

The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts of

Communal Conflict, Poverty and Injustice

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In her stimulating and insightful book, *Europe: The Exceptional Case - Parameters of Faith in the Modern World*, Dr Grace Davie deals with the close relationship of modernisation and secularisation in Europe and suggests that secularisation will not necessarily accompany modernisation in the rest of the world. In this sense Europe is the exceptional case. By examining the different patterns of Christian activities in Americas, Africa and part of Asian continent, the author persuasively argues that these examples support her thesis. The basis of this argument lies in the unique development of religious patterns in (Western) Europe. Taking the example of Britain, which she characterises as "believing without belonging", she points out that, though church attendance has drastically declined, the British have not abandoned "their deep-seated religious aspirations or a latent sense of belonging", but instead "religious belief is inversely rather than directly related to belonging" and as the institutional disciplines decline "belief not only persists, but becomes increasingly personal, detached and heterogeneous" (pp.2-8). She challenges the notion of Europe being a model for the rest of the world and argues that the religious behaviour of Europeans is distinctive and peculiar to Europe.

I am in agreement with Davie that the patterns of the European religious experience will not be repeated in the same way in the rest of the world, but I am less convinced about the notion that Europe is the exceptional case. The experience of the rest of the world is quite different from the European pattern of modernisation and secularisation. Calling Europe the exceptional case tends to downplay the distinctiveness of other contexts. In the words of Byron Shafer, "all societies, observed closely enough, are distinctive, while all societies, observed with sufficient distance, are simultaneously similar".^[1] Furthermore, in socio-political analysis there is a sizeable literature on "American exceptionalism" arguing that America has to be understood differently because of its distinctive origins and development. But this has been challenged by many scholars on the grounds that the same particularities are found in other contexts. Each continent may be regarded as exceptional and no two continents are mutually exclusive.

I shall argue that the *distinctive features* of Asian Christianity lie particularly in the theological approach to socio-political and religious problems rather than in sociological patterns of church growth and religious belief. In addition to analysing Christianity sociologically, observation of the engagement or interaction of theologians and church leaders with the context is vital to understand contemporary Christianity in a particular part of the world and to predict its future shape. I shall limit my presentation to theological perspectives from two countries - South Korea and India, which are the most familiar to me. I shall return to Davie's book as I examine the implications of the discussion.

K.M. Panikkar, a prominent historian, in his book *Asia and Western Dominance* predicted that after the colonial era the increase of Christianity in Asia would be "a thing of the past" since it was supported by "the unchallenged political supremacy of Europe".^[2] However, Christianity in Asia has not only grown in terms of numbers, but also continues to be prominent in many areas of the life of the people. In this period of transformation, Christianity has been an active contributing factor not only in political and economic nation-building but also in sociological and ideological changes taking place in this region. Davie presents us with a very perceptive analysis of the different continents: North America; South America and Africa, but when it comes to Asia, she is forced to make selections and consider only the two examples of the Philippines and South Korea, both of which could be said to be exceptional in the Asian context. If we consider religious movements in Asia in general then we may come to a broader consensus in terms of the importance of religious life in society and culture, but the situation of Christianity varies considerably from country to country and from state to state.

The concerns of Christianity in Asia have been quite different from the problems Europe faced in the past century - secularisation and modernisation. Most Asian countries, with perhaps the exception of Japan, went through complex and overwhelming encounters with poverty and socio-economic and political injustice, on the one hand, and the experience of being minorities in religiously pluralistic contexts on the other. The question I would like to address is the question of how the churches in these two very different environments have not only survived but also grown or at least sustained their integrity. I would like to ask how they see themselves and how they deal with these problems. In other words, what is their distinctive understanding of their *identity* and their *mission* How do they see the nature of the church - its function, meaning and form in the contemporary world, and secondly, the *raison d'être* of the church - its role in society and service to the world? Although the importance of sociological analysis of the Christian church is

vital to our understanding of religious phenomena, the rise of Christian thinking and formulation of theology is equally, if not more, vital to understanding the future of the Christian church.

II. The Korean Case: The Problem of the Poverty and Injustice in Post-War Korea

The churches in South Korea, as Davie points out, grew along with the modernisation of the Korean society and rapid growth of the economy. The revival movement of seeking eschatological hope and the emphasis on church growth dominated the Korean church in the second half of the last century and, as a result, the church rapidly grew numerically, forming a largely conservative evangelical constituency. However, the problem faced in Post-war South Korea by the church was the problem of poverty and later economic and political injustice. There were two prevailing strands of theological thought, which made the Korean church significant for the society as a whole and I believe the influence of these are vital to understanding the growth of the Korean church. It is important to notice that the two theologies are not confined to any denomination or particular generation, but cut across the church and also the society. I will argue that its involvement with contemporary problems made the Korean church credible in the eyes of non-Christians and made an impact on Korean society.

After the Korean War in 1953, South Korea went through political turmoil with corruption and dictatorship. Eventually the military took over the government and through a series of coups d'etats military-backed government continued until 1988. High on successive government agendas was overcoming poverty. This legitimised their rule and their oppression of the opposition party and disregarded for the civil liberties of the people. So in the process of the remarkable economic growth, there was political injustice and exploitation of the workers and the farmers. The Korean church in this situation took two different directions, the *kibock sinang*^[3] on the one hand and Minjung theology on the other hand. I see both of these as contextualisations of the gospel in Korea in response to the problem of poverty and injustice.

1. The problem of the poor and kibock sinang, 1950s-1960s

Kibock sinang or "faith of seeking blessings" in modern Korean Christianity is closely related to revival movements which started in 1907 in the present North Korea. Revival has been described as a characteristic of Korean churches and a Korean scholar even says, "If anyone wants to understand the Korean church he has to understand its revivals".^[4] This series of revivals has led to several

dynamics in the practices of the Korean church in which Korean Christians experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, genuine repentance, and forgiveness and this gives them tremendous confidence to preach the gospel and keep the faith in times of difficulty. The earlier revival meetings were to do with seeking blessings, particularly "spiritual" blessings such as forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. Studies suggested that during the time of Japanese threat to the Korean peninsula many of the western missionaries tried to direct the Korean Christians' attention to these "spiritual matters" rather than to a political struggle which they foresaw would inevitably end in Japan's favour. [5]The message of the preachers and expectations of congregations were more toward something beyond this world, towards future expectation.

However, in the context of post-war Korea, as Min Kyeung-Bae describes, people were desperately looking for a way to meet their material needs that was both eschatological and experiential, they were seeking the eternal kingdom in the reality of the present situation.[6]There was a rapid increase in revival meetings and the messages preached were to meet people's need of material blessing and healing. *Kibock sinang* became the dominant aspect of Korean Christianity as these meetings became popular and various religious groups were took root soon after the War.[7]There were also a growing number of "prayer mountains" where people stayed for prayer and fasting and where often reported for miracles and healing. People wandering from mountain to mountain following well known miracle workers or revival preachers. It was indeed a time of great turmoil and testing for Korean Christianity. People were confused and yet they wanted to see God's blessings here and now rather than rely on a future hope. It was not that they were not interested in matters of belief, ethics and ultimate destiny but as they had recently faced the challenge of life and death in a real sense, their faith had to be met by the immediate result of healing and miracles and above all by liberation from desperate poverty.

Kibock sinang or seeking blessings is not new to the Korean church nor it is unique to Korean religiosity as it is a common phenomenon of people who profess any form of religion known as *do ut des*: I will do this in the expectation of receiving something from deity. What is interesting in the particular context of the post-war Korean church was that there was a shift in thinking from the early revival phenomenon of emphasising "spiritual blessings" in the eschatological dimensions to include the material manifestation of those blessings. This was in line with the government campaigns for economic growth at all costs and the rise of the "*jaebol*", Korean family-run mega-companies. In the midst of it all, the Korean church

experienced rapid growth in numbers and produced mega-churches. So in the 1960s and 70s, Korea experienced tremendous growth in both business and church congregations and the poor felt the changes taking place. They also witnessed to changes in their own lives or those of other Christians, who testified to God's blessing that had brought them out of poverty. In other words, Christians had not only set the material manifestation of spiritual blessings as an achievable goal of Christian life, but also actually "experienced" it in their lives and the life of the whole nation as the economy rapidly grew.

The man who epitomises this approach is Paul (David) Yonggi Cho of Full Gospel Church in Seoul. The story of the church is one of tremendous transformation of a church which started as a tent church in 1958. The official history of Full Gospel Church explains the situation:

In the 1950's however, especially toward the close of the decade, Korea's situation, both economically and politically, was not rosy by any means. It was not long after the Korean War and there were many suffering poverty and chaos from the war's aftermath. Pastor Cho Yonggi was no exception. It was not uncommon for Pastor Cho Yonggi to satisfy his hunger with nothing other than three meals of porridge given him by an American evangelist. He also battled poverty along with the members of his congregation. In such desperate times, Pastor Cho Yonggi called out to God for messages appropriate for such harsh reality.[\[8\]](#)

It was this harsh reality that brought Pastor Cho to seek the meaning of the gospel and come up with his famous three-fold blessing.[\[9\]](#) The testimonies of the people who have experienced these blessings are numerous: BBC series interview.

He [Che Su Hwan] was taken ill. He knew his sickness was not only of the body; he was on the edge of total collapse. When he was over the worst of the physical malady, he was taken by a friend to hear Dr Paul Yonggi Cho, of the Full Gospel Church in Seoul... At one of the Dr Cho's services, he had an intense emotional experience, accompanied by uncontrollable tears and a sense of being caught between modes of living. ... Dr Cho's promise of blessings had been delivered. 'Astonishing, astonishing,' murmurs Su Hwan, 'We are blessed in the Spirit and everything else is added unto us...[\[10\]](#)

Though the three-fold blessing is what Pastor Cho preached, the idea of holistic blessing is not limited to the Full Gospel Church, indeed it is across whole sections of the Korean churches. As revival is characteristic of the Korean church regardless of denomination so the message of the expected blessings for

those who seek is common to most of mainline Korean churches. Good News to the Poor in Korean context in the 1950s and 60s was seen as this gospel of three-fold blessing and it seemed the message prevailed. Is it a genuine inculturation of the gospel to deal with the problem of the poor in Korean context? Pastor Cho and others certainly have succeeded in exploring the Korean traditional religiosity of seeking blessings and expanded the meaning of blessing in the context of poverty. But the approach is not without problems.

There has been considerable opposition to this *kibock sinang* approach from both moderate and conservative sections of the Korean church. In fact, most of the articles written on *kibock sinang* in Christian academic or popular journals condemn this approach [11] They have various reasons: first, they see it as unbiblical and influenced by shamanism, which they regard as this worldly, unethical, anti-historical and temporal. Second, they object to *kibock sinang's* belief that poverty is a curse and the result of wrong actions and attitudes toward God. Third, they interpret *kibock sinang* worship, offerings to God and good deeds as performed in expectation of receiving from God something in return. Fourth, they blamed it for contributing to the lack of social participation of Korean church and sharing their resources with others. It was described as a "corrupted faith" and "making Christianity a lower religion". In addition, some claimed that biblical blessings are not meant to be material and that the gospel of Jesus is a gospel of suffering not blessing. Believing in Jesus, they claim, is for eternal salvation and the gospel is the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, of righteousness and forgiveness.

The critics focus on the negative outcome of excessive seeking of blessings particularly when we see in the revival meetings and services. They criticise the revival preachers for their unethical approaches toward material blessings and healing. [12] It is not uncommon to see revival meetings dominated by stories and testimonies of those who received blessing of wealth, healing and success. There is an excessive drive to increase church membership and construct new church buildings or church prayer halls in the mountains, often by borrowing money from the bank in "faith" that God will fulfil his promise. The critics are right in that the extravagant demonstration of material blessings in church buildings and membership has become a disease in the Korean church. This preoccupation with self-interest and allegations of corruption have tarnished *kibock sinang's* attraction to the growing middle classes.

However, these critics have their own biased perspectives. First, the critics focus on the fact that *kibock sinang*, is somehow related to Korean religiosity, Shamanism, and that they uncritically condemn Shamanism as unethical, selfish, materialistic, this worldly, temporal and non-historical. The fact that

Korean Christianity has been influenced by shamanistic understanding of traditional Korean religiosity is not necessarily a negative point. The religious tradition of Korean people, including Shamanism cannot be just dismissed as unworthy. This interpretation is rather the result of traditional Christian understanding of religiosity of the people as something inferior, unacceptable, or even evil, and anything to do with is labelled as syncretism. According to Yoo Dong-Sik, Korean tradition combines *han* (oneness), *sam* (life) and *myuet* (beauty) and that Korean theology has developed in these three directions: conservative fundamentalist theology, progressive social involvement theology and cultural liberal theology respectably.^[13] However, I would like to add one more dimension to this, *kum* (dream or hope) is a vital to Korean religiosity that somehow in the midst of despair and poverty, people look for hope either in this world or the next. While conservative theology may meet the need of spiritual fulfilment and eschatological hope, *kibock sinang* has harnessed the people's desire for *kum* in the present context. In Korean religiosity, the desire for the something better, both spiritual and material is expressed as seeking blessings. It is the humble desire of those who have not experienced fullness of life and who are constantly facing despair and poverty.

Second, it seems the critics are emphasising the other-worldly aspect of the Christian gospel and also following the example of the suffering of Christ and the Cross. It may be relevant to those who have already received material blessing to preach on suffering, the Cross, inner spirituality and future hope, but the poor, had already experienced suffering, they had already carried the Cross. What they needed was the message of deliverance and liberation from poverty and the promise of God's blessing, in the here and now. Besides, both in the Old Testament and in Jesus' teaching, blessing is not limited to the other-worldly nor is "spiritual" blessing superior to "material" one - they are part and parcel of the whole blessing from God - often expressed as "shalom", the peace and well-being of God's people. This tendencies to make blessing in the next world more desirable than in this world has been consistent in Christian tradition and also in Confucian understanding of life, but *kibock sinang* challenges this. It cannot be said that the poor are cursed because they are not in a right relationship with God, but neither can it be said that seeking material blessings from God is improper or less "spiritual" than seeking this-worldly blessings. The poor are blessed when they are fed and provided for, as in the example of Jesus' ministry. In the context of post-war Korea, many of the Korean church leaders responded to the problem of poor by tapping into the traditional religiosity and also interpreting gospel as seeking holistic blessing.

Though the problem of *kibock sinang* still remains and often threatens the gospel principle of the Cross and suffering by employing the method of "the end justifies the means", *kibock sinang* represents one way the Korean church has responded to the problem of poverty and it has indeed been good news to the poor. It provided the people of Korea with hope here and now through Christian faith and resilience to endure the hardship and to persevere through the turmoil of post-War Korea. This hope, I believe, was not only limited to Christians only but spread to the nation as whole. Since the term *kibock sinang* carries such negative connotations in the Korean churches, there have been some attempts to find alternative terms. *Chukbock sinang*, meaning "faith of invoking blessings" has been introduced by some Korean churches,[\[14\]](#) and perhaps it may be appropriate to use this rather than re-interpret *kibock sinang*.

2. The problem of injustice and Minjung theology, 1970-1990

Between the 1950s to 1970s, South Korea witnessed the rapid rise of the *jaebol* with the help of government policy, which started to dominate the Korean economy. As a consequence, there was serious exploitation of the factory workers in their working conditions as well as their wages. The majority of pastors saw this problem as a simply matter of the "process" of development and concentrated in their emphasis on church growth. In this period, *jaebols* and mega-churches rose in parallel and the church leadership believed the growth of Christian population and the growth of national economy went hand-in-hand. There were large evangelistic meetings, for example the Billy Graham Crusade in 1973 and EXPLO'74 organised by Campus Crusade for Christ, both of which drew more than a million people. This speech of the head of CCC in Korea on "total evangelization of Korea" is typical:

They [total evangelisation] cover pre-evangelism, evangelization, discipleship, socialization, and the total Christianization of this nation. When they are realized, the amazing blessing promised in Deuteronomy 28:1-4 will apply to us. In Christ all things will be made new.[\[15\]](#)

However, Charles Elliott rightly points out the lack of social ethics regarding achieving material blessings and church growth:

Those offers - attractive as they are to people deeply troubled by the processes of transition in which they find themselves caught - are, however, predicated on the assumption that nothing can be done to modify the processes. It is at that point that Cho and the great majority of church leaders who think like him are at their weakest.[\[16\]](#)

In the context of 1970s Korea, there was a need for a new theological paradigm to meet the need of the urban poor who were victims of highly competitive capitalist market. The philosophies of *kibock sinang* and evangelistic campaigns did not seem to have mechanism to deal with this problem of "process" in modern Korean society. The problem of poverty is not just individual matter or to do with a congregation but has to do with the structure of the Korean economy and society. It is in this point, some Christian intellectuals realised that the poor are not just poor in the sense of lacking material things, but they are also exploited and unjustly treated in socio-political reality, and that the gap between the poor and rich and between employee and employer is widening. The *minjung* movement was sparked when Jun Tae-Il set himself on fire in November 1970 as his protest against the exploitation of fellow factory workers. The incident shook the country and soon Christian leaders took this as major issue and stood for and with the poor and exploited. This meant challenging the status quo of the government and the capitalist market economy of the *jaebol*. In 1973, they declared "The Korean Christian Manifesto" which says:

We believe in God who, by his righteousness, will surely protect people who are oppressed, weak and the poor and judge the power of evil in history. We believe that Jesus, the Messiah proclaimed that the evil power will be destroyed and the kingdom of Messiah will come, and this kingdom of Messiah will be the haven of rest for the poor, oppresses and despised.[\[17\]](#)

Following this, Suh Nam-Dong, among the most well-known of *Minjung* theologians, presented his thesis in 1975 that Jesus identified with the poor, sick and oppressed and that the gospel of Jesus is the gospel of salvation and liberation, and for him, it is manifested in struggle with those evil powers and that liberation is not individual or spiritual but rather communal and political. *Suh* systematized his *Minjung* theology in the following years, seeing *themjung* as subjects of history and the dealing with "*han*" as the key theme for theology in Korean context.

Let us hold in abeyance discussions on doctrines and theories about sin which are heavily charged with the bias of the ruling class and are often nothing more than the labels the ruling class for the deprived. Instead, we should take *han* as our theme, which is indeed the language of the *Minjung* and signifies the reality of their experience. If one does not hear the signs of the *han* of the *Minjung*, one cannot hear the voice of Christ knocking on our doors.[\[18\]](#)

Ahn Byeung-Moo, another well known *Minjung* theologian, asserted that Jesus identified in such a way that Jesus is *minjung* and *minjung* is Jesus as he shared

his life with *minjung* and the event of the Cross is the climax of the suffering of *minjung*.^[19] Therefore the presence of Christ is not when the word preached nor when the sacrament is conducted but when we participate with or in the suffering of *minjung*. Jesus is God becoming flesh and body, which means material being and reality in everyday life not a ideology or philosophy.^[20] Therefore he argued the *minjung* is the owner of the Jesus community which is fundamentally a "food community" - community sharing food - and the concept of a worshipping community comes later.^[21]

Ahn and Suh and other *Minjung* theologians were deeply influenced by Kim Chi-ha, a prominent activist and poet who expressed in poetry this concept of sharing food in Christian life and theology:

Food is heaven
As you can't go to heaven by yourself
Food is to be shared
Food is heaven
As you see the stars in heaven together
Food is to be shared by everybody
When the food goes into a mouth
Heaven is worshipped in the mind
Food is heaven
Ah, ah, food is
To be shared by everybody

^[22]

Minjung theologians captured people's imagination and brought the issue of poverty and exploitation into the church. Here we see *Minjung* theology as a "protest" theology on behalf of the *minjung* against injustice and exploitation. Their interpretation of the poor is not in isolation from others but it is "relational". Poor are poor not necessarily because they are sinners or do not have a "right" relationship with God, but because of the greediness of some others and unjust system of modern capitalism. Therefore their main concern was not dealing with individual poor people but rather to do with social process and the system which prevents the *minjung* from coming out of their misery. In this respect, *Minjung* theologians' main concern is with anything anti-*minjung* than with the *minjung* themselves as they try to deal with economic and political injustice.^[23] *Minjung* theology has made a great contribution to Korean church and society through their understanding of liberation and justice, and by showing the poor and oppressed that they are not or should not be the objects of exploitation and that their protest was a legitimate one. It has been good news to the poor and, like *kibock sinang*, it was intended to uplift the

poor. However in its identification of the problem and the way to deal with it, it is vastly different from the latter.

There has been criticism of *Minjung* theology in two areas.^[24] First, whether *Minjung* theology is by *minjung* or of the *minjung* or whether it is a theology by elites for *minjung*? Second, who are the *minjung* in contemporary Korea and how do they see themselves? Are they only a conceptual group which is created by theologians for the purpose of their argument? I see these questions as pertinent and important, but nevertheless *Minjung* theology still has important prophetic role in Korean society especially for the poor.

On the question of the identity of *Minjung* theologians, and therefore of *Minjung* theology itself, *Minjung* theologians did identify themselves with *minjung* by participating in sufferings with them. Many theologians went to prison and went through hardship. Because they identified with Jesus and the *minjung* in their theology, they suffered with the *minjung* and so the *Minjung* theologians, at least in the first generation in the 1970s, became *minjung*. Though they may not have come from a *minjung* background - in fact, most of them were intellectuals - they qualified as *Minjung* theologians in that they shared the experience of the poor. The leaders of the *minjung* church deliberately put themselves in a vulnerable situation and participated in the poverty and suffering of *minjung* and their theology was the outcome of their struggle against what they saw as an evil system. Therefore *Minjung* theology has a legitimate place in the life of Korean people as of the *minjung* and thus gives self-identity to the *minjung*.^[25]

However, when we come to the second generation in the 1980s, this claim is not so firmly founded. The issue for the former was mainly the socio-economic problem of poor workers and farmers, and for the latter it was political and ideological tensions in relation to democracy. At least the first generation had the "mass" of workers and farmers - the lower or middle class people - over against the employers and land owners, who are relatively small. But the second generation *Minjung* theologians had only minority support because they rather uncritically adopted Marxist-Lenin ideology in theologizing. Moreover they perceived *Minjung* theology as a protest ideology and so they rejected the present system and thereby also, wittingly or unwittingly, excluded those who supported the system. Particularly after the Kwangju massacre in 1980 by a military-backed government, *Minjung* theologians shifted their attention to ideological issues, taking a socialist-communist line, favouring North Korea, and confronting what they perceived as the illegitimate government of the South which was in association with the American imperialism. This made a large gap between *minjung* who were not prepared to be on the side of the

North and those who tried to integrate *Minjung* theology into their ideological combat.[26] They seemed to have misread the mind of the *minjung* and perhaps undermined the *minjung* by having a rather arrogant and dogmatic approach to complex ideological issues and by being naive about the reality of the North.[27]

The second question of the identity of the *minjung* is a more difficult one. The term *minjung*, which is Chinese word for ordinary people or citizens, is quite a new and unfamiliar one for contemporary South Koreans. This term was also often exploited by the South Korean government since the term has a similar nuance to the word used by North Koreans to describe the people - "Inmin". In addition, people find it difficult to identify themselves with this heavily loaded term without definite or immediate benefits to be associated with. In a rapidly changing society like contemporary Korea, people are not prepared to commit themselves to such a static concept as *minjung* and for the cause of the *minjung*, but in contrast, they rather wish to rise out of the *minjung*. [28] The fact that many articles were devoted to defining the *minjung* indicates that there have been difficulties of identifying this term with a concrete and tangible group unlike Black theology, Feminist theology and Dalit theology.

Nevertheless, in spite of these problems, *Minjung* theology has made a vital contribution to the identity of the *minjung* and challenged them to stand and speak. Though Latin American liberation theology made the point that the poor and oppressed are the ones who need to be liberated, *minjung* theology further asserts that the *minjung* are the subjects of this liberation as well as the subjects of the history and culture of their particular contexts. This was expressed as in the relationship between Jesus and the *minjung*:

Jesus proclaims the coming of God's Kingdom. He stands with the *Minjung*, and promises them the future of God... God's will is to side with the *Minjung* completely and unconditionally. This notion was not comprehensive within the framework of established ethics, cult, and laws. God's will is revealed in the event of Jesus being with them in which he loves the *Minjung*. [29]

This led to the idea of Jesus as the *minjung* and the *minjung* as Jesus - the former is acceptable to most theologians but the latter is a problem for many theologians. This is because the question of the identity of the *minjung* depends on ontological questions of who the *minjung* are in relation to "the other" and ideological division of "us and them". But *minjung* theologians, particularly the third generation theologians of 1990s, asserted that the *minjung* has to be understood as an experiential entity identified with the event of Jesus in his life and words, especially of the Cross. The *minjung* as Jesus does not mean for

them an ontological identification, but that by participating in the life and death of Jesus, the *minjung* are part of the Jesus event and in that sense the *minjung* are Jesus. The *minjung* as Jesus does not mean that they are equal with him in an ontological sense, but that they are experiencing the Jesus event and therefore able to being in Jesus and being part of his mission in this world. This has further consequences that being *minjung* requires being in Christ for others - it is being part of God's transformation for others.[\[30\]](#)

The focus of the *minjung* movement has been twofold: to safeguard the rights of the poor, weak and oppressed, and to change the society to a better system to protect them. It is for the *minjung* only. But being part of the Jesus event requires the *minjung* to serve others and this could be the way forward for *minjung* theology in the future. There are already discussions of *minjung* theologies (plural) in context of the globalisation and ecological crisis. In particular, there are deep concern for foreign factory workers in Korea who are exploited and mistreated by employers as well as the Korean *minjung* themselves. Perhaps identifying the *minjung* is the most difficult and important question for the future of *Minjung* theology and this should be an on-going search. On the whole, *Minjung* theology has been a major instrument of the *minjung*, or civil movement that challenged both the church and society to deal with the problems of socio-economic and political injustice, brought democracy in Korea in the late 1980s, and certainly played a "prophetic" role in Korean history.

Kibock sinang and *Minjung* theology can be described as two major contextual theologies intended to address the problems of the poor. The former integrates traditional religiosity and Christian teaching on blessing to address the problem of the poverty, and the latter employs socio-political tools developed in the west and articulated in Latin America to meet the question of injustice. *Kibock sinang* focuses on the individual poor and helped people in the context of the post-war Korea to hope for material blessings by committing themselves to God, who is understood as being ready to bless his people. *Minjung* theology was formulated in the 1970s as a protest theology against both conservative evangelical theologies and *kibock sinang* on the one hand and against the unjust system of modern and divided Korea on the other. These two approaches are the product of the search for an answer to a particular problem in a particular time and place, therefore they have their limits. But with all their weaknesses, these two approaches are the outcome of sincere quest to solve what is perhaps the most difficult problem for the Christian church: the problem of poverty and injustice.

Both theological struggles to answer the Korean problems of poverty and socio-political injustice have made a significant impact on Korean churches and society. However, the churches particularly associated with each movement - the Pentecostal churches and *minjung* churches - are not in the main stream of Korean Christianity. The vast majority of the Korean churches are conservative evangelical churches, emphasising revival, personal experience, eschatological hope, exclusive truth in Christ and the numerical growth of the church. On the surface, they reject the two movements we have discussed, but in reality the life and practice of ordinary Christians is deeply influenced by these two movements. So, in the case of the Korean church, Christian theology and thinking have permeated into the society and have been instrumental in bringing hope and justice in the context of poverty and injustice. This legacy may arguably be more important for Christian witness in Korea than the spectacular growth in numbers of Christians.

III. The Indian case: In Search for a Mission Ecclesiology in India

One of the major concerns of Indian politics, economy, society and religion is the problem of communalism or sectarianism. The complexity of communal relationships in India is enriching and beautiful and at the same time communalism's destructive power and divisiveness has been demonstrated among the people of India. Indian Christians have been wrestling with the question of what being a Christian and being church in the midst of Hindu-dominated society means. The topic of ecclesiology rose to prominence in Indian Christian theology particularly during the second half of the twentieth century as the strength of Hindu opposition to Christianity became evident in the various attempts to regulate conversion in both central and local states. These provoked strong reactions from Christians on the basis of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Indian Constitution and the conviction that conversion was at the heart of Christian belief and practice. However, this opposition to conversion also forced Christian theologians to re-think the idea of the church. As a result, there have been several distinctive theological models for dealing with the problem and I shall discuss the two of them, the kingdom model and the secular model in this paper.

1. Kingdom model: the "raw fact of Christ", 1930-40s>

The meaning and practice of the traditional form of the church was first collectively challenged by the "Rethinking Group" of Madras. They recognised the problem of the politicisation of mass conversion and raised concern over the Christian community being confined to the church, which they saw as a Western product. They regarded the traditional missionaries' emphasis on

conversion to the Christian community - and therefore change of religious affiliation by joining the church - as the root cause of the problem in Christian mission. And they insisted that there must be an alternative model and goal for Christian mission, that is either creating an Indian church, radically different from the traditional church structure, or seeking the kingdom of God and rejecting any form of church.

The "Rethinking Group" produced a book, *Rethinking Christianity in India*, just before the Conference of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras in 1938.^[31] The book was interpreted by many authors as a response to Kraemer's understanding of theology of religions, but careful examination of the book informs us differently. It appears that the authors' concern was not necessarily theology of religions, but the practical problem of the Indian church in relation to the contemporary debate on mass conversion - the problem of proselytism, the need for integration of the Hindu and Christian communities, the problem of Christian communalism, and the search for an alternative model for Christian mission.^[32]

In his article on "the Church and the Indian Christian", Pandipeddi Chenchiah questioned the choice of the church as the central theme of the Conference. He asked openly "by what right Christendom has all but jettisoned the kingdom of God which occupies so central a place in the message of Jesus and substituted in its place the Church of which the Master said so little."^[33] Furthermore, in his article, "Jesus and Non-Christian Faiths", he raised the question, "why should Hindu converts join the Church?" He criticised the missionaries' dogmatic view and insisted on the necessity of continuity in the life of Indian Christians in a Hindu context.^[34] He went on to discuss the questions, which Kraemer addressed concerning the church, the message and the missionary mandate. First, on the issue of the church, Chenchiah saw that the problem of the church in India was that it had become "the centre of influence, the source of salvation, the object of loyalty" and it was "identified with the core and acquired as it were the same value as the original nucleus". He rejected institutional Christianity by separating Christ from Christianity, and seeking what he called the "Raw Fact of Christ". His strongest criticism was that "the Church with all its claims cannot lead us to the Christ"; "the Church detracts our attention from the central fact"; "the Church has never been the cradle of new life", but instead "accommodator to the dominant forces of the old life."^[35] In the church's place, he insisted, Indian Christianity needs, "Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God".^[36]

Second, regarding the missionary mandate, he argued that there are two obstacles to mission in India - communalism and the church, and he hoped that

eventually the "social intolerance of the Hindu and excessive zeal of the missionary may disappear in India". In order to achieve this, he argued that conversion should be separated from church membership. That is, he saw conversion as a change of life without insisting on affiliation to the church because he viewed mission as a "movement in the Hindu social fold" rather than the creation of "a solid society outside". He strongly objected to either individual or mass conversion to the Christian church, but supported a Christian mission in India that was "prepared to see the gradual infusion of Hinduism by Christian ideals and above all Christian life" by creating "a powerful Christian atmosphere within Hinduism". He saw the heart of Christian mission as the creation of "new life" as demonstrated in the life of Jesus, which he believed was able to fulfil the "unrealised longing for a life here" of the Hindus".[\[37\]](#)

In similar vein, Vengal Chakkarai, another key figure in the "Rethinking group", asserted that the church had arisen out of the historical setting of Western Christianity and that Indian Christians are not obliged to follow its pattern. Whatever the positive elements of the church might be, they cannot be included in the "revelation of Christ Himself" since they are not eternal and not of "divine essence". Therefore the church should be inspiration not institution, and the institutionalised church, for Chakkarai, is "the tents put up by our Western friends; but they can never be our permanent habitation". Instead, he emphasised that Indian Christians should seek the kingdom of God which the Lord "announced and for which He gave His life".[\[38\]](#)

The theological question of the kingdom of God and the church is important when it comes to missionary endeavour because it relates to the practical life of the converts in their relationship with their past religious experiences and the wider community. The "Rethinking Group" represented Christians of a higher caste background who regarded the Hindu tradition as part of their heritage, and did not wish to be excluded from the wider Hindu society. They also saw themselves as sharing a common identity with Hindus in their search for the welfare of India and its people in a time of national struggle against colonial rule. These approaches are recurring themes of Indian theologians, and they arise out of their sincere attempt to solve the problems of communalism and proselytism, for which they saw the church in its western pattern and theology as responsible. However, their arguments need to be examined in the light of the critique from the Christians of a lower caste background. Just before the Tambaram Conference, the Christians of the Scheduled Castes issued a statement addressed to the conference that strongly accused the church of caste discrimination, saying that "untouchability, and even inapproachability is still practiced against us by the 'advanced castes' still within the Church even after

we have been thoroughly Christianised".^[39]The problem seen by these Christians was not the western form of the church, but that the Christian community tolerated the Indian problem of caste discrimination, which they saw as contradictory to the gospel of Christ. The solution to the problem, for them, did not lie in creating an Indian church separate from wider Christian traditions, nor in seeking the alternative model of the kingdom of God, but rather they wished to see the kingdom values of equality and dignity manifested *within* the existing Indian churches.

The debate at Tambaram was the result of a painstaking search to answer the question of what means to be Christian in their seeking to follow Christ who preached the kingdom of God and also shared his life with the community of believers. What is the place of the church and the kingdom of God in Christian mission? The Christian church, in spite of its weaknesses, or rather because of its weaknesses can bear witness to Christ, and continue to be a place for worship and sharing. The church as a visible community, rather than a hindrance, can make an impact on the wider community, and more importantly, the Christian community need not be understood merely in a functional way, but as the body of Christ and therefore of the essence of the gospel. On the other hand, the church constantly needs to be shaped and challenged by the kingdom perspective that there is a hope in Christ beyond the boundaries of the exclusive visible community of believers. The kingdom of God is not limited by historical and cultural traditions of religious affiliation, but open to the possibilities in Christ who has called believers to be part of his on-going "new creation".

2. Secular model: "Christ-centred secular fellowship", 1960-70s

Toward and after Independence, the concern of Indian Protestant theologians was more to do with the relationship between the Christian community and the Hindu community, particularly the question of whether converts should leave the Hindu community and join the Christian community, and what joining the church entailed. The Protestant debate on conversion in the 1960s and the early 1970s was a part of the wider Christian discussion in the face of the political and social revolutions taking place in many parts of the world and urgent calls for the church to take part in the struggle for humanisation. There was a conscious shift of emphasis in mission from evangelism (leading to conversion) toward social involvement. In India Christian theologians faced increasing challenges from the Hindu nationalist movement, especially as it started to gain support from certain states and pressured the central government for the rights of Hindus over against other minority communities. In search of a solution, some Indian Protestant theologians suggested that the Christian community in

India should be part of the wider Hindu community in an apparently rapidly secularising India, for they believed that not only was secularisation an inevitable process of modernity but also that it would gradually overcome communal tensions. They insisted that a "point of contact" between the Christian community and the Hindu community must be established so that Hindus would not need to convert to the Christian community. This point of contact must be located inside the wider Hindu community since the Christian community was either a stumbling block in this process, or an entity that naturally transcended religious divides to produce a secular fellowship.

At the Nasrapur Consultation in 1966, M.M. Thomas who was a leading theologian on the issue of ecclesiology, developed his thoughts on conversion and raised the question of the "form" of the Christian community within the human community.^[40] He argued that the most urgent task for contemporary Christian mission is to participate in the people's struggle for the "realisation of humanity" rather than following the traditional missionary task of conversion. He further insisted that the secular fellowship was the "point of contact" and could be in "partnership in the struggle" and called on the church to break the communal structure and build up a new partnership of Christians and non-Christians - the "human *koinonia*". Thomas, reflecting on the Uppsala Assembly of the WCC (1968), published a booklet, *Salvation and Humanisation* (1971), which was the outcome of his search for the "point of contact", and perhaps represents his most mature thinking on the issue,^[41] but it brought about a direct confrontation with Lesslie Newbigin.^[42] Thomas insisted that the mission of the church must take into account the "religious and secular movements which express men's search for the spiritual foundations for a fuller and richer human life" in the present "revolutionary" period.^[43] In his critique of dichotomic approaches that separated salvation and humanisation - concepts he saw as "integrally related" - he alleged the main problems of Indian Christianity were "pietistic individualism", which emphasised dogmatic belief and the inner experience of conversion, and the communal tendency of the Christian community, which isolated and closed off Christians from others.^[44] He then introduced the concept of the "Christ-centred secular fellowship outside the Church", a *koinonia* which was the "manifestation of the new reality of the Kingdom at work in the world of men in world history". He perceived that the Indian understanding of Jesus Christ was as the "Divine Head of Humanity" through whom the Holy Spirit brings all men into sonship of the Father, ultimately uniting all their struggles for humanisation. Therefore, "[s]alvation itself could be defined as humanisation in a total and eschatological sense".^[45]

In order to cultivate the fellowship or *koinonia*, overcoming the "form" of the church was of vital importance for Thomas. Therefore he stressed that the church must "move away from being a communal entity to become an open fellowship able to witness, in all religious and secular communities, to Christ as the bearer of both true human life and salvation".^[46]As a result, he envisaged a "new pattern of combining Christian self-identity and secular solidarity with all men".^[47]Therefore, he insisted that "the Church must be bearer of Christ in all Indian communities" as it "extends" into both religious and secular society, and saw this as the "only way in which the form of church life in India could be renewed".^[48]Thomas rejected a Christian mission of calling people to convert to Christianity and also saw the limitations of attempting a synthesis by finding a meeting a point between and within Christianity and Hinduism. He believed that, by secularising itself, Christianity could meet the needs of the people in India, which were caused by the rapid secularisation of Hinduism. The main concern for Thomas was not the conversion of individual Hindus to Christianity nor creating a "Hindu Christianity" but rather a perceived need for a conversion of both Christian and Hindu faiths into the common ground which he saw as a "human *koinonia*" or as he later called it, "the Christ-centred secular fellowship" outside the church.

It is important to notice that for Thomas, "secular fellowship" does not mean making the gospel secular. What he intended was not for Christians to lose the religious or spiritual aspect of the gospel, nor for Christianity to be absorbed into Hindu religion but for the secularisation of the Christian community in order to bridge the gap with the wider Hindu community and identify with Hindus. Secular for him meant the Christian community becoming "truly 'religious' without being 'communal'".^[49]Thomas wanted to overcome the problem of the Christian community becoming more and more isolated from the main community in India, especially because of the insistence on a radical discontinuity between the gospel and Hindu religion through the means of conversion. This led to the exclusion of Christians by the Hindu majority as "outcastes", which resulted in the fact that the Christian community was no longer able to make an impact on Hindu society - as was plain especially in the case of the Hindu personal laws. He was confident that secularism would override religious differences and shatter the values which Christianity and Hinduism held as religions, but that the "human *koinonia*" would remain as the meeting-point and that since Christ is in all, he is to be found there too.

The struggle of Indian theologians was to find a common identity as Indians and yet keep a self-identity as Christians within the dominant Hindu community. The theological problem was the relationship of the Hindu and

Christian communities and the place of individual Christians in the Hindu context. The "Christ-centred secular fellowship" approach relies on the theological presupposition that the spiritual experience of God can be separated from the act of change of religious affiliation, in other words, the inner commitment to Christ need not extend to sociological change for an individual. However, in the case of independent India, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, Hindus increasingly called for total allegiance from the religious minorities to a common Hindu identity. This necessitated giving up not only their self-identity as a community but also their individual faith as Christians.

The above two approaches are focussed on the *identity* of the church and individual Christians in India. The arrival of the Protestant missionaries and colonial advancement to India came together and India underwent modernisation through these encounters. Though Western science, technology and philosophy was absorbed into Indian society and became part of it, the socio-cultural and religious aspects of Indian life remain traditional, partly because of Indian perception of superiority of these and partly because of their intimate nature and the consequences of the change in daily life. Indians - particularly Hindus - reject the Western form of the church and, as a consequence, the Christians struggle to find alternative models for church in India. Indian theologians who rejected the "modern" form of the church and looked for the "raw fact of Christ" advocated the "Indian" church or "Christian ashram".

While secularisation caused European churches to decline, the Indian Christian response to secularisation is quite the opposite. Indian secularisation is different from European concept of privatisation of religious belief and practice and from American concept of separation of the church and the state, it is more to do with the state giving equal distance or treatment to religious communities and easing the rigid divisions between them. Thomas and others envisaged that the Christian gospel would permeate the society without forming a rigid Christian community, the church. Though the number of Christians may not increase, the influence of Christians, particularly in education and social work in the Indian society is ever present and this makes Christianity credible and attractive to non-Christians. It is a vital aspect of witnessing to Christ and in Hindu-dominated India, with restrictions on conversion, it may be the only viable model.

IV. Implications for Christian Mission - Identity and Mission of the Church

I have discussed Christianity in the contexts of South Korea and India, focussing not on sociological phenomena but on theological approaches to church and society. Though these approaches have their limitations and problems, they represent sincere searches for the answer to the problems of mission and the church. I would argue that the churches in these countries have made an impact on society not because of their growth in numbers but because of Christian principles, initiated by the church, which shaped the direction of the church and in many cases of the whole society. In this regard, talking about the decline of church attendance may not be as important as formulating and redefining the identity and mission of the church. The place of the church and its role in society may not depend on its size but on its contribution to the society and its people.

Davie has made significant contributions to identifying and mapping the situation of contemporary Christianity in Europe to the extent that Europe is exceptional, both in terms of its secularisation and the decline of Christianity and in fact religiosity as a whole. But, as her table on "religious belief" shows, there is still a remarkably high percentage of people who are aware of the presence of God and of other faith matters. In foreseeable future it is unlikely that the statistics of church attendance will be raised and there is no reason for the religious belief to decrease rapidly. Obviously Christian theology needs to deal with this gap between believing and belonging. Europe has developed theologies which have served the need of European context and have affected the life of its people for centuries. Furthermore, they have influenced the religious quest of the rest of the world a great deal. Perhaps the theologies developed in Asia, for example, could in turn shape the churches in Europe.

What the church in Europe needs is to formulate and articulate theologies to deal with the contemporary European religious problem - the rapid secularisation and lack of church attendance. Here Indian and Korean examples might help in stimulating our attempt to seek ways to engage in Europe. My concern is that European exceptionalism should not turn into European isolationism. There is a common basis in humanity and in theology for global interaction of churches and mission cannot be bounded by the geographical boundaries of this continent. Though the differences and distinctive natures of Christian religious patterns remain, nevertheless the Christian churches share certain common values and experience and, in my opinion, the extent of this is far greater than the area covered by the exceptions.

As I indicated at the beginning, the question of Christianity in Europe lies, I believe, in two aspects of the church. First, the identity of the church and of individual Christians in contemporary Europe: Do we define Christianity or Christians by their attendance at a particular church? What do we mean by being Christian or church? Indian theologians wrestle with the meaning of being a minority in society and, though their theological search is unique to Indian context, the implications of their theological thinking is important to consider. In the case of the kingdom model, the idea of the ashram is very much promoted in Indian Christianity and, though the numbers are not great, the perception of integration into Indian religious patterns and working within the socio-cultural framework is vital to Christian mission in India. The Christ-centred secular fellowship model is trying to promote the idea that, rather than being confined by the church and therefore losing influence on society, believers are encouraged to be in Hindu society and permeate it with Christian values. These models could be helpful in the radical reworking of ecclesiology in Europe that is needed in order to form an integrated Christianity. The particular forms of Christianity or church, such as Pentecostalism in Latin America or in Asia, cannot be just imported into Europe as they are, as Davie rightly suggests. They need to be found in European soil to meet the particular need of the particular time. I see this consultation as a part of an attempt to redefine the identity of the church in modern and secularised Europe by finding creative ways of being church.

Second, the *mission* of the church in the society: What is the role of the church in contemporary Europe? What is the function of the church in secular and post-modern Europe? What are the problems which the church needs to attend to? Poverty and social injustice, which were the main problems for the church in Korea, are not great issues in Europe nor are the particular approaches - *kibock sinang* and *Minjung* theology - prevalent here. Nevertheless the active engagement of the Christian church in the problems of the people is vital for the mission of the Christian church in Europe. The problems for Korean society became opportunities for the church as they took up the challenge to bring hope and justice. Davie points out that Europeans see the church as "public utilities" rather than competing firms (44) and that, particularly in the case of English, there is strong connection between religion and respectability. This means the church can still play an active role in society without being intimidated by secularists' critique of the church. The most damaging effect of the European version of secularisation is the deprivation or lack of awareness of spirituality in the life of the people. We may say that they are "poor in spirit" - a very European version of poverty. In the word of William Meissner:

Man needs to create, to shape and transform his environment, find vehicles for expressing his inner life, or rather the constant commerce between the ongoing worlds of his external experience and his inner psychic reality... It is through illusion, then that the human spirit is nourished... The man without imagination, without the capacity for play or for creative illusion, is condemned to a sterile world of harsh facts without color or variety, without the continual enrichment of man's creative capacities...[\[50\]](#)

The church exists in Europe to bring hope in the midst of these "harsh facts without color" and the church is called to respond and provide this colour in the life of the people.

Third, the relations between the churches in Europe and the rest of the world: Have the European churches exhausted what they have to contribute to the rest of the world? Both Grace Davie and David Martin (and to certain extent, Paul Freston) emphasise the exciting phenomena of churches in the non-European world, and come to the conclusion that Europe is exceptional. Andrew Walls even points out a profound shift in recent Christian history from Europe to the rest of the world:

It is nothing less than a complete change in the centre of gravity of Christianity, so that the heartlands of the Church are no longer in Europe, decreasingly in North America, but in Latin America, in certain parts of Asia...in Africa.[\[51\]](#)

However, this does not, I believe, mean that now there is no role for European churches to play in the rest of the world, or that the Christians in Europe should only take care of their home situations. The identity and mission of the church need to be understood in the context of global Christianity as the body of Christ or household of God. As there is no doubt that the churches in Europe have made vital contributions to the Christianity in the rest of the world, so these contributions should continue regardless of changes in the situation in Europe. The churches in the rest of the world are grateful for what the European churches have offered to their churches and societies, and this cannot just be dismissed as colonial advancement or the church expansion. At the same time we rejoice at the rise of non-European Christianity and their contributions to their counterpart in Europe. European churches are finding it hard to get used to the situation of being a minority in society - but this experience is not unusual in the history of non-European Christianity and the lessons can be drawn for Europeans. The lessons learnt by the European churches through their long traditions are important to remember because, though the European pattern of religious behaviour and of secularisation may not be repeated in the same way, most of European experience is not exclusive to Europe and the churches in

other parts of the world may still find a great deal of commonality with their situation and historical instances from which to draw lessons. In the household of God and in globalised world, we all are inter-dependent and are influenced by one another, and perhaps this is the most exciting aspect of the church's new identity and mission.

Notes:

[1] Byron Shafer, "Introduction" in Byron Shafer (ed), *Is America Different? : A New Look at American Exceptionalism* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1991), vi.

[2] K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953), 454-6.

[3] The term "prosperity gospel or teaching" is often associated with some contemporary American evangelists who combine the social psychology of positive thinking with Christian ethics and practice. But in the case of Korea, what is known as "kibock sinang" has roots in Christian revival movements and in shamanism, the traditional religiosity of the Korean people. This term, literally translated as "faith of seeking blessings" has very negative meaning in Korea.

[4] The most prominent revival took place in 1907 in Pyeung Yang, now the capital of North Korea. The great revival, known as the Korean Pentecost, broke out during the Annual Ten-day Bible Study Conference.

[5] See Min Kyeung Bae, *Korean Christianity and Reunification Movement* (Seoul: Korean Institute of Church History, 2001), 59-114.

[6] See Min Kyeung Bae, *Korean Christianity and Reunification Movement* (Seoul: Korean Institute of Church History, 2001), 59-114.

[7] The most notable cases were Moon Sun-Myueng's Unification Church established in 1954, which continues to extend its membership especially among the poor, and Park Tae-Sun's "Evangelism Hall", which starting in 1955, established several "Sin-ang-chon" or faith communities, which were self-reliant economic and religious communities.

[8] The official web site of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, www://english.fgtv.com/yoido/main.asp.

[9] The three-fold blessing, the blessing of the Spirit, the soul and the body, has been dominant theme for the message of Pastor Cho particularly in his emphasis on "our general well-being. He uses "positive thinking" terminology such as "change your thought patterns". He utilizes the law of blessing (the law of tithes; the law of sowing and reaping; the law of reverberation) and expects blessing from God as prerequisite to receive blessing from God. This three-fold blessing is based on the idea that God is a good God who is ever ready to bless those who are coming to him with expectation. See the section on "Full Gospel Theology" in www://english.fgtv.com/Gospel/main.asp. See Younggi Cho, *Threefold Blessing* (Youngsan Publications: Seoul, 1977); *The Fourth Dimension* (Seoul: Seoul Word Publications, 1996). For more detailed studies on theology of Cho and of Yoido Full Gospel Church, see *The Holy Spirit and Church: A Collection of Scholarly Papers in Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Dr. Younggi Cho's Ministry Vol 1 & 2* (Seoul: Seoul Word Publications, 1996); *The Faith and Theology of Yoido Full Gospel Church* (Seoul: Seoul Books, 1993). See also the papers presented at 2002 Young San International Theological Symposium (26-27 September 2002).

[10] Charles Elliott, *Sword and Spirit: Christianity in a Divided World* (London: BBC Books), 20-21.

[11] See Kim Byeung-Seo, "Well Established Kibock sinang" in *Sinang Saekae* (April 1989), 34-39; Kim Eun-Hong, "Overcoming Family Based Kibock sinang" in *Kidockyo Sasang* (March 2000), 138-142; Kang Chun-Mo, "Korean Church under Kibock sinang" in *Pulbit Mockhea* (September 1996), 15-31; Kang Seung-Jae, "Critique on Kibock sinang" in *Pulbit Mockhea* (March 1990), 82-98; Lee Moon-Jang, "What about Kibock sinang of the Koreans?" in *Mockhea ywa Sinhack* (December 1999), 52-59; Kim Jin-Hong, "The Shadow of Kibock sinang in the Church", *ibid.*, 60-66; Min Jong-Ki, "Let Us Remove Kibock sinang from the Church", *ibid.*, 67-73; Kim Young Jae, "The Relationship Between Kibock sinang of the Korean Church and the Church Growth", *ibid.*, 74-78; Song Jae-Keun, "The Danger of Kibock sinang from the Perspective of Covenant Theology", *ibid.*, 79-91; Jung Hoon-Taek, "The "Blessed" in the New Testament", *ibid.*, 92-104.

[12] The typical biblical verses are: Deuteronomy 28: 1-2, "if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you..."; Malachi 3:10-12, "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you

an overflowing blessing"; Luke 6:38, "give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back"; 3 John v2, "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well".

[13] Yoo Dong-Sik, *The Mineral Vein of Korean Theology* (Seoul: Jun Mang Sa, 1984), 14-20.

[14] For example, see http://yfgc.fgtv.com/Y_5/WY_514_1.htm (in Korean).

[15] Kim Joon-Gon, "Korea's Total Evangelization Movement" in Ro Bong-Rin & Marlin L. Nelson (eds), *Korean Church Growth Explosion* (Word of Life Press: Seoul, 1983), 23.

[16] Elliott, *Sword and Spirit*, 38.

[17] In Yoo Dong-Sik, *The Mineral Vein of Korean Theology*, 258-9.

[18] Suh Nam-Dong, "Toward a Theology of Han" in Kim Yong Bock (ed), *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 51-65.

[23] Ahn Byeung-Moo, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, (Seoul: Korea Institute of Theology, 1990), 31-37..

[20] Ahn, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, 87-128

[21] Ahn, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, 156-185.

[22] In Suh Nam-Dong, "Toward a Theology of Han", 64.

[23] "21st Century and Minjung Theology", *Shinhack Sasang* (Summer 2000), 5-29.

[24] See Moon Dong-Hwan, "21st Century and Minjung Theology", *Shinhack Sasang* (Summer 2000), 30-54; Na Young-Hwan, "Minjung Theology from the Evangelical Perspective", *Mockhea ywa Sinhack* (Aug 1992), 40-50.

[25] Baek Nak-Chung, "Who are Minjung?" in *Essays on Minjung* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1984), 13-28.

[26] Kim Sun-Jae, "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow of Minjung Theology", *Shinhack Sasang* (Spring 1998), 8-9.

[27] See Kim Jin-Ho & Lee Sook-jin, "A Retrospect and Prospect on the Korean Modernity and Minjung Theology", *The Journal of theologies and Cultures in Asia* (Feb 2002), 157-175.

[28] Ham Seok-Hun, who is not regarded as a minjung theologian, but has contributed significantly in this discussion introduced different term, "Ssi-al", a made up Korean word to mean people taken from the Korean word, "seed". Though this term has had rather limited usage, it represents an attempt to extend the meaning of minjung - Ham Seok-Heon, "The True Meaning of Ssi-al" in NCC (ed), *Minjung and Korean Theology* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), 9-13; Park Sung-Jun, "Reflection on Minjung Theology in the Context of 21st Century", *Shinhack Sasang* (Summer 2000), 70-89.

[29] Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and Minjung" in Kim Yong Bock (ed), *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983) 138-151. He further explained the meaning of Minjung as ochlos in Mark's gospel: "The ochlos are feared by the unjust and powerful, but they are not organised into as power bloc; rather, they should be regarded existentially as a crowd. They are minjung not because they have a common destiny, but simply because they are alienated, dispossessed, and powerless".

[30] See Choi Hyeung-Mook, *Some Issues of Minjung Theology in 1990s*, *Sidae ywa Minjung Theology* (1998), 345-369.

[31] D.M. Devasahyam & A.N. Sunarisanam (eds), *Rethinking Christianity in India* (Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938).

[32] When we read the whole book, the articles are heavily concentrated on the Church - out of 13 articles, more than 7 articles are dealing with the Church or the Christian community in India.

[33] P. Chenchiah, "The Church and the Indian Christian" in Devasahyam & Sunarisanam (eds), *Rethinking...*, 81-82.

[34] P. Chenchiah, "Jesus and Non-Christian Faiths" in Devasahyam & Sunarisanam (eds), *Rethinking...*, 47-49

[35] Chenchiah, "Jesus and Non-Christian Faiths", 53-62.

[36] Chenchiah, "The Church and the Indian Christian", 99.

[37] Chenchiah, "The Christian Message...", 44-52.

[38] Chenchiah, "The Christian Message...", 119-123.

[39] *Indian Social Reformer*, 24 Dec 1938

[40] M.M. Thomas, "The Struggle for Human Dignity as a Preparation for the Gospel", NCCR LXXXVI/9 (Sep 1966), 356-59.

[41] M.M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation: Some Critical Issues of the Theology of Mission in Contemporary India* (Madras: CLS, 1971).

[42] The discussion first started when Newbigin made his critique on Thomas' comments during his 1965 debate with Berkhof - see Newbigin, "The Call to Mission - A Call to Unity?" in *The Church Crossing Frontiers*, (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1969), 254-65. In *Salvation and Humanisation*, Thomas was responding to Newbigin's comments. After its publication, Newbigin wrote a review of Thomas' booklet - Lesslie Newbigin, "Salvation and Humanisation - Book Review", R&S XVIII/1 (Mar 1971), 71-80. The ensuing correspondence between Thomas and Newbigin from October to December 1971 was published as "Baptism, the Church and Koinonia", R&S XIX/1 (Mar 1972), 69-90.

[43] Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 1-4.

[44] Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 4-12.

[45] Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 12-9.

[46] Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 40-1.

[47] Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 60.

[48] Thomas in "Baptism", 74.

[49] Thomas in "Baptism", 88.

[50] W.W. Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984), 177.

[51] Andrew Walls, "Toward an Understanding of Africa's Place in Christian History" in J.S. Pobee (ed), *Religion in a Pluralistic Society* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 180.
