiology: how can being-a-church be shaped in these particular circumstances? The question of the relation between gospel and culture has also been high on the agenda in these circles through their efforts towards a Korean liturgy.

Besides these ministers, who were deeply rooted in the praxis of the parish, there were a number of theologians with academic ambitions, who refer to themselves as "the second generation."¹⁵⁾ Contrary to their predecessors, they did not have the advantage of studying abroad in the first place; they received their theological education in Korea.¹⁶⁾ An essential bone of contention with the first generation was the issue of ideology, as the younger did not share their skepticism regarding Marxist analysis. Because the second generation published in Korean, the discussion was mostly internal and it is difficult to gain an insight for the outsider without knowledge of Korean.

In retrospect Hwang Hong-Eyoul sees the ideological orientation as one of the obstacles of the second generation¹⁷⁾: "the revival of Marxist ideology was a backdrop to the formation of the minjung church" (9). The gap between community organization and conscientization on the one hand and building a Christian faith community on the other seemed to be unbridgeable. The workers participated in all sorts of social activities during the week but nevertheless did not attend the Sunday worship services.

Only in the 1990s minjung pastors came to the conclusion, that "for minjung mission to be effective it needs to rely heavily on the spirituality of the cross" (21), which brings them back to one of the core ideas of the first generation. It came to a rediscovery of spirituality and religion as a way of life (22). At the same time they emphasized the imbeddedness of the minjung spirituality in "the spirituality of eastern religions where life and doctrine are one" (22). The minjung was even seen as bearer of traditional

15) Cf. for instance the former assistants of Ahn Byung-Mu, Kang Won-Don and Park Song-Joon.

16) Eventually some of them went abroad at a later age, the aforementioned Kang to Germany and Park to the US.

17) Hong-Eyoul Hwang, *The History of the Minjung Church in South Korea from 1983 to the Present*, unpublished manuscript (forthcoming in: *CCA Peoples Concept of Mission South Korean Dialogue*). Page references in the text.

culture and religion. This meets with the "survival-liberation centered syncretism" propagated by Chung Hyun-Kyung (*1956), who belongs to this generation age-wise, but is theologically closer to her teachers' generation. Only with her feminist perspective she went beyond them.

The Korea Association of Minjung Theologians, which was founded in September 1992 under the chairpersonship of Ahn Byung-Mu and David Suh, functioned as a forum for the encounter of the various groups within Minjung theology. Besides the continuing strive for peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula, the ecological question became more and more a topic in the discussions. This was a point of contact with so-called civil movements. The changing context has certainly lessened the attendance and influence of this forum that exists till today.

What Subject of Which History? The Quest of the Third Generation

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama, one of the augurs of the American empire in times of globalization, proclaimed the end of history in a much-disputed article.¹⁸⁾ With the breakthrough of liberal democracy, history would have reached its finishing point in an ideological evolution. The collapse of the bipolar world order which is symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall in the same year and accompanied by the extension of neoliberal capitalism and the increasing compression of the world by means of new communication technologies can be viewed as the end and the beginning of an era.¹⁹⁾

Many peaceful regime changes took place in the Third World too. In South Korea Chun Do-Hwan decided not to strive for a second term due to the pressures of the ongoing demonstrations in 1987. Unfortunately, the opposition was unable to reach an agreement on only one candidate, which provided once more for the victory of a military, Roh Tae-Woo.²⁰⁾ A few years later, however, he and his predecessor Chun had to give account of

18) Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, in: *The National Interest* 16 (1989) 3-18; id., *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York et.al. 1992).

19) Cf. Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity. Theology between the Global and the Local* (New York: Maryknoll, 1997).

20) Cf. *Lost Victory. An Overview of the Korean People's Struggle for Democracy in 1987* (Seoul 1988).

their involvement in the Kwangju massacre in court.²¹⁾ Both leaders of the opposition in 1987 were chosen as presidents one after the other, Kim Young-Sam from 1993-1998 and Kim Dae-Jung from 1998-2003. With president Roh Moo-Hyun (since 2003) a former human rights lawyer and representative of the younger generation that fought the military dictatorship took office.

Within 30 years South Korea has gone through a development, for which Europe still had 200 years. The price that the 'little people' had to pay for this was high. The minjung movement and Minjung theology with it made a large contribution to the democratization and the social progress of large sections of the population.²²⁾ Although the social and political set-ups have changed radically in South Korea, the reunification issue remains virulent.²³⁾ Korean activists have carefully watched the reunification process of Germany and have thereby matured to realistic politicians.²⁴⁾ To many Korean contemporaries, the historical-theological project of the minjung movement appears as a myth of times long gone. The question as to who is minjung today, that is still asked every once in a while, indicates that to many not just this story has come to an end, but also its subject seems to have gone lost. Nevertheless, the spirit of the minjung movement is still alive in the civil movements of South Korea.

Fukuyama was right in proclaiming a new era that we call today the age of globalization - but his perspective was western, he missed the eye for the non-simultaneousness of simultaneous processes (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*) and the plurality of modernities. The hyperculture of

21) In 1997 Chun got a life-sentence and Roh 17 years imprisonment. They were released however only 8 month later due to an amnesty by then president Kim Yong-Sam.

22) Still 25 % of the population live beyond the poverty line and many people work for leasing firms, who get only a split of the salaries of the regular employers of the big firms they work for.

23) Cf. Ji-Seok Jung, Korean Reunification Theology: A Theological Reflection on Peace in the Situation of Conflict and Division between North and South Korea, in: *Madang* 2, 2005, 27-48.

24) Cf. Yang Sung Chul, "The Implications of German Unification for Korea: Legal, Political and International Dimensions", in: *Korean Politics. Striving for Democracy and Unification*, ed. Korean National Commission for UNESCO, (Seoul 2002), 585-598.

neoliberal capitalism which icons led social scientists to new terminologies such as *McDonaldisation* or *Coca-Colonisation* is opposed by hybrid local cultures gaining strength. Regarding this phenomenon, Roland Robertson speaks about *Glocalisation*.²⁵⁾ Were the first generation Minjung theologians ahead of the Minjung culture movement and later used the artistic resources nowadays most of the small group of progressive theologians has lost contact with secular intellectuals and artists. Whereas the later have responded to the contextual changes in a variety of ways, theological reflection on these matters is still very limited. While there are at least some reactions from the theologians to the socio-economic impact of globalization and empire,²⁶⁾ the cultural-religious side is neglected. To make these challenges more visible I introduce here a sample of more recent works by three former Minjung artists. I follow a categorization that is derived from their earlier woodprints²⁷⁾: *pictures from the political resistance* (1), *sketches from everyday life* (2), and finally *cultural-religious motives* (3).²⁸⁾

(1) Pictures from the political resistance

Hong Song-Dam has been one of the most prominent representatives of the minjung culture movement. Born and raised in Cholla province he took part in the 1980 Kwangju uprising.²⁹⁾ In 1989 Hong got arrested, was put into solitary confinement and severely tortured. In the 1990s he tried to cope with his prison experience in an artistic way, like he did with the Kwangju

25) Cf. Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time Space and Homogeneity Heterogeneity", in: Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities* (London 1995).

26) Cf. e.g. the contributions of Kim Yong-Bock and Kang Won-Don in *Madang*.

27) Cf. Volker Küster, "Minjung-Theology and Minjung Art", in: *Mission Studies* 11, 1994, 108-129.

28) The first two categories both refer to the socio-economic and political dimension of the context, this categorization is therefore reminiscent of the classical typology of contextual theologies.

29) During a short democratic spring after the assassination of president Park Chung-Hee, who had launched a development dictatorship, the people of Kwangju, the capital of the most poverty stricken province tried to establish democratic rule in their city. The military crushed down on them with brute force.

massacre in the 1980s. He switched however his technique from woodprint to oil painting.³⁰⁾ Born on an island surrounded by water the artist strives to gain back the positive memories of his youth after being exposed to water torture during his imprisonment. The guards forced liters of water down his throat or pressed his head under water for long minutes. In the series "The twenty days in water" (8 pieces; 1999). Hong describes the metamorphosis of the one tortured with water into a fish, which cannot live without water.

The first image of the series shows the victim sitting naked tied to a chair upside down drowning in water. Flowers are blossoming from the legs of the chair that stick a bit out of the water, together with his feet tied to the front ones. These flowers only grow in coastal areas. In the moment close to death, when the torture has reached a point where resistance fades, Hong recalls these flowers of his youth. In the early morning hours when fog is covering the ground up to ones knees, the flowers seem to drift on the sea. Even these beautiful flowers have forsaken him in his own perception. A rice bowl floats on the water next to the chair. While for Kim Chi-Ha rice as the basic food in Asia is a symbol of life, Hong Song-Dam has a much more ambivalent notion of it. One can only be tortured if he or she eats sufficiently. Rice then becomes part of the torture process. Fishes are swimming around the body. On the right hand a single tree grows on the cliffs. In the left upper corner one can see an island from a far. Probably reminding of the artists own home island Haui.

The second picture shows his face upside down mirrored in the bathtub, with a piece of soap on a dish and two toothbrushes on the side. Hong was hung head first in his prison cell and drowned in the bathtub by the guards. At the bottom of the



▲ (1; 650x530 mm)



▲ (2; 650x530 mm)

30) The mural style of the protest years is resumed by Hong in a number of oversized oil paintings. After earlier tableaux denouncing the ecological crisis in more recent works he has created mytho-poetic worlds, mixing elements of Korean history and culture with fantasy.



▲ (3; 650x530 mm)



▲ (4; 650x530 mm)



▲ (5; 650x530 mm).

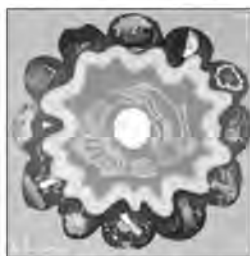
fishes still circle around the rice bowl, which color has changed from the yellowish of the preceding picture to pure white.³¹⁾

Hong Song-Dam has recovered from his trauma through his artwork. One of the torturers

next picture the upper part of his head is depicted with closed eyes as if he is dreaming of the tray above him with soup, rice and *kim chi* on it. A little fish is eaten up to the bone. The tray is reminiscent of the way Korean restaurants serve meals outside of the house. The torturers ordered food for the delinquent in order to keep him strong enough to bear the pain. A small streak on the top marks the water surface. In the forth picture the former prisoner has grown fins and is swimming with a fish. Together their bodies form a circle, reminisced of the *yin-yang* symbol. Only the face with eyes closed looms out of the water on the fifth picture The artist has painted flowers and trees on the forehead. His thoughts roam to the nature that only can be sustained by water. For the last three pictures Hong choose the shape of a *mandala*. On number six man and fish circle around the chair, with some of the bonds hanging over the backrest. On the seventh picture they are surrounded by depictions of memories from the artist's life. Close to death ones life passes by before the inner eye. The two are now swimming around a rice bowl. On the concluding picture the man has transformed into a fish totally. The two



▲ (6; 1200x1200 mm)



▲ (7; 1200x1200 mm)

31) In the series "Meals" of 68 square paintings in mixed media Hong has created

who had been traced by an investigative TV program was not showing any repentance and even said that they obviously did not torture him enough because he is still politically active. While Hong Song-Dam has gone through a process of aesthetic self-reconciliation, mutual reconciliation and forgiveness have not even begun in Korea.³²⁾



▲ (8; 1200x1200 mm)

(2) *Sketches from every day life*

Kim Bong-Chun who also has been deeply involved in the struggle during the 1980s retreated like many others to the countryside. Always being interested in farmer's life and culture he specializes nowadays in pastoral scenes. Besides hand colored woodprints that he produces sometimes with a particular stamp technique he started with sculpture. The colored clay figures in a naive style depict mainly animals. By turning a storage house into a temporal gallery and opening farmhouses as inns, Kim organized a very successful art exhibition in his small village Munmak. The local people exposed the visitors to the country life. The artist is convinced that minjung culture will survive in the countryside. The farmers are still poor and suffer from hard work and low income. Many young people left for the metropolitan areas seeking better education and job opportunities.³³⁾

Turong

Already the name *turong* of the artist collective around Kim Bong-Chun founded in 1982 indicated his interest in rural life. The Korean word denotes the small earthen dam around the rice paddies, where people take a rest



▲ (9; 1983, 240x350mm)

variations on the rice bowl, given to him through a square whole on the bottom of his prison wall (cf. *Distributing meals*, in: East Wind, 67).

32) Cf. Chai Soo-Il, Die Überwindung der Gewalt aus der Sicht der Opfer Das Beispiel von Hong Sung Dam, in: Benjamin Simon and Henning Wrogemann (eds.), *Konviviale Theologie*, Festgabe für Theo Sundermeier zum 70. Geburtstag, Frankfurt a.M. 2005, 287-298.

33) Lately Kim is involved in cultural work with the Korean diaspora especially in Russia.

from their hard work, have food together and enjoy life. On an early woodprint under the same title farmers are sitting around a rice mat spread on the ground, with rice bowls, side dishes and cups on it. In the left upper corner a mother is breastfeeding her child. Next to her sits her mother-in-law watching her. Two young guys eating their rice are sprawling on both sides of the mat. At the bottom the grandfather and probably the child's father are sitting. They have put their tools, a spade and two sickles besides them. In the accompanying poem a wanderer is describing the scene. It is noon and he feels hungry. The farmers invite him to join their meal. First he is hesitant but then enjoys their hospitality. Probably he is to be identified as the guy on the left side of the rice mat.



▲ (10; 1998, 200x270mm)



▲ (11; 1998, 200x270mm)



▲ (12; 2002, 193.5x782mm)

Eco-farming

A family is sitting on the *turong*. The father has opened a small canal so that water can flow into the rice paddy. Mother and child are letting ducks plunge into the water. They will catch the vermin and provide a little extra income. No expensive chemicals will be needed and the food will be pure. Healthy food makes the body healthy as well. Human beings and the earth form one body. In the back stand an ox and a small tree under two clouds. The rice paddy forms a microcosm.

Shade

In another color print from the same period a father rests under a shady tree, with his little daughter sleeping on his chest. Two pairs of slippers and a rake are lying at their feet. In the poem that goes with the picture the father compares the treetop with a roof and the ground underneath with a traditionally heated floor (*ondol bang*). He wants to feel the heartbeat of his little daughter while they are

sleeping.

Avatar I

During the Soccer Worldcup 2002, hosted by Japan and Korea, the Koreans fervently supported their own team, that was even able to beat the Japanese. The fans dressed in red like the players on the field and called themselves "red devils." Hong Song-Dam has produced a series under the title "Avatar" to deal with this phenomenon. The blue skin of the figures standing in several rows and their red dresses are reminiscent of the colours of the Korean national flag. They wear scarves with the subscription "Korea We all will be there for you." The artist is suspicious of the glooming nationalism. A quite different assessment gives Kim Chi-Ha.³⁴⁾ He sees a chance to overcome the Korean "red complex": The color red was the color of the King and later has been banned as the symbol of communism.

(3) Cultural-religious motives

Lee Chul-Soo started as well as a radical political artist in the 1980s.³⁵⁾ After the fierce years of struggle however he bought a farm in the countryside together with his wife. Nowadays Lee is a famous artist in Korea. In the early 1980s Lee sympathized with Minjung theology. Some of his works were used as illustrations for covers of church publications or theological books. Already then he produced critical prints about the attitude of the mainline churches towards poverty and oppression. Like Kim Chi-Ha, Lee turned more and more towards Asian cultures and religions, especially Buddhism.

Church

In the front of the picture crouches a man. His head rests on his forearms that are crossed on the ground, forming a square with the shoulders. His right leg is bent close to his body, the sole of the bare foot on the ground. The depiction resembles more a rock than a human being. A big church building dominating the upper half of the picture above the man seems to press him even more to the ground. The artist reverses one of the central ecclesiological ideas of Minjung theology, namely that the minjung church



▲ (13; 1983; 450x600 mm)

34) Interview with Kim Chi-Ha on 26 November 2005.

35) Cf. Lee Chul-Soo, *Collected Woodcuts*, Seoul 1989 (in Korean).

is outside the gate with the minjung, like Christ himself went outside the gate (Hebr 13,11-13). The church on the picture to the contrary keeps the minjung outside of its gate.



▲ (14; 1992; 480x420 mm)

Some gravestone

Another of Lee's prints is dominated by three huge triumphalistic crosses with little aureoles on top of the beams. On the crossbeam of the biggest one in the foreground somebody hung himself. The text on the bottom states that he could not find a place on earth. His spiritual needs were frustrated. He failed to reach God through the

Christian churches, protestant and catholic alike. The artist thematizes his renunciation of Christianity in an ironic way.



▲ (15; 1987; 420x500 mm)

Rice is heaven

The colored woodprint shows a rice bowl containing the whole cosmos. Rice is the basic food in Asia. Koreans were accustomed to eat it three times a day together with soup and kim chi. All ingredients are grown on Korean soil, foreign food was frowned upon until recently. A pine tree branch is dividing the circular inside into

two parts. In the upper half the sun is rising above mountains and rain is dripping from clouds. The lower half is filled with the moon and stars. Sun and moon are located on a diagonal opposite to each other.

The whole composition alludes to the *yin-yang* symbol of cosmic harmony. Only the rice bowl itself is a reminder on human beings who are an integral part of the cosmos. Lee created this woodcut already in 1987 amidst the height of the struggle, anticipating the spirituality of life of the years to come. *Happiness of rice, joy of one bowl of rice* A rice bowl, containing water, is placed in the middle of a circle. Koreans used to drink water out of the rice bowl after they emptied it. The circle is a symbol of harmony, with



▲ (16; 2001; 420x500 mm)

the bowl in the center focusing the concentration of the viewer. Pictures that serve such meditational practices are known in Asia from ancient times as *mandala*.

Samsara

On the fringes of the yellow ball of the sun plants with green leaves are growing. Without the sunlight the plants cannot survive. Sun and plants are one. The leaves of one of the plants is turning red, beginning to fade. If the leaves fade however, the sun will also fade. The black dot in the center is the point of highest concentration the self.

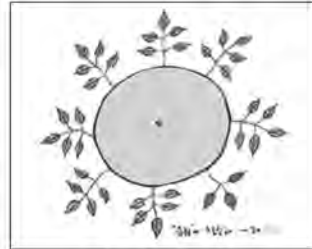
Emptied space

To draw a circle is to create a world. In Zen thinking "absolute nothingness" is paradoxically enough not "nothing" in the western sense. The circle is decentered. The self stepped outside, leaving a space without word behind. In the poem that goes with the picture the self is reflecting about the empty space. "I think this world is supposed to be filled with stories from all different walks of life." "I know this world is big enough to contain stories from all different walks of life."

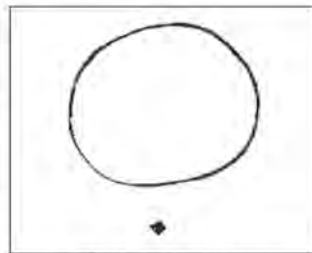
Lee Chul-Soo shows a clear tendency to simplify and minimize the forms of his prints. This does not mean however that content wise they become easier to interpret. The general frame of reference is his longing for harmony and oneness, virtues Lee found in Asian cultures and religions. Sometimes his prints and the accompanying texts and poems contain a certain paradox or irony neither unfamiliar to Zen Buddhism. They can easily serve as a kind of visual *koans*³⁶⁾

"Obuba" "Come on my back"

Next to the pastoral scenes Kim Bong-Chun is



▲ (17;1990; 370x375 mm)



▲ (18;1990; 250x300 mm)



▲ (19, 1996, 210x270mm)

36) In Zen Buddhism the master responds to questions of the pupil, who is seeking the way to awakening, with koans, a kind of paradoxical, riddle like sayings..

also referring to Buddhism in his works. A mother is carrying her child the traditional way, in a special cloth on her back. Heads and shoulders of both of them are surrounded by a double halo. They look into opposite directions though. In the poem the artist is referring to the Mahayana teaching that all humans are Buddha. The love of the mother for her child cannot be divided from Buddha's heart. Paradoxically enough the disobedience of her child is also Buddha's act. Through Buddhism the life of the common people is for the artist open to transcendence.

Lotus of silk road



▲ (20, 1995, 1200x1650mm)

On the upper part of the colorful picture three key religious figures with halos round their heads are to be seen. The middle is taken by the Buddha in lotus seat dressed in white clothes. The mudra of his hands symbolizes ki. Above his head two heavenly creatures with lotus flowers are floating. To his right sits Mary with the child Jesus on her left thigh. She is dressed in a brown monastic dress with cowl. The space between her and the edge of the picture is filled with some star ornaments. On the left side of the Buddha kneels Mohammed with the Qu'ran in his right and a short dagger in

his left hand. Ornaments reminding of Arabic calligraphy fill the gap on his side.

Before their eyes a naked woman with two children is lying on a blanket in the colors and shape of a lotus flower. In her right arm she holds a baby wrapped in white cloth that seems to drink from her breast. The other arm the mother has put around the neck of a little girl watching from behind her back.

Underneath or in front of them extends a desert landscape. Kim, who had the opportunity to travel the middle-east, filled the scenery with two camels, with colorful saddlecloth, birds, date palms and a monkey. At the bottom of the picture a herdsman riding on a donkey next to his sheep appears from the left. On the right ancient style Egyptian figures probably depicting a pharaoh with his wife and two female servants with lotus flowers in their hand and hair are to be seen. Next to them a little pond with lotus flowers is located. Kim envisions the peaceful exchange between cultures and religions along the Silk Road as model for the hybridization of

cultures and religious syncretism in a globalized world. The place from which this new civilization of peace emerges is Asia. It is grounded in mutual respect, an attitude that is searching for comparability rather than claiming the absoluteness of one's own tradition.

Where is Jesus Christ today? In search for a new Minjung theology

Due to the dynamics of the socio-economic, political and cultural parameters the question for the *Christus praesens* has to be asked time and again by Christian theologians. If one holds that Christ is preferably present in the poor and oppressed, as liberation theologians do, then in contemporary South Korea Christ is to be found for instance among the labor migrants. The images are strikingly comparable. Whereas in the 1980s the urban poor whom the government chased away from the "moonlight towns" searched for church asylum, during my visit in winter 2003/04 the labor migrants who are threatened with deportation did the same. This situation concerns however only a part of the churches' social welfare work.³⁷⁾ The *generative themes*³⁸⁾ of suffering and solidarity of Jesus with the poor lost the integrative power they had for Minjung theology in the social struggles of the 1970s and 1980s.

Already in the 1990s, the circle of Minjung theologians proposed "life" (*salim*) as a new generative theme, which is the precise antonym of the

37) Park Jong-Wha student of Ahn Byung-Mu and former Professor of Theology and General Secretary of his church, today minister of the oldest church of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) has made the medical care for labour migrants and an aid programme for North Korean child refugees an inherent part of his parish work. By permanently reviewing these projects with the members of his congregation he tries to find an adequate form of diaconic work on the parish level.

38) The concept of generative themes I owe to Paulo Freire, who developed it for his alphabetization campaigns in Brazil. The basic idea is that every community has particular generative words and themes that disclose its linguistic or thematic universe. That is where alphabetization should start. I have transposed this idea to the systematic reflection of contextual theology. Not only the particular contexts but also the Christian text has such generative words and themes. Cf. Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ, Intercultural Christology* (New York: Maryknoll, 2001), 32-35.

theme of "suffering." During the final years of his life, Ahn Byung-Mu was especially concerned with the Asian principle of *Ki* or *Chi*, the power of life. Kim Yong-Bock is striving to start a university for the study of life. Huh Byung-Sub has founded a Green University.³⁹⁾ The students of the Minjung theologians even renamed their society of minjung ministers into "Life Mission Solidarity." Chung Hyun-Kyung's "survival-liberation centered syncretism" integrates the life enhancing elements of other religions.⁴⁰⁾ Her line of thought is followed by Jin-Kwan Kwon who sketches an interreligious pneumatology.⁴¹⁾ He rereads the "spirit languages" of different religions from a minjung perspective, abandoning what is oppressive and bringing into dialogue what is life centered. The solidarity with the poor and the oppressed is continued in these theological projects. But after the harsh years of the struggle for human rights, social justice and democratization, many protagonists of the minjung movement and Minjung theology seek spiritual contemplation. While minjung artists such as Kim, Chi-Ha or Lee, Chul-Soo have turned to Buddhism,⁴²⁾ Ahn Byung-Mu and Kim Yong-Bock left Seoul and moved into the mountains. They all share a growing interest in Asian cultures and values.

The concept of "life" that has been stretched a lot in the ecumenical discourse has become a metaphor for the increasing complexity of late modern societies. This holistic discourse will become concrete only in the way the generative subthemes of *nature*, *culture* and *religion* that determine it are tackled with theologically. The panorama drawn above with the help of visual arts can give some hints here.

To be sure, Minjung theology was more public theology than church theology,⁴³⁾ but it gave a lot of prestige to the Christian faith in Korea. As

39) Many former minjung activists have joined the Environmental movement. They are discussing the establishment of a green political party.

40) Cf. Chung, *Struggle*, 113f.

41) Cf. Jin-Kwan Kwon, "The Holy Spirit and Minjung," in: *Third Millenium. Indian Journal of Evangelization*, 6, 2003, 33-44.

42) To many activists this turn to Buddhism also meant a turn away from Christianity. Kim Chi-Ha publicly declared, that Christianity has often served as an entrance gate to western culture and therefore he turned his back to the Catholic church. Cf. Kröger, *Befreiung des Minjung*, 18 fn. 11.

43) Jin-Kwan Kwon, "A Sketch for a New Minjung Theology," in: *Madang* 1, 2004, 49-68, 56.

stated before, nowadays, both theology and the church have become alienated from the public discourse.⁴⁴⁾ According to the few progressive theologians,⁴⁵⁾ a passionate *theology of life* could induce a “new reformation” and break this isolation. If the term Minjung theology should gain acceptance as umbrella term for this emerging theologies then it will nevertheless carry a quite different connotation. Once confined to the experience of the Korean people, now its scope would be *glocal*.⁴⁶⁾ Minjung theology then would simply become the brand name of a Korean made theology. Already in 1988, Hyun Young-Hak answered the question about the future of minjung theology rather laconically:

The minjung theological way of looking at the poor people, Korean society, history, reunification issue and so on may change, even theologically. And whether the expression Minjung theology will stick or the name will change, that we do not know, but I personally don't care, so long as there is a new generation coming up and try seriously to deal with the Korean history and reality in the light of the biblical message.⁴⁷⁾

44) Kwon, Sketch, 50. Chai, Soo-Il, “Missio Dei: Ihre Entfaltung und Grenze in Korea,” in: *Missio Dei heute. Zur Aktualität eines missionstheologischen Schlüsselbegriffs*, Weltmission heute. Studienheft 52, Hamburg 2003, 115-131.

45) They have organized themselves around the last active first generation Minjung theologian Kim Yong-Bock in the Korea Association of Progressive Theologians and their Journal of Contextual Theology in East Asia *Madang*.

46) Cf. Kwon, Sketch, 61.

47) Interview with Hyun Young-Hak of 14 April 1988.

