

**A Paper Proposal for
The Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society
"John Wesley for Reconciliation in Korea:
A Korean's Missiological Hermeneutics of Wesley"**

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On Myself: I have been a member of the Wesleyan Theological Society since 1997. I have written two graduation theses, focused on Wesley Studies, for Th.M. and M.T.S. degrees: "The Comparison between John Wesley's and Jeong Kyong-Ok's Doctrine Concerning Sanctification" & "John Wesley and the 'Via Media.'" I have just finished my course work for a Ph.D. in intercultural studies at Asbury Theological Seminary. My dissertation topic is "Wesley and Contextualization."

On My Paper: For the first time in Korean history, a Korean summit was held in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, last June 2,000. Reconciliation between the two Koreas is in progress. However, the reconciliation process in South Korea has to move in two directions. One direction of reconciliation is between the South Korean people and North Korean people. The other direction is among the South Korean people themselves. In his article in *Missiology* "From Tribal Identity to Solidarity of Others: Theological Challenges of a Divided Korea," Anselm Kyongsuk Min points out, "Korea is a divided nation not only between North and South, but also between classes, genders, regions, and religions" (1999:333). Min asks:

Are there any specifically Christian resources to be retrieved in the daunting task of a national conversion from tribalism to solidarity of Others? Are there Christian symbols that can express at once the many sufferings of exclusion and oppression; the hope of inclusion and liberation from the tyranny of the system of tribal identity; solidarity of all humanity in their diversity, in their suffering and victory in the struggle for solidarity, and the grace to embrace the Other and Other? (1999:340)

Min then suggests the triune God as the best Christian resource. I, however, would like to add John Wesley's contextualization to the triune God as a good resource for reconciliation of Koreans. John Wesley's spirit of tolerance, conjunctive theological tendency, and grassroots ministries are good resolutions for Korean Christians who suffer from various divisions. In my paper, I would like to concentrate on the missiological values of Wesley's "both/and" approach in the "divided" Korean context.

True reconciliation occurs when both sides of a conflict feel that they are in winning positions. Making a win/win situation is a starting point of true reconciliation. Mutual interests should be felt among Koreans. I believe that Wesley's theology and ministry is helpful in finding the answer.

As a result of Westernization which is largely related to Western missionaries in Korea, many

Koreans lost their holistic worldview. Recovering the Far East Asian heritage and Wesleyan heritage is needed for Koreans. The more I study Wesley's contextualization the more I have confidence that Far East Asians' way of thinking fits Wesley and is useful in mission.

The Korean context demands a new ideology for reconciliation. I believe that Wesley studies can give good answers for today's Korean Christians. Finding links between Chinese classics, which form the Far East Asian worldview, and John Wesley's writings and life is my objective in this study. Without asking, I would not forget to apply these links to a Korean context because I believe that missiology is indeed a "practical divinity." What I, simultaneously a student of Wesley studies and a student of missiology, am trying to do is interpret Wesley through a missiological point of view. So, I would like to term my approach as "a Korean's missiological hermeneutics of Wesley."

The following is a part of my paper which I handed in to my mentor Howard A. Snyder, Ph.D., for my area studies. I hope that this portion of my former work is helpful in understanding my paper's direction.

To understand the concept of *Chung Yung* is to understand an important part of the Far East Asian mentality, I believe. What is *Chung Yung*? James Legge interprets, "The state of equilibrium and harmony" (1971:383). What is Confucius' answer? He articulates *Chung Yung* as follows:

He [Shun] took hold of their two extremes, *determined* the Mean, and employed it in *his government* of the people. (1971:388)

Therefore, the superior man cultivates *a friendly* harmony, without being weak.—How firm is he in his energy! He stands erect in the middle, without inclining to either side.—How firm is he in his energy! (1971:390)

Does Confucius' concept of *Chung Yung* fit the *via media* tradition of the Church of England? My answer is positively, Yes! One thing we should remember is that although *Chung Yung* and the *via media* can be a good window to see Wesley's theological tendency, there is a serious danger. The middle zone can be misused as a refuge by people who do nothing.

We can think of five types of people in terms of their involvement in evangelism and social responsibility. The first group Christians do neither evangelism nor social responsibility. Christianity becomes nominal religion. The second group Christians do only evangelism. Christianity loses its social status in a society. The third group Christians focus only on social responsibility. Christian church's numeral growth slows down. The fourth group Christians stand in between, do both duties, and see other Christians who belong to either one side as immature. Many Korean Christians see themselves in this category. There is a peril of joining into the first group Christians. Korean Christians serious problem is that there is no clear line in between the first group and the fourth group. Many first group Korean Christians believe that they belong to the fourth group. The fifth group Christians do both duties or one duty while seeing both sides as an inseparable one. Christians become kingdom people. Wesley's conjunctive tendency belongs to this category. I see Wesley's theological tendency as a ski slope. To be a good skier, one has to use both sides of the slope, especially when one skies down the steep slope. Using just the middle part of a ski slope is not good enough and even dangerous.

The fifth category can be found in a history of Chinese philosophy. The theory of the *Yin* and *Yang* and the theory of the *Li* and *Ch'i* are good sources for contextualization. Almost all Koreans are aware of the theory of the *Yin* and *Yang*, and many Koreans know the theory of the *Li* and *Ch'i* at least by its name, I believe. Yu-Lan Fung's *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* is a good guide book to understand these important concepts. According to Fung, the *Yin-Yang* school "represents a scientific tendency in the sense that it tried to give a positive interpretation to natural events in terms of solely of natural forces" (1948:130). The theory of the *Yin* and *Yang* try to explain the origin of the world:

The word *yang* originally meant sunshine, or what pertains to sunshine and light; that of *yin* meant the absence of sunshine, i.e., shadow and darkness. In later development, the *Yang* and *Yin* came to be regarded as two cosmic principles of forces, respectively representing masculinity, activity, heat, brightness, dryness, hardness, etc., for the *Yang*, and femininity, passivity, cold, darkness, wetness, softness, etc., for the *Yin*. Through the interaction of these two primary principles, all phenomena of the universe are produced. This concept has remained dominant in Chinese cosmological speculation down to recent times. . . . when an earthquake occurred in the year 780 B.C., a savant of the time explained: 'When the *Yang* is concealed and cannot come forth, and when the *Yin* is repressed and cannot issue forth, then there are earthquakes' (*Chou Yu*, I, 10.). Later, the theory of the *Yin* and *Yang* came to be connected primarily with the *Book of Changes*. (Fung 1948:138-39)

In his book *Explanation*, the first Neo-Confucian cosmological philosopher Chou Tun-yi (1017-73) speculates: "The Supreme Ultimate [*T'ai Chi*] through Movement produces the *Yang*. This Movement, having reached its limit, is followed by Quiescence, and by this Quiescence, it produces the *Yin*. When Quiescence has reached its limit, there is a return to Movement. Thus Movement and Quiescence, in alternation, become each the source of the other" (Fung 1948:269-70). The core of the *Yin-Yang* philosophy is that "the *Yang* is the principle that 'gives beginning' to things; the *Yin* is that which 'completes' them. Thus the process of the production of things by the *Yang* and *Yin* is completely analogous to that of the production of living beings by the male and female" (Fung 1948:142). If we think about the famous Christian dichotomy between evangelism and social responsibility in terms of the *Yin* and *Yang*, we could say that evangelism belongs to the *Yang* and social responsibility belongs to the *Yin*. Through the interaction of evangelism and social responsibility, a healthy Christian community can be produced. Evangelism and social responsibility "become each the source of the other."

The other dominant Chinese cosmology, the theory of *Li* and *Ch'i*, was well developed by Chu Hsi (1130-1200). Chu Hsi has been the dominant figure in Chinese thought through his commentaries of the Chinese Classics:

It is to be remembered that the Neo-Confucianists considered the *Confucian Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Chung Yung* or *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Ta Hsueh* or *Great Learning*, as the most important texts, which they grouped together, giving to them the collective title of the *Four Books*. . . . In 1313 Emperor Jen-tsung of the Yuan, the Mongol dynasty that succeeded the Sung, ordered that the *Four Books* should be the main texts used in the state examinations, and that their official interpretation should follow Chu Hsi's commentaries. The same governmental endorsement was given to

Chu His's commentaries on the other Classics; persons hoping for success in the examinations had to interpret these works in accordance with Chu's commentaries. This practice was continued throughout the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, until the abolition of the state examination system in 1905, when the government tried to introduce a modern education system. (Fung 1948:295)

Chu Hsi explains the theory of the *Li* and *Ch'i* as follows: "The *Li* is the *Tao* that pertains to 'what is above shapes,' and is the source from which all things are produced. The *Ch'i* is the material [literally, instrument] that pertains to 'what is within shapes,' and is the mean whereby things are produced" (Fung 1948:299). Chu Hsi combines the theory of the *Li* and *Ch'i* with the theory of the *Yin* and *Yang* as follows: "The *Li* of movement does not itself move, nor does the *Li* of quiescence itself rest, but as soon as the *Ch'i* 'receives' them, the later begins to move or rest. The *Ch'i* that moves is called the *Yang*; the *Ch'i* that rests is called the *Yin*" (Fung 1948:300). "Thus, according to Chu Hsi," Fung says, "the dualistic elements that are the fundamentals of the universe in Chinese cosmology are produced" (1948:300).

Can we apply this theory of the *Li* and *Ch'i* in the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility? I think so. I see evangelism as *Li* and social responsibility as *Ch'i*. Chu Hsi's following explanation of the relationship between *Li* and *Ch'i* is worth considering:

It seems to me that the *Ch'i* depends upon the *Li* for its operation. Thus when there is an agglomeration of *Ch'i*, the *Li* is also present within it. It is so, because the *Ch'i* has the capacity to condense and thus form things; but the *Li* lacks volition or plan, and has no creative power. . . . The *Li* constitutes only a pure, empty, and vast world, without shapes or traces, and so incapable of producing anything. But the *Ch'i* has the capacity to undergo fermentation and condensation, and thus bring things into existence. And yet, whenever the *Ch'i* exists, the *Li* is present within it. . . . there is no *Li* without *Ch'i* and no *Ch'i* without *Li*." (Fung 1948:299-300)

Evangelism must coexist with social responsibility. Evangelism and social responsibility complement one another like the *Yin* and *Yang*, and the *Li* and *Ch'i*. As we have seen the two dominant Chinese cosmologies are holistic.