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into things christological carried on in mainline academic study of the NT. If anything I ask for an increase in such activity. **P. 125**

But I do believe that as evangelicals labour to keep abreast of and to advance current research in NT Christology, they ought to be cognizant of Islam's use of Jesus. While the Jehovah's Witnesses' misreading of [John 1:1](#), or their gratuitous textual emendation of [Colossians 1:17](#), are doubtless the object of professorial asides in many a Christian college or seminary, islamic (mis)appropriation of Jesus too seldom, one suspects, receives similar explanation and where necessary correction. And again, from another point of view, time is too seldom taken to show how Islam's reading of Jesus feeds into the larger body of Muslim belief and practice, an exercise which would be useful in two ways. First as a means of acquiring critical sympathy for their views; and second, possibly, as a model for how some similarly triumphalistic and politically aggressive strands within conservative evangelicalism make analogous untenable use of Jesus: not as a theological end in himself, but as a cog in a much larger religio-political juggernaut.

Pedagogically, such obliviousness to the Jesus of Islam reflects a cultural parochialism ill-befitting the institutions we serve, many of which are striving valiantly to cultivate a credible third-world awareness. Professionally it signifies a lost opportunity to involve ourselves in research and debate that has both academic and spiritual promise. Missiologically our failure to take Islam's Jesus seriously is a strategic error on our parts as leaders, for it fails to prepare our students, our parishioners, and ourselves for a religious future to some extent already with us, one which may see an attempt to reduplicate the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries.³⁸

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The Concept of God in Minjung Theology and Its Socio-economic and Historical Characteristics¹

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The chaos and crisis of modern theology, it is said, has been derived from the loss of God. Today's theology discusses the man-made god projected through philosophy and ideology instead of describing the Triune God who is met and served in the whole personal and

³⁸ Cf. Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), esp. chs. 3–7.

¹ Trans. Myung Hyuk Kim, *Trend of the Modern Church* (Seoul: Sungkwang Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 250–295.

historical *Sitz im leben* through the Bible and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, modern theology has come to be degraded merely to a matter of the humanities and social sciences, which, without God, describe the urgent socio-economic and political issues of man instead of describing God.

In this paper I have tried to describe the degeneration of the concept of god which has taken place in the history of modern thought, modern political theology and Minjung theology, as well as the characteristics of the socio-economization of theology which have resulted from it. Also, I have tried to point out that one of the tasks of evangelical theology is to recover the biblical concept of God in the church around the world.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN MODERN POLITICAL THEOLOGY AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

1) Moltmann: The Futuristic, Historical God

i) *The Historical Trinitarianism* Jürgen Moltmann, the Protestant theologian of Tübingen, understood Trinitarianism in terms of a 'History of God' which is connected with Christ and man rather than as the unreal ritual symbol that has no connection with experience or practice.² 'God is not an object which man could define by any p. 127 concept. The history of God is not a fact that was closed once and for all and thus far distanced from man. For the history of Christ with God and the history of God with Christ becomes the history of God with us and the history of us with God through the Holy Spirit'.³ Thus Moltmann wanted to understand the God of Trinity from the viewpoint of Trinitarian history rather than that of the substantial Trinity of the subjective Trinity of the past.⁴

Moltmann understood Scripture as a witness of human worldly open history as well as of the Trinitarian God of the communal relationship. Such a concept of relationship and community was understood by Moltmann as developing from the teaching of the Trinity and manifested even to the relationship between man and God, between man and others and the whole of mankind, and between community and the whole creature. Accepting the panentheistic idea, Moltmann insisted that God, man and the world should be understood as ecologically connected and living together.⁵

By sending his son into the world, God saves the world, and by sending the Holy Spirit, God unifies the world with the Son and God.⁶ And such an order of Trinitarian salvation history corresponds to the order of inner-trinitarian origin, namely, the historical relationship of Jesus and the Father, of the Father and the Son, and of their communal relationship in the Holy Spirit which corresponds to the pre-existent relationship of God

² See Jürgen Moltmann, 'Die Trinitarische Geschichte Gottes', in *Zukunft der Schöpfung* (München: Kaiser, 1977), pp. 90f.

³ Moltmann, *ibid.*, pp. 90f.

⁴ 'The unity of God is not presented in the same essence or in the united subject, but is pursued from the trinitarian history and is developed trinitarianally.' (Moltmann, *Trinitat und Reich Gottes* (München: Kaiser, 1980, (p. 34.)) 'Namely, we hope to develop a social trinitarianism which is separated from the subjective trinitarianism and the substantial trinitarianism.' (Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 35).

⁵ See Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶ See Moltmann, *Zukunft der Schöpfung*, p. 93.

himself. That is, the Trinitarianism in the sending is based upon the Trinitarianism in the origin.⁷

ii) *The Eschatological Unification of God* Moltmann described 'the divine act on the cross', as that in which the Father sent the Son into the world and had him suffer by the Holy Spirit, as 'the trinitarian self-distinction of God', or 'the forsakenness of God'.⁸ And he said that as compared with classical Trinitarianism, which has concentrated on the original Trinitarianism seen in the light of Christ's sending, today's p. 128 Trinitarianism must be concerned with the Trinitarianism of glory, that is, 'the eschatological unification of God', seen in the light of his sending and also of his resurrection.⁹ When the Son gives all things to the Father, the eschatological unification of God and the unification of the world should be accomplished ultimately, and we can understand the final submission of the nation by the Son to the Father as the inner-trinitarian accomplishment which embraces the world and completes history. God then comes to his own glorification and the creation comes to its own fulfillment.¹⁰

iii) *God the Liberator* Moltmann understood the essence of divine work which saves the earth and unifies the world as liberation. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not the God of Pharaoh, the emperor or the slave-owner. He is the liberator God who leads his people from political slavery to freedom. That God is the liberator is the definition of God. Therefore, selecting between God and freedom is not possible. God is none other than our true liberator.¹¹

Moltmann, giving emphasis to that, believes that the centre of Old Testament tradition is the Exodus event, which set the people free from political restraint and then led them into the land of glory; and that the centre of New Testament tradition is the resurrection of Christ, who for the eternal free nation was condemned on the cross, which was the way to punish political offences. Moltmann pointed out that traditional Christianity and today's church has failed to make the Exodus and the resurrection events the centre of Christianity.¹² Accordingly, Moltmann said that the exploitation with which a man oppresses other men is a crime which goes against the Christian way of life, and means that there is a separation from God. The purpose of all kinds of liberation theology, then, is the liberation of the oppressed.¹³

By the way, Moltmann said that even the dominator and the oppressor, if he recognizes his oppressing act, can be justified through p. 129 the incarnation of God, the

⁷ See Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁸ See Moltmann, *Christliche Trinitätslehre* (München: Kaiser, 1979, 82), pp. 40f.

⁹ See Moltmann, *Zukunft der Schöpfung*, pp. 95f. 'The purpose of eschatology is the final unification of God, which means that the world becomes one in and with God. Therefore in view of eschatology, the unification of God is connected with the salvation of the world of creation.' (*Ibid.*, p. 99) 'Without all things becoming one with him, God does not want even the unification of Himself.' (*Ibid.*, p. 101).

¹⁰ See Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 101.

¹¹ See Moltmann, *Menschen wurde Recht und Freiheit* (Stuttgart/Berlin: Kreuz, 1979), pp. 83f.

¹² See Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³ See Moltmann, *ibid.*, p. 61.

sacrifice on the cross and a recognition of God.¹⁴ Thus when the oppressor recognizes himself as such, and recognizes God as well, he obtains salvation not only for himself, but also for the oppressed.¹⁵

We find that here in Moltmann, Hegel's panentheistic historical God is illuminated and highlighted through the framework of modern political structure, and that with his panentheism the idea of an eschatological unification of God prepared the ideological foundation which encourages the various modern struggles of the masses which have a tendency towards liberation theology and which pursue both political liberation and a future utopia.

2) Löffler: the Political Christ

Paul Löffler, director of the Missionsakademie, Hamburg, West Germany, presented the paper 'The Reign of God Has Come In The Suffering Christ' at a consultation held in Bossay, Switzerland, 1978. In this paper, he interpreted the cross of Christ and the coming of the reign of God in political terms.¹⁶ Löffler challenged the whole tradition in which the suffering of Christ is understood in personal categories, and insisted that the crucified Christ was not merely a divine person who suffered for others, but who suffered in the context of a confrontation with the ruling powers. He actually challenged a religious understanding of the cross, which interprets it in the framework of sin and salvation, and insisted that the cross represented the power of the powerless, the alternative to the rule of kings.

He insisted that the beginning of the reign of God was the context of the life and ministry of Jesus, and that the reign of God was concerned not with giving meaning to individual existence or with providing the occasion for the formation of a new religious community, but with bringing about a new dynamic of change which upset the established powers. He also insisted that as the direction and structure of the new p. 130 dynamic were clearly outlined in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in the source Q, they were manifested by events such as the rise of the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, his retreat into the desert for an inner struggle about the means and goals of his ministry, healing, liberation from demons, and setting people free from the bonds of the law, religious authorities, want and oppression. As a result, a people's movement emerged and this built up to an explosive confrontation with the established powers, its high point being the entry of Jesus and his followers into Jerusalem and its climax being the crucifixion. The event also manifested itself in a movement among the people, beginning in Galilee and reaching to the capital, Jerusalem. Its members came from among the poor and disinherited from among the marginalized and rejected. Löffler insisted that the authenticity of this new interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels is discovered and verified in the lives of thousands of Christians today who suffer and struggle in South Korea,

¹⁴ 'In this suffering of God, the love of God reaches to the creature doomed to death. In this sacrifice of God the unrighteous men have received righteousness freely.' (*Ibid.*, p. 76).

¹⁵ 'Whoever wants to free the oppressed, must begin with himself. He must no longer be the oppressor, and he must free himself ... that is, the oppressing action has to be eliminated from both sides. By doing so, the freed oppressor and the freed oppressed will serve each other.' (*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 79).

¹⁶ See 'The Reign of God Has Come In the Suffering Christ: An Exploration of the Power of the Powerless', *International Review of Mission*, 68 (1979), pp. 109–114.

Paraguay and South Africa. The reign of God manifests itself as a power which runs counter to the established and ruling power.¹⁷

Löffler, then, interpreted the suffering of Christ not in substitutionary but in political terms. While this suffering culminates in his crucifixion, it is really his whole life and work which is described as suffering, and it has to be seen as the result of his confrontation with the ruling power. From beginning to end, Jesus confronted the ruling powers instead of taking their side and compromising with them. Jesus recruited from among the poor those who would work with him to accomplish change. The criteria of the new order were: liberation of the suffering and oppressed, disregard for material wealth and power built on might and the work for 'shalom'. As Jesus thus rejected the world and the contemporary religious authorities and confronted them, he suffered and was persecuted. 'The suffering of Christ points to the fact that the reign of God has actually begun, but also to a permanent struggle for the implementation of its goals.'¹⁸

Löffler indicated that as is illuminated in these new insights about the Gospel and Christ, today's mission form is to be the participation with the poor in their struggles: 'We must get alongside the poor, not in order to help them, as our Christian agencies have done for centuries, but to practise solidarity with them in their struggles and to seek support from them. The Christian Truth as a message does indeed p. 131 equally apply to all human beings at all levels and in all classes, but recruits primarily from among the poor. That kind of rediscovery is bound to create a confrontation with the middle class membership which dominates our churches in Europe. To break out of that bondage seems, however, the first step in mission.'¹⁹ Löffler then listed concrete questions and methods for today's mission forms as follows: how can I express the joint struggle with black Christians in South Africa in the face of the fact that my own society profits from their exploitation? And how do I use the inherited power and influence to support rather than hinder their combat? To participate in the struggle for the kingdom is to work for peace in the educational field, in the public media or in political bodies, and to oppose militarism, military production and exports. It is to liberate the oppressed by raising human rights issues of migrant workers, or to practise love towards love-starved children or handicapped people. These struggles to accomplish the concrete goals of the reign of God inevitably bring us into contact with other people of other faiths, humanists, and supporters of ideological causes which struggle for similar ends. 'A priority for mission today is thus to open to those who struggle toward the same ends, rather than to practise a narrow, identity-ridden Christian missionary approach.'²⁰

We find that Minjung theology is just following Löffler's political interpretation of the cross and the kingdom of God and its missionary form, which reflects the trend and mark of the wcc's mission theology,²¹ and political theology which regards the struggle of the poor and oppressed as the nature of mission.

3) The Asian Theological Conference: The Liberation Theology

¹⁷ See Löffler, *ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁸ Löffler, *ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁹ Löffler, *ibid.*, p. 113.

²⁰ Löffler, *ibid.*, p. 114.

²¹ Kim, Myung-H., 'Trends of the Churches Today', *Journal of Reformed Theology* (Hapdong Presbyterian Theological Seminary), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 349–375.

The Asian Theological Conference, held in Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, in 1979, under the theme of 'Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology', explored the way and the content of Asian theology. There it was stated that the Asian theology is a theology of liberation to seek the liberation of the poor and the oppressed, and that God is present today in the struggles of people.²² p. 132 The summary of the content of Asian theology, which manifested itself in 'the final statement' adopted by the Asian Theological Conference, is as follows.²³

First, Asian theology must direct itself away from western theology toward the context and problems of Asia itself, including the poverty, exploitation and deprivation of human rights under military dictatorship. Today the struggle against these socio-economic and political exploitative forces is taken up by advocates of socialism on the one hand, and has been enriched by the traditions of the major religions of Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity) on the other. The richness is expressed not only in philosophical formulations but also in various art forms such as dance, drama, poetry and song, as well as in myths and rites, parables and legends. The immediate issues of Asia are the suppression of human rights and the rights of workers, and the victimization of youth, women and ethnic minorities. To be relevant enough to solve these issues, Asian theology must undergo a radical transformation.

In the context of poverty and exploitation, theology must above all have a very definite liberational thrust, and must participate in the struggle of the poor for full humanity. We must affirm that the poor and the oppressed are called by God to be architects and builders of their own destiny. To be truly liberating, theology must start from the context of poverty and must be expressed by the oppressed community using the technical skills of biblical scholars, social scientists, psychologists and anthropologists. It also can be expressed in art forms such as drama, literature and folk stories. In addition, to be truly liberating, Asian theology must be the work of the Asian poor, who are struggling for full humanity. To be authentically Asian, the theology must be formulated in the religio-cultural history of Asia, must be integrated with the insights and values of Asia's religions, and must approach its task with the tools of social analysis of the realities of Asia. The Bible becomes an important source in the doing of theology. The God encountered in the history of the people is none other than the God who revealed himself in Jesus, and continues to be present in the struggles of people. Therefore the formula for Christian living and ministry has to be made through participation in the struggle of the masses of people. This requires the development of corresponding spirituality. We need to continue deepening our understanding of the Asian reality through active involvement in people's struggles for full p. 133 humanity. This means struggling side by side with peasants, fisherfolk, workers, slum dwellers, marginalized and minority groups, oppressed youth and women, so that together we can discover the Asian face of Christ.

We find that as the above summary statement clearly shows, the theological concern of the Asian Theological Conference has been almost completely concentrated with the people's liberation movement in its socio-economic-political dimension, and with the religio-cultural humanities and social sciences. We find also that inclination for socio-economic-political and religio-cultural concerns manifests itself as such in Minjung theology.

²² See Virginia Fabella, ed., *Asia's Struggle For Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology* (Paper from the Asian Theological Conference, January 7–20, 1980, Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka) (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980), pp. 1–202.

²³ See *Asia's Struggle*, pp. 152–160.

4) Esquivel: God the Labourer

The poetess of Guatemala, Julia Esquivel, who had impressively expressed the socio-economic and political trend and revolutionary enthusiasm of modern ecumenical mission theology, and had won great applause at the Melbourne Mission Conference and the World Council's Assembly at Vancouver, presented an article entitled 'The Crucified Lord: A Latin American Perspective' at the 1980 mission conference in Melbourne. In that article she satirically mocked, criticized, and denied the traditional Christian view of God, and presented the new picture of the god of Latin America's liberation theology.²⁴

First she criticized all the descriptions of God learned in Sunday School and at the Seminary, such as that God is omnipotent, that he punishes sin and protects the just, that he chooses his people and sustains order in this world, that he guarantees social and economic well-being on this earth, that he prepared for eternity, and that he presented and offered his son, Jesus, as personal saviour. She claimed that these descriptions were false images of god made by the ruling class. She said that the god fabricated in the western world many years ago is a false god which neither feels, hears, nor responds. It is a god which is erected for the generals of Guatemala, for merchants who make cosmetics and luxuries, and for murderers who make death weapons. She insisted that we are struggling against the powerful false god of a thousand faces, and that this enormous idol with feet of clay is p. 134 beginning to crumble in Central America through the force of an awakening people.

Esquivel said that the real god, who so far is unknown, has begun to be accessible to the poorest. This god has been described in the People's Mass of the Nicaraguans as follows: 'You are the God of the poor, the human and humble God, the God that sweats in the street, the God of the worn and leathery face. That is why I speak to you in the way my people speak, because you are God the worker, Christ the labourer.' Esquivel continued to describe the real God who has begun to be known to Latin Americans in this way: This Living God has been found by the people who searched for him in anguish, with tears, insistently. When they lifted their eyes from their totally destitute situation, they found him. Right in their midst, in their neighbour, is the God that perspires in the streets, that shouts through the people asking for freedom, that suffers with the people (the suffering servant, [Isa. 53](#)), that has the pallid face of the tortured peasant of Guatemala. He can only reign through a people, in a people. That is the Justice-God, the Fraternal-God, the Liberation-God that appears as in the Exodus of the people of Israel and in each exodus of all people that march towards the Kingdom of Life. This God, unknown, is the God who changes the laws of the transnational free enterprise (the creation of abundance for some and death for many), who changes the law of the mighty in order to plant in the heart of the people the law of love and the law of life, who breaks through the frontiers of sex, race and class and makes fraternal communion. That God is fighting against the death-god which is alive in a system of capitalism.

The history of salvation shows us the God who reveals himself in the events of the daily lives of ordinary human beings such as fishermen, women and carpenters. But all of those who met him were discontented with the models of society in an unjust world, and dreamt of a different world and a different earth, a world of peace and brotherhood. They dare to come forth to transform history. By daring to move without knowing where they are going, they become friends with that God, they become the Word of God, and action of God among his people. Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel, Saul becomes

²⁴ See 'The Crucified Lord: A Latin American Perspective', *International Review of Mission*, 69 (1980), pp. 311-315.

Paul, Jesus of Nazareth becomes Christ. This Christ is the God of the people of Nicaragua, of El Salvador and Guatemala, the God of the poor, the human and humble God, the worker God. This God, which in the past spoke to us through the prophets, has spoken to us through Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus also promised us that through his Spirit we would accomplish even greater things than he. Therefore, although Jesus did not leave us a finished plan in writing, he planted in p. 135 us the seed of Truth and Life. In this way he opened the way that leads to the kingdom that he announced, and announces today, amidst the people who struggle for liberation. Jesus is the way for and with the people united in a common project.

The picture of God the labourer, as Esquivel described him, is the struggling God and the liberating God who is sought for by modern ecumenical theology, and is present in the poor and oppressed. This God has nothing to do with the rich and the ruling class. This God is also the revolutionary God who easily digs into and raises a storm in the hearts of people all over the world who have suffered from the harsh evil of the socio-economic-political structure. We find that this picture of Esquivel's God is similar to the god of Minjung theology.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN MINJUNG THEOLOGY AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMICO-HISTORICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Elsewhere I have pointed out that Prof. Seo Nam-Dong's Minjung theology is more of a social movement. Minjung theology considers the context of a few subjectively selected historical events from social, economic and political life (in the Bible, church history and Korean history) more valuable than the biblical text which has been the source and guideline of theology. It then talks of human gods (such as Kim, JiHa, Jang, Il-Dam, or a newborn baby of a prostitute) which are in the outcries (Han) of oppressed Minjung (the mass of people) instead of God who is the central theme of theology. It deals with Han instead of a major theological theme like sin. It puts the emphasis on hate, the resolution of Han and the actualization of humanity rather than on repentance or salvation; it therefore fails to be a theology and can be considered only as a social movement.

On the other hand, within the Hansin College of Korea Christian Presbyterian Church, which is the mecca of Minjung theology, there is a serious critic. Chun Kyung-Yeon, the professor of New Testament theology at the College, said in his thesis 'Minjung Theology Evaluation'²⁵ that it is not right to regard Minjung theology as a theology, claiming that it is prejudiced, narrow and destructive. He then pointed out the hermeneutical problem of Minjung theology, stating its interpretation of folk tales to be not only 'irrational sophistry', but also 'impudent and snobbish'. He criticized the p. 136 interpretation of prophetic books as having been 'a largely damaging work'. He further commented harshly, 'If one demands Minjung to become the subject of history, isn't the result only creating an army of devils who will fight against God?'

Let us attempt to analyze and evaluate the socio-economic and historical characteristics of the concept of God in the Minjung theology of Seo Nam-Dong, the one who pioneered and constructed it.²⁶

²⁵ See Min Young-lin; Chun Kyung-Yeon; Kim Kyung-Jae; Change Il-Cho, *Lights of the Korean Theology*, (Dae-Hwah Press, Dec., 1983), pp. 51-94.

²⁶ 'I am proud that I have set "Minjung" as the main theological theme, and have systemized it to claim that to be the centre of all theology.' (Seo Nam-Dong, 'I Talk Minjung Theology,' March, 1980), *Studies on Minjung Theology* (Han-Kil Press, 1983), p. 174.

1) The Concept of God in Minjung Theology

In an accurate sense, there is no God concept in Minjung theology, because the major interest of Minjung theology is not the traditional Christian God. It says that Christianity must look for a new form of God. They insist that it is time to think of God as a historical God who acts in history and man, instead of the doctrinal, metamorphic ontological God of traditional Christianity.²⁷

In fact, according to Feuerbach, Minjung theology's major interest is historical man—Minjung rather than the transcendent God. Prof. Seo claims that the God of tradition is the wrong God; therefore one needs to stand as an atheist against such a God (Boch, Bonino).²⁸ He sets Minjung as the 'central theme of theology' in 'an age of supra-Christianity', and Minjung becomes 'the subject of history'.²⁹ Feuerbach's understanding of man is applied directly in Minjung theology. Man in Minjung theology is not a mere rational being but a concrete, actual being (who is exploited and suppressed), not an individual, but a communal Minjung.

Since the object of Minjung theology is the historical Minjung, Minjung's God is a God who lives along with Minjung, is immanent [p. 137](#) within Minjung, and is equal to Minjung. Prof. Seo says that the people who are cursed and neglected meet God in their hearts. When you turn the bottom up, that becomes God, and the Messiah of Minjung appears (In-Nae-Chun; the people are equal to God). If a prostitute in the ghetto gives birth to a baby, in this slum a god appears in the form of a new life.³⁰

Prof. Seo's God is not a transcendental God, but a god immanent in human reality. Prof. Seo claims that 'Jang Il-Dam is the present modern-day Christ of 1970', and the same concept is repeated by poet Kim Ji-Ha.³¹ In his interpretation of [Luke 10](#), the parable of the Good Samaritan, he finds the image of Christ and his work in the man who was robbed rather than in the Good Samaritan.³² Prof. Seo reiterated his position in a panel discussion

²⁷ See Jose Miguez Bonino, *Room To Be People* (Geneva W.C.C., 1979), pp. 9–25.

²⁸ See Seo Nam-Dong, 'Blending of Two Stories', (March, 1979), *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 62; 'Shaping of Han and Its Theological Insight', (October, 1979), *Minjung Theology*, p. 83.

²⁹ See 'I Talk Minjung Theology', *Minjung Theology*, p. 174. 'The theme of Minjung is Minjung rather than Jesus.' (Blending of Two Stories', (March, 1973), *Minjung Theology*, p. 53). 'Dakawa decided that Minjung is the centre of theology as a result of his interpretation of Mark ... I theologically agree with the idea.' ('I Talk Minjung Theology', *Minjung Theology*, pp. 187f.)

³⁰ 'He saw it and said, "Oh! On this contaminated flesh a new life is born. God is born." There he learned the way. He then knelt down and said, "God is in your wombs. He is in your bottom. Oh! My mother." He kissed her foot.' ('Shaping of Hah and Its Theological Insight', *Minjung Theology*, p. 103). See also 'Blending of Two Stories', *Minjung Theology*, p. 79.

³¹ See 'Shaping of Han', p. 105.

³² 'The man who is hit, hurt, and calling for help—his painful groan (Han) is the call of Christ to those passing by. The attitude to him is the attitude to Christ.' ('Shaping', p. 107). See also 'I Talk', p. 180.

held in March, 1980. The title was 'Talks On Minjung Theology'. He said that the voice of Minjung is the voice of God, for God is immanent in Minjung.³³

Further Prof. Seo insisted that Jesus, unlike Moses, had not claimed himself as a hero, but 'came down into Minjung to identify with Minjung'; therefore Christ is Minjung, and Minjung is the Messiah.³⁴ He said, if traditional Christianity understands Christ's redemptive work in the sense of 'salvation for me', and 'dying instead of me', then the 'de-Christian' era's Minjung theology sees it as a 'recurrence of Christ by each individual'.³⁵

By that, Prof. Seo clearly has expressed himself. He said that his interest is not in Jesus. He confessed that Jesus is a 'tool' for understanding Minjung.³⁶ Therefore, Prof. Seo's Jesus doesn't necessarily p. 138 have to be the triune God of traditional Christianity, nor the subject of worship. Jesus was a model for the realization of true humanity, so one merely needs to imitate and follow the modeling. Naturally it is meaningless to believe in his divinity or to confess him as the Son of God.³⁷ The word 'faith' is no longer necessary in relation to Jesus.³⁸

Prof. Seo's Minjung theology has neither the Lord of judgment nor the eschatology of the coming New Heaven and Earth. Though he says that he does not necessarily deny the belief in Heaven after death, his words suggest some sense of mockery. He expressed it as if that kind of belief might be necessary when he gets somewhat aged, but not at this time.³⁹ Furthermore, his view of the judgment is almost insulting. He proclaimed that one

³³ 'When we say "the voice of God", which is the inner voice of an individual, socially it means "the public opinion" (Voice of Minjung).' ('I Talk', pp. 167f).

³⁴ See 'I Talk', pp. 187f. ' "Minjung takes the role of Messiah" means that sufferings of Minjung itself is doing the role ... In the understanding, Minjung is the Messiah and they are the Lord of the new era.' ('I Talk', pp. 180f.)

³⁵ See 'Blending', p. 79.

³⁶ 'The theme of Minjung Theology is Minjung rather than Jesus. In Minjung Theology, Jesus is a tool to understand Minjung, not the other way around.' ('Blending', p. 53; See 'I Talk', p. 187).

³⁷ 'To believe in Jesus is not that of confessing and acknowledging traditional doctrine, but is a practical sense ... People are all sons of God, but Jesus was one who is a son in a special way ... Jesus' humanity and life is humanization in its essence, and an example and a model for a man, so we try to imitate and follow him ... It is nonsense just to sit down and say, "I believe Christ is the Son of God." ' ('I Talk', p. 188f.).

³⁸ 'Therefore, we no longer need to have "faith" in Jesus of Nazareth, but a "historical knowledge" is enough for a relation to him.' ('I Talk', p. 173). 'No need to use the word "faith". I think it might be better to drop "faith" in the narrow sense of Christian faith.' ('I Talk', p. 170).

³⁹ 'In Church, old persons are there. They don't understand labour movement, nor ever engaged in it. They are waiting for death ... To give meaning to them in the Gospel, one has to teach that Heaven is waiting when you are dead. It might be necessary for me also when I get older. I might need "Life eternal".' ('The Victory of the Suffered', *Studies on Minjung Theology*, April, 1982, p. 256.

should not accept the invitation of Messiah, if the coming Messiah calls the rich and the rulers to the coming Kingdom.⁴⁰

Since the interest of Minjung theology is in Minjung, and its historical development of the socio-economy where Minjung is the leader, Minjung theology's God is not only equal to Minjung but also to historical development. Prof. Seo acknowledged that his God concept is sort of a pantheistic concept, and he also said that historical development and nature could be understood as God.⁴¹ Prof. Seo, in p. 139 accordance with Joachim Floris' theory of historical theology, said 'God is the immanent power in the development of world history, and God evolves himself to lead the process of history through humanization and incarnation process.'⁴²

In Minjung theology, the traditional Christian transcendent God has deteriorated to an immanent God of massiveness and history who acts within historical events of Minjung's Liberation. Prof. Seo said that God's revelation and salvation are experienced in the historical events such as the Exodus, the Cross, the March 1st. Movement and Korean Independence.⁴³ Also, the divine work of liberation of this kind is done through 'eternal revolution' (or a unification of God and revolution).⁴⁴ He expressed his change of God concept as 'God's transcendence converting from the dimension of metamorphic to transcendence of the future'.⁴⁵ There, the personal God of Christian tradition is again deteriorated into a force for historical development. In Minjung theology, we cannot find the God of grace who seeks, forgives, and saves sinners. Prof. Chun Kyung-Yoen of Hansin critically pointed out that Minjung theology 'does not mention a word about the gracious God who not only seeks but heals all the hurts of human pain and sorrow'.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ 'Then, if the Messiah invites me to sit in the same seat with the rich who have lived in luxurious houses and driven fancy cars, and the ruler who unjustly oppressed the people, I will definitely reject such an invitation ... It is necessary and possible to reconcile all other disagreements, but not those between the rich and the poor, the oppressors and those who have suffered.' ('About Minjung Theology', *Minjung Theology*, April, 1975, p. 35).

⁴¹ 'In a broad sense, we take a pantheistic position ... But I want to emphasize that I believe it to be a socio-economic historical development in which God leads the history. This is the main frame of my belief. God works through history. This, in an extreme application, means that the history itself is God ... To my understanding, God can be nature, or history.' ('I talk', p. 171).

⁴² See 'Blending', p. 59.

⁴³ See 'Blending', pp. 50f.

⁴⁴ See 'Blending', pp. 51, 80.

⁴⁵ See 'Jesus, the Church History, the Korean Church History' (Feb. 1975), *Minjung Theology*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Light, p. 59.

Prof. Seo, though he agrees that his pantheistic and evolutionary historic God concept is from Hegel, who was indicted as an heretic by traditional Christianity, made the absurd remark that it is now time for conservative theology to accept this new concept of God.⁴⁷

2) Ideology of Socio-Economic History

It is difficult to acknowledge Minjung theology as a theology, since it ignores the personal and transcendent God, and considers God an immanent force for historical evolution whose action is limited within the realm of historical events such as mass revolution. It is proper to p. 140 consider it as an ideology.⁴⁸ In fact, Prof. Seo, who is the leader of the idea, repeatedly emphasized Minjung theology's core trait as that of a theology of socio-economical interpretation of history. The urgent objective of theology today, he said, 'is to interpret theology in the light of socio-economic history'.⁴⁹ And he claimed that modern theology should change its traditional inductive methodology and ideal speculation into sociological practices of deductive methodology.⁵⁰ Further, he clearly said, 'When we say we are doing socio-economical and socio-literary theology, it certainly means farewell to the old theology.'⁵¹

So Prof. Seo called Minjung theology 'a theology in the de-Christian era'.⁵² In this description, we find its non-Christian traits and socio-economic history characteristics. I will make a detailed analysis and evaluation to prove that Minjung theology is a socio-economic and historical ideology under the guise of theology.

i) View of the Bible and Hermeneutics Prof. Seo followed the theory of Tillich and Gutiérrez and said that the structure of theology no longer clings to the transcendent revelation or the personal existence of humanity, but must be the 'social conditions of humanity'.⁵³ Here, as Gutiérrez set his theological structure on the praxis of Latin America's monarchy and economical exploitation, and defined it 'a critical insight into historical praxis', Prof. Seo took the biblical, Church historical and Korean historical tradition of Minjung as his theological frame. He had especially narrowed the frame by dealing with the Korean social conditions of the 70s under President Park's regime when Christianity and Korean Minjung tradition were 'mingled together'. So he sees the events and descriptions in the

⁴⁷ 'That is Hegel's concept. It was condemned as a heresy by conservative theology. But now it's time for them to stand back.' ('The Objects of Minjung Theology as a Korean Theology', *Theological Philosophies*, Vol. 24, Spring, 1979, p. 123).

⁴⁸ Kim Kyung-Jae of Hansin College pointed out, 'There exists a danger that Minjung Theology might limit the sovereignty, transcendence, and free will of the biblical God in historical science. That means that there is a danger of theology becoming a flat theology of one dimension if it ignores existing religious experiences which transcend empirical science.' (*Illumination on the Korean Minjung Theology*, p. 108).

⁴⁹ 'I talk', p. 164.

⁵⁰ 'The Cross-Actualization of the Resurrection', *Minjung Theology*, April, 1983, p. 317.

⁵¹ 'The Objects', p. 126.

⁵² 'Blending', p. 625.

⁵³ 'Now when political theology bases its frame of reference on socio-economical history or sociology of literature, man's personal existence is not the frame but I he social condition of human.' ('Blending', p. 49).

Bible as a p. 141 'frame of reference' or 'a referable text' which records socio-economic-historical Minjung movement. In that, Minjung theology definitely denies that the Bible can be regarded as an absolute standard.⁵⁴

Prof. Seo goes beyond literal criticism and applied socio-economic and historical criticism of the Bible. He maintains that the Gospel of Mark is a true Gospel, because it is recorded according to the position of Minjung, and it is recorded at Galilee where repressed Minjung were. In comparison, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles has corrupted the original Gospel, for those were recorded in the Jewish national perspective of history which went along with the people of Jerusalem, the rulers.⁵⁵ This interpretation is not original with Prof. Seo. As he has admitted, it is borrowed from Japanese theologian Dakawa,⁵⁶ and a similar interpretation is held by German theologian Löffler.

Prof. Seo also interprets the Covenant Law (Ex. 20:22–23:19), which he claims is the oldest record ever to be settled in a socio-economic and historical context. He claimed that the essence of the text is a human rights law which defines the socio-political system of the time.⁵⁷ To conclude, Prof. Seo says that 'socio-economic-historical methodology is the definite basis for hermeneutics', and 'one is able to see the important aspects when he sees socio-economic- p. 142 historically'.⁵⁸ The Bible becomes non-religious and socio-economical.

ii) *God and His People* The socio-economic and historical method of interpretation of Minjung theology is applied consistently to all the themes of theology. The God of the Jews, and the God of Jesus is a socio-economically sensitive God, who communicates only with

⁵⁴ "Traditional theology does not use the term "frame of reference"; instead it uses "absolute revelation" or "theological standard", i.e. the Bible. Conservatives sorely depend on it, saying that "the Bible is the absolute standard" is rejected by the Bible itself ... Therefore, I see the Bible as a point of reference. In other words, it is a reference textbook.' ('I talk', p. 184).

Chun Kyung-Yeon of Hansin College criticized Minjung theology's view on the Bible as follows: 'Minjung Theology is not listening to the whole context of the Bible. They only suggest passages that support their claims to be "the Biblical point of reference ..." Minjung Theology does not listen to the Word but to Minjung.' (*Illumination*, pp. 71, 79).

⁵⁵ 'In Mark, Galilee where Jesus spent his life is the land of Minjung, while Jerusalem is the seat of the rulers ... While Jerusalem is the center (capital) of the final victory and glory of the Jew in the traditional Jewish view of history, Mark seems to challenge the view by claiming Galilee as the final home of victory for isolated Minjung ... This is in sharp contrast to the Gospel of Luke and Acts where the resurrection and the second coming are centred around Jerusalem, therefore inspired traditional theology is a depoliticalized view of history. Jesus' mission field in Mark is an entirely isolated Minjung (*Ochlos*). It changed into people (*laos*) in Luke. Therefore "Galilee" is a symbol for oppressed Minjung, and "Jerusalem" is of rulers.' ('The April Revolution and the Resurrection', *Studies on Minjung Theology*, p. 129).

⁵⁶ See 'Blending', pp. 52f.; 'I talk', p. 187.

⁵⁷ 'The content is "protection law", "law on social justice", that is, human rights law. That constitution defined "political system of the society" ' ('I talk', p. 186).

⁵⁸ See 'I talk', p. 164.

the repressed poor. The Jewish God is not for the rich or the rulers, but for the slaves, and he is a God of hope and liberation.⁵⁹

Therefore Minjung theology describes Minjung as Jewish people with whom Yahweh first communicated, and the subject of salvation that Jesus dealt with as lowly ones, robbers and groups of beggars in socio-economical perspective. Prof. Seo, as some other Old Testament theologians, does not regard Jewish people as religious leaders, but as a low class mass of 'Habiru' who wandered around the Middle East.⁶⁰ We can easily see that Minjung theology's view of Jewish chiefs is faulty and twisted. Though the Bible speaks of the forefathers of the faith as a 'small herd of nomads' ([Deut. 26:5](#)) in a socio-economic sense, 'foreigners and strangers' ([Heb. 11:13](#)) in a religious sense, it never calls them 'a school of lowly wandering beggars'. The Bible, in turn, describes the Jewish ancestor Abraham who possesses sheep, silver and gold, servants, camels and donkeys abundantly ([Gen. 24:35](#)) as blessed of God. It describes his son Isaac as also very rich, having many sheep, cows and servants ([Gen. 26:12f](#)).

However, Prof. Seo clearly states that no riches or rulers can be included in the Covenant people of Jesus. Only oppressed low ones, poor ones and outcasts are included in the Covenant.⁶¹ Jesus himself dealt with and identified with the poor and the oppressed alone, not [p. 143](#) with the rich and the rulers. He claims that Jesus excluded privileged ones who possessed knowledge, intelligence, wealth, fame and position in the parable of God's invitation in [Luke 14:15-24](#).⁶²

Prof. Seo, on several occasions, has even said that the rich and the rulers are not entitled to pray or to receive the grace of salvation.⁶³ He then asserted that no rich person can enter heaven.⁶⁴ But the Bible, though it warns against a lust for things, teaches that

⁵⁹ 'Yahweh God was a God of slaves who had protected their human rights ... He was a God of hope who led slaves out into emancipation, with the fire pillar during the night and the cloud during the day. He took revenge in behalf of suffering slaves and protected their rights' ('The Biblical Reference for Minjung Theology', *Minjung Theology*, p. 237). 'The God of Jesus was not the kind that the poor and the rich can believe and worship together. He is God of the poor and the suppressed. He is one who liberates the poor and the suppressed.' ('Jesus', p. 12).

⁶⁰ 'Habiru was a name for the lowest. It was a name for wanderers who were out of the Empire's rule, without citizenship. These outcasts were poor. Many orphans and widows were among them. Sometimes, they were robbers. But many of them were slaves, farming slaves, cheap mercenaries. These outcasts were Habiru. Therefore Jews were not the one race of people, nor a cultural group of beggars who were out of ruling orders.' ('The Biblical', p. 236).

⁶¹ See 'The Priest of Hah', *Minjung Theology*, pp. 37f.; 'Blending', pp. 46f.

⁶² See 'The Biblical', pp. 230f.

⁶³ 'It is Christianity that does not allow the rich or the ruling to have the privilege of prayer. It is not Christianity nor God when the rich offer prayer breakfast meeting for the rulers and ministers. The God of the poor and the oppressed is different. That is Jesus.' ('Jesus', p. 13).

⁶⁴ 'It is apt to say that the rich cannot enter Heaven ... It is absolute nonsense ... That will be like saying "a round triangle" ... The rich going to Heaven is absurd ... Anyway, this is my unmovable position of faith.' ('I talk', p. 195).

God's blessing enables one to be rich, and the rich and the rulers can also be objects of salvation. 'It is the blessing of the Lord that makes one rich' ([Prov. 10:22](#)). 'The rich man's wealth is his fortress' ([Prov. 10:15](#)). 'Who does give salvation to Kings' ([Ps. 144:10](#)). Prof. Seo may reject these verses by saying that they are not reliable, for they were recorded at the time when the original Gospel was reduced to an ideology by the ruling class of the post-kingdom era.⁶⁵

Minjung theology understands man in human class relations; in other words, in the socio-economical perspective rather than the religious and spiritual perspective related to God. It is the Marxist view of man. Minjung theology, therefore, selfishly selects passages to justify its socio-economic and historical ideology, and rejects passages irrelevant to their use by labeling them as products of a contaminated ruler's ideology.

iii) *Exodus, the Cross, the Resurrection* Minjung theology is consistent with a socio-economic and political interpretation of Exodus, the Cross and the Resurrection. Prof. Seo follows the same path as Reimarus, Kautsky, Isler and Brandon who saw Jesus as a social revolutionist, and also as Löffler's modern political theology. So, he interprets these events as political events in socio-economic history. He saw the Exodus as 'a socio-economical event in which a group of slaves fought against oppressing rulers with violence, achieving p. 144 liberation and escape'.⁶⁶ In other words, 'it is a story of escaping slaves'.⁶⁷ The divine redemptive nature of the story has been eliminated thereby. He says that 2,000 years of Christianity have changed the story, making it religious instead of political, and making it an ideology of the rulers. Since the Exodus is a socio-political event, 'God's involvement in history today must take place in a socio-economical setting also,' he claims.⁶⁸

Prof. Seo also sees the cross as a political event resulting from political motivation. The sentencing of Jesus to the cross was due to his political uprising against the Jerusalem rulers who were exploiting Minjung, which eliminates the redemptive meaning of the cross.⁶⁹ His critique continues by saying that 2,000 years of Christianity again elevated the cross event as a religious event for the political purpose of the ruling classes.⁷⁰ He says that, since Minjung theology finds its frame of reference in the cross event in a political context, Minjung theology today sees that 'the salvation of Minjung is processed in the political area (narrowly in the socio-political area)'.⁷¹

Prof. Seo interprets the Resurrection and resurrection of the saints in the same way. He calls the death of Jesus 'a political murder', and the Resurrection 'a protest and

⁶⁵ 'Originally God was a being who led and protected the sufferers, the poor, and the oppressed social outcasts. This God had been reduced to a protecting God by David and his successors to make him an ideology.' ('The Biblical', p. 52).

⁶⁶ 'Blending', p. 52.

⁶⁷ 'I talk', pp. 164f.

⁶⁸ 'Blending', p. 51.

⁶⁹ See 'Blending', p. 54; 'The Biblical', p. 234.

⁷⁰ 'After that the Church dropped the judicial meaning of punishment but elevated it as a religious event. So they lifted the Cross up in the air to exaggerate as a great religious symbol of God's love and forgiveness.' ('The Biblical', pp. 234).

⁷¹ 'Blending', p. 54.

resolution of Han'.⁷² Also the resurrection of the believers is the resolution of Hah of those who were killed innocently or mistreated. Therefore those who have died after a natural life span are excluded from the resurrection. For the 'resurrection will only be of those who were killed'.⁷³ Prof. Seo has twisted the Revelation to rationalize his opinion: 'the Revelation does not include the Resurrection, but only the resurrection of the killed'.⁷⁴ p. 145 So the resurrection of the believers no longer signifies receiving a glorified body instead of a mortal body, but realization of a new social and political order on this earth as the resolution of Hah of those killed innocently. Resurrection is 'a socio-political concept', 'the effort toward a new society, and a Messianic politics'.⁷⁵ The reason resurrection is interpreted as an event after death in Heaven or a religious symbol is that the Church has changed the political context of it.⁷⁶ Therefore today's Church must restore and carry out the original political meaning and the power. This will be done through the awakening of Minjung and the revolutionary process. Prof. Seo summarized the idea of resurrection: 'for the Church of new era, the Resurrection of Jesus means the awakening of Minjung. From now on, the awakening of Minjung, who claim to be the subject of history, is the Resurrection of Jesus ... So, uprisings like the March 1st Movement, or April 19 Revolution are all resurrections. This is Minjung theology's new understanding of the Resurrection.'⁷⁷ This seems like a harmonized model of Hegel's absolute spirit concept of pantheism and Marx's ideal of social, economical and political revolution.

iv) Sin, Repentance and Salvation Minjung theology interprets the main themes of theology such as sin, repentance and salvation in the same way. Prof. Seo does not understand a sinner as a person who has sinned against God and his neighbour. He defines a sinner as one who was mistreated, meaning someone 'who had crimes committed against him'. Sin is 'a label' that rulers give to the weaker class.⁷⁸

⁷² 'The Resurrection of Jesus is that of the murdered. It is the protest, resolution of Han, and restoration of divine righteousness. Hah is the soul and the outcry of the dead who suffered. It is a suppressed emotion of those who were murdered unjustly, but justified falsely by the law. When their protests and explanations were ignored ... Denial of death, revealing of hidden truth, victory of the life and the truth—that is resurrection. Resurrection is resolution of Hah.' ('The Cross', pp. 318f.).

⁷³ 'The Cross', p. 319.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ 'Our resurrection is social. Resurrection is not returning to the world in an immortal body, but is a rebirth into a new society with a spiritual body. The Messianic Kingdom is not a visible thing but is a new era, new society and new politics which comes in the line of history ... The Resurrection Symbol is a sociological, political concept. Resurrection faith is the will for the coming new society and Messianic politics.' ('The Cross', p. 320).

⁷⁶ 'It is a present reality that the Church today only acknowledges a religious meaning of the Cross and the Resurrection instead of the full political meaning which they originally had.' ('The Cross', p. 317).

⁷⁷ 'I talk', p. 194.

⁷⁸ 'Sin, condemnation is, sociologically, only a label that the ruling puts to the weak and the opponents ... So called sinners are actually victims of the crime, sufferers.' ('Shaping', p. 106).

Seo said Minjung theology's major interest is to salve social injustice and structural contradictions. And this injustice is sin.⁷⁹ Naturally, p. 146 Minjung theology is not interested in condemning individual 'sinners' who are sacrifices of structural unrighteousness, but defends them. Prof. Seo agrees with Ahn Byung Moo's interpretation, and claims that Jesus has never condemned sinners, but received them 'unconditionally'.⁸⁰ Jesus never condemned anyone and was never concerned with their repentance. Luke records it seventeen times, which proves that it is his ideological concern. Jesus and Mark did not take repentance as a theme, he concludes.⁸¹ He then criticized preachers who teach sin and repentance as defenders of the ruler's ideology.⁸²

In a word, Minjung theology deals with Han rather than sin as a core theme.⁸³ While traditional theology teaches that the purpose of the life and death of Jesus is to redeem and save his people (Mt. 1:21, 26:28), Minjung theology says the life and death of Jesus is to identify himself with Minjung's Han and to resolve their Han. There Seo even calls Jesus 'Christ of Han'.⁸⁴ He claims the Minjung theology of today must be concerned with Han and the sorrow of Minjung to the extent of taking it up as the framework and the guide of theology, and the sole responsibility of modern theology. While the western Church and theology disguised its role as a mediator of redemption to speak of 'guilt and repentance as an ideology of rulers', Minjung theology's church must bear the role of 'priest of Hah' to resolve and comfort Minjung's Han.⁸⁵ In Minjung theology no repentance is necessary. A sinner is not to be ashamed, but bold. That means Minjung theology has replaced the religious matter of the God-man relationship with the socio-economical matter of man to man relationship. It is an inevitable result of a political theology that lacks love and respect for a personal transcendent God.

Minjung theology, in place of salvation through a restored relationship between man and God by repentance of sin and forgiveness, understands salvation as a humanization process through p. 147 resolution of Hah by means such as liberation, expression and clarifications.⁸⁶ Minjung theology speaks of 'working out one's own salvation' in which Minjung is the subject, instead of a 'dependent salvation' that relies on the blood of Christ.⁸⁷ Prof. Seo criticizes the traditional attitude of 'by the power of the blood' as an 'incantative religion', and condemned such redemption as 'only the morphine to Minjung,

⁷⁹ See 'I talk', p. 202.

⁸⁰ See 'Shaping', p. 106; 'The Objects', p. 142.

⁸¹ See 'Shaping', p. 106.

⁸² 'Today, ministers who are supposed to deliver God's message usually "preach" sin and repentance to the congregation which eventually is an excuse for the ideology of the power system.' ('Shaping', p. 105).

⁸³ 'So far, we treated the matter of sin as the Christian theology's theme. But Minjung theology's concern in the future is on Han rather than sin. This means more than mere forgiveness of sin.' ('The Biblical', p. 243).

⁸⁴ See 'Shaping', pp. 105-107.

⁸⁵ See 'Blending', p. 81.

⁸⁶ See 'Shaping'. pp. 89, 107.

⁸⁷ See 'Blending', pp. 51, 57.

not salvation'.⁸⁸ Minjung theology's salvation is no longer the salvation of grace which reconciles God and man in the blood of Christ. It is a self-achieved human process by exercising Dan (an act accumulating Han) to resolve Han, therefore relating the process to 'eternal revolution'.⁸⁹ Prof. Seo said that *Missio Dei*, which is the salvation event of Minjung liberation, is possible without the belief in the blood of Jesus. And such events have happened in Korean history as well.⁹⁰ We can conclude that Minjung theology, following Löffler's socio-political understanding, has contaminated the biblical meaning of sin, repentance, and salvation.

v) *Pneumatological Interpretation* Prof. Seo, following Joachim Floris' evolutionary and modalistic Trinity's historic theology, says that his second presupposition is pneumatological interpretation. Minjung theology is a theology of the Spirit's age when the Father's age and the Son's age has gone by.⁹¹ Theology, in his definition, does not cling to the old traditional Christianity but voluntarily chooses and decides in accordance with the present experience and context.⁹² Past events (including the Jesus event) are only frames of reference or reference texts. Pneumatological theology does not value the past Jesus that much. While Christological interpretation says that Jesus was the ransom for me, pneumatological interpretation says, 'I am recurring Jesus, and the Jesus event is repeating at the present.'⁹³

Pneumatological interpretation is, for example, 'to make a decision p. 148 regarding God's will concerning whether to resist against a certain monarchy or not'.⁹⁴ In other words, a theological effort to resolve today's social economical and political characteristics of Minjung theology is clear.

vi) *Millennium* Prof. Seo has said that 'the doctrine of the kingdom of Heaven' and 'the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom' are like two centres of an ellipse. Though it appears that he acknowledges both teachings, in truth he has called for revival and restoration of the Millennial doctrine which was Minjung's teaching of the First Church. He said the doctrine of Heaven had deteriorated and depoliticalized into an ideology of the rulers.⁹⁵ Minjung theology that emphasizes historical context must take the Messianic Kingdom as its central doctrine, he said.⁹⁶ He not only disregards the central biblical message of Heaven as God's Kingdom, but also interprets it as if the Bible is teaching a self-made socio-political utopia as its central doctrine. 'The Promised Land' which Yahweh had

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80f.

⁹⁰ See 'I talk', p. 169.

⁹¹ See 'Blending', pp. 58–63; 'I talk', pp. 165f.

⁹² 'Christological is to mean "dependent" while pneumatological means "self-made" ' ('I talk', p. 165). 'I claim that pneumatological interpretation is given its appropriateness, for it accords with present experience and context.' ('Blending', pp. 78f).

⁹³ 'Blending', p. 79.

⁹⁴ 'I talk', p. 166.

⁹⁵ See 'The Cross', p. 320; 'I talk', pp. 192f.

⁹⁶ See 'I talk', p. 193.

shown to Abraham, Seo interprets as not a model, but the socio-political millennium itself.⁹⁷ For that reason, Minjung theology takes Thomas Wincher's social revolutionary movement as its appropriate historical frame of reference; and it was the most fanatical millennial teaching ever recorded in Church history.⁹⁸

Seo further declared that to carry out the 'actualization process' of millennium in today's context, and to see the process in the 80s, 'the Yusin constitution must be thrown out [former President Park's amended Constitution for the 3rd regime], and a new constitution must be established'.⁹⁹ Such political, economical and social democratization is The New Heaven and Earth of [Revelation 21](#) and [22](#), also of [Luke 14](#), and the Festivals in Heaven of [Matthew 22](#).¹⁰⁰ Prof. Seo, p. 149 in other articles, has even actualized the Second Coming by saying, 'Today's church needs to identify the coming Christ in the pain and Han of Minjung.'¹⁰¹

CONCLUSION

We have surveyed Minjung theology's socio-economic and historical characteristics, and anti-theological or non-theological elements, on the grounds of modern philosophical development and modern political theology. Minjung theology has gone out of the theological boundary. For its major interest is not the God or Jesus of the Bible but the liberation and the humanization of Minjung. Jesus and the Bible become a mere tool for understanding Minjung. The claim to call Minjung Messiah Or to believe eschatological faith as an actualization of the Millennium in a political, social and economical sense is nothing other than an ideology. Minjung theology has gone into the area of socio-economical action and political revolution from the faith of God and God meditation.

Prof. Seo lived as a sensitive intellectual and a responsible realist who tried to accept the rapidly changing theological trends in order to analyze and to solve today's practical problems. At the end, he accepted the worldwide historic action theology of the 70s in the Korean political context. This was the final destination of his theological meditation. Until the end of his life, he lived with Minjung in order to be on their side. To live the life, he willingly gave up the traditional God, the Bible and the Church. He will remain as a human rights fighter, a friend of Minjung in the hearts of Minjung. However, he cannot avoid taking responsibility for causing theology to deteriorate to a mere socio-economical ideology, and thereby disturbing the Korean Church.

⁹⁷ 'Yahweh told Abraham, "Go to the land that I will show you." Then, where is the Promised Land? That is the people's vision of Utopia. Biblically symbolized as the Millennium. This is actualization of human essence that is his future and hope.' ('At the Gate of the New Era', *Minjung Theology*, April, 1980, p. 154.)

⁹⁸ 'Blending', pp. 60-62.

⁹⁹ 'We are doing the work of actualizing the Millennium. We are planning the Millennium where the separation of the 3 powers will be established, there will be no unjust torture to the indicted, free speech and press will be there, 3 rights of labour will be guaranteed, and participation of workers in administration is allowed. This is the Promised Land.' ('At the Gate', p. 155).

¹⁰⁰ See 'At the Gate', p. 157.

¹⁰¹ See 'Shaping', p. 108.

It is inevitable that any theology that lacks a transcendent and personal God will become a void meditation or a mere social, political and economical principle. Good theology stands on an understanding of the true God. To know the triune God is to meet the enlightening and revealing Holy Spirit, then to relate that experience to the historical tradition of life and reality. The Korean evangelical Church is responsible for carrying out the historical task of re-establishing the biblical concept of God and of providing the right direction of good theology for the Church of Korea and the world. p. 150

Protestant Mission Education In Nineteenth Century China

Charles W. Weber

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A major consideration of the study of missions is the extent to which it is involved in acculturation. China in the nineteenth century provides an interesting case study for this, since during this period a resurgent industrializing Western culture, along with an activist, mission-minded Church, were making a more concerted impact on the Ching dynasty. The dynamic interaction of Western culture and Christianity with Chinese civilization provides a model of cross-cultural analysis.

Focusing on mission-provided education contributes significantly to an understanding of Western *versus* Chinese cultures because education is a socialization process. Therefore, mission schools become a means of communicating one culture to another, and in this process, the comparisons between the West and China become apparent as divergent customs and values come into proximity with one another. It was in the efforts of missionaries to propagate their religious beliefs, nurtured in their own cultural and historic traditions, that the difficulties of transplanting these beliefs into another cultural milieu became manifest. Missionary educational efforts can be used to highlight this cultural clash.

The missionary was the Western agent for this cultural interaction. John K. Fairbank stressed the importance of the missionary's role when he observed that 'in China's nineteenth-century relations with the West, Protestant missionaries are still the least studied but most significant actors in the scene', since missionaries were the only agents 'in direct contact with the common people in the two civilizations'.¹ In this regard the latter part of the nineteenth century was a period of dramatic mission growth in terms of increased numbers of mission agents, of mission stations, of Chinese converts, of literature translated into Chinese, and of humanitarian endeavours, such as hospitals, p. 151 dispensaries, orphanages, and schools. In relation to this last endeavour, schools, Fairbank (again) noted its special significance in indigenizing Christianity into China,

¹ John K. Fairbank, 'Introduction: The Place of Protestant Writings in China's Cultural History', in *Christianity in China* edited by Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John K. Fairbank, p. 2.