

**Perspective of the Northeast Asian Mission  
from the Viewpoint of Pauline Theology: Focused on Christology**

Heon-Wook Park

Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, Professor of Practical Theology

Published in "Featured Article" of [www.GlobalMissiology.org](http://www.GlobalMissiology.org) July 2011

This paper was originally presented at the TCU/TEDS Conference on  
"Suffering and Hope in Jesus Christ: Christological Polarity and Religious Pluralism"  
at Tokyo Christian University, July 21-23, 2010

Coordinated by Harold Netland (TEDS) & Takanori Kobayashi (TCU)

## **PREFACE**

In the religiously pluralism came with globalization in our modern time. Following the trend of our time, there seems to be a search for a "theology of religions" by way of "paradigm shift: - from Christo-centrism to Theo-centrism. According the "Frankfurt Statement" which reflected Karl Barth's theology and its position, all religions are the attempt of human sin to rob God's revelation and salvation, and are unfaithful as godless, human affairs.<sup>1</sup> Therefore religious pluralists criticize Barthian Christo-centrism.

If we consider this, Barth's Christo-centric revelation idea means that there is an essential self assertion of Christianity, just as other religions have their own doctrines and the self assertions. And the revelation of Christ includes exclusiveness of salvation. However, this understanding has a weak point, i.e. Christianity shows no interest in other religions. Consequently, the problem of exclusiveness and universalism (in Christianity in general and in Barthian theology in particular) is to be solved.

## **I. CONTROVERSY OVER THE THEOLOGY OF RELIGION**

To solve this problem, some scholars advocate a theo-centrism. G. Rosenkranz, J. Hick, U. Schoen and P. F. Knitter are its representative scholars.<sup>2</sup> A Japanese religious philosopher who changed to the position of religious pluralism is Yagi Seiichi.<sup>3</sup> But the theo-centralism served to dissolve the identity of Christ into relativism and to shake the Trinitarian structure by the relativizing of Christ. On the other hand, Knitter insists that a dialog between religions should be based on personal religious experiences and a steadfast demand for truth. But it is particularity limited by relativism.

---

<sup>1</sup> K. Barth, *Kirchendogmatik(KD)*, I/2 Paragraph17,327, II/1 504; epd-Dokumentation 35/70, 3,5.

<sup>2</sup> G. Rosenkranz, *Der christliche Glaube angesichts der Weltreligion*, Berlin/München 1967; J. Hick, *Der Mythos vom fleischgewordenen Gott*, Gütersloh 1979; U. Schoen, *Das Ereignis und die Antworten. Auf der Suche nach einer Theologie der Religion heute*, Göttingen 1984; P. F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religion*, New York 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Yagi Seiichi, "Common Ground of Buddhism and Christianity", *Houzoukan*, 1975. Yagi Seiichi / Abe Masao, "Buddhism and Christianity-Ask for the dialog with Takizawa Katsumi-", *Sanichi Shobo*, 1981.

Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin considers and criticizes the modernistic dichotomy which is behind the pluralistic understanding of religion — namely, the distinction between science as fact and religion as value.

According to this distinction, modern people shut religion up into a domain of private taste and values. They separate religion from science which is said to deal with “fact” and to be an official, universal (general) sphere. So while science succeeded in dominating in our view of the world, religion was transformed to the idea related to a free market economy, as a free choice in a consumer society.<sup>4</sup>

However, even though religious pluralism could be criticized in such a way, a question of how theology with Christological concentration can really be related to other religions still rises among us. I think that the answer to this question could be derived from a viewpoint of the comprehensibility of Christ (such as K. Rahner) either the fundamental principle of Christ (such as P. Tillich), or from a viewpoint of synthetic perfection of religions in God’s future (such as W. Pannenberg). Moreover, the answer should be Trinitarianly given.

Christology as a main theme at this time cannot be cut off from ecclesiology and missiology. Of course this is also true in the Asian context. In other words, Christology could be productively discussed on the table of practical ecclesiology and missiology: namely, evangelism and the formation of the Body of Christ. Because we can positively consider a fundamental problem in the contact between revelation and religion, asking for what the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ means and what sort of horizon proclamation historically has had. If we try to discuss together suffering and hope in Christ from the viewpoint of “the Bible and Today,” we will also have to discuss Christology as connected with practical ecclesiology and missiology.

I will try to present a consideration of Christology from an Asian context. I will deal with this issue first theologically, second exegetically, and third missiologically.

## **II. CHRISTOLOGICAL AND PNEUMATOLOGICAL TRINITY**

### **1. Reinterpretation of Christology**

For several centuries, Western Christian missionaries came to Asian countries, where non-Christian, traditional world-religions were already rooted, and new native Christians as minorities in the mission-fields were faced from the beginning with a society of religious pluralism. This religious situation is quite different from Western Christian countries. Therefore, the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, Messiah raised a lot of tension and conflict and sometimes functioned as revolutionary powers — for instance, in Korea, China and the Philippines.

---

<sup>4</sup>Leslie Newbigin. “Foolish to the Greek” – The Gospel and Western Culture. 1986. Cf. D’Costa, Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered. New York 1990.

Anyway, because today's globalization lets people cross borders with dizzying frequency, the subject of peaceful coexistence and religious dialog among the mutually heterogeneous cultures and religions comes to the surface and requires a renewed theology of religion.

When we, from the position of Christianity, try to construct a new "theology of religion," how exclusive Christology should be considered becomes an issue. In this paper we will not sketch the opinions of W. Pannenberg and Tillich concerning it, but we do want to observe the view of K. Rahner and the Catholic Church as references.

The "Statement on The Relationship between Church and non-Christian Religions" in the Second Vatican Council provides a flexible Christian relationship with other religions. The Statement surely reflects Rahner's theological attempt which tries to avoid Christian exclusive thinking and regards other religions as tools of God's revelation and salvation. The Council grasps Jesus Christ as the "essential" and decisive foundation of salvation. This thinking coincides with "anonymous Christianity," to use Rahner's term. It presumes that Jesus Christ is the sole absolute norm of salvation. But it doesn't have an exclusive or specific character; rather, it is understood as the revelation of the ultimate, inclusive, and universal norm. So even if other religions do not consciously accept Christ, they fully need the inclusiveness in Christ. Whenever believers of other religions receive the grace through their own religion and respond to it, the grace of Christ is also effective for them. The responder is the anonymous Christian redeemed by Christ.<sup>5</sup>

This opinion met with much approval. Interestingly, the China Christian Council (中国基督教三自爱国运动委员会 . CCC) seems to accept this opinion. The CCC was founded in 1980 as an umbrella organization for all Protestant churches in the People's Republic of China with the bishop K. H. Ting (丁光训, 1915 – ) as its president. The CCC leads the Three-Self Patriotic Movement with the Communist State's ideology and obviously utilizes this opinion. Chinese Christians, including house churches, are now rapidly growing to the present to exceed 8 percent of whole population, over 1 billion 3 hundred million, in China. Bishop Ting did a lecture in England, entitled "Christ of the Universe" for the members of "The Friends of The Church in China." He interprets the cosmic Christology of Ephesians and Colossians in the context of the Chinese church and intends to characterize the Chinese Christian religion by expanding and integrating it into the universal and cosmic Christology, not into the thought of atonement as related with individual forgiveness.<sup>6</sup> I would like to deal precisely with these interesting assertions on another occasion.

But Rahner's view was criticized by other scholars. They think as follows. Even though Rahner recognizes Christ's mysterious, universal, and anonymous working in all religions, he presumes normative Christology after all. Therefore its attitude prevents actual dialog. Moreover, if only latent faith of non-Christians is referred to, actual faith of other religions' believers clearly doesn't come into view. Eventually, such Christianity may stray into a monolog with itself. J. Hick puts off the Christian "inclusiveness" which appears in Rahner's

<sup>5</sup> K. Rahner, *Anonymous Christentum und Missionsauftrag der Kirche*, Schriften zur Theologie IX, 498ff.

<sup>6</sup> Tomisaka Christian Center (ed.), "Original Source. Material Collection of Modern Chinese Christianity", Shinkyō Publisher, 2008, P.493-501.

concept of the “anonymous Christian,” because in Hick’s eyes, it presumes the doctrine of Christian superiority against other religions. He calls himself a Christian pluralist who aims for equality of religions, radically relativizes Christianity, and comes to the same position as that of Jalaludin Rumi who wrote, “The lamps differ from one another, but the light is same. Light comes from far beyond.”<sup>7</sup>

However, if we push forward with this criticism and abandon such a view as Rahner's in which Christ is the essential ground of all salvation, we may come to think that “many kinds of roads lead into salvation”, such as Hick thought. Another Catholic theologian who is like Hick, H. Küng, looks at the doctrine of the church, not in relation to the conversion of other religions' believers, but in relation to the effort to realize “the Kingdom of God” by love and justice on the earth.<sup>8</sup> But his insistence was criticized by the Roman Catholic Church.

## 2. Christological, Pneumatological Trinity

In Japan, Yasuo Furuya, who wrote “Theology of Religion” was in the spotlight.<sup>9</sup> After he actively considered in this book the academic and social situation on the plurality of religions, he says that you must not undermine the focus on Christology, when you build up “theology of religion”. Christianity without Christological focus doesn’t deserve its name. Rather, he says, the problem is in how to develop this Christological focus.

After he actively considered in this book the academic and social situation on a plurality of religions, he says that you must not undermine the Christological focus, when you build up a “theology of religion”. Christianity without a Christological focus doesn’t deserve its name. Rather, he says the problem is in how to develop a Christological focus.

We can go to the wide world through the narrow gate of a Christological focus. We believe in the Father as Creator through His only Son and meet the wide cosmos God created. And we believe in God as the Holy Spirit through God’s Son, and meet the humankind whom God guide by speaking to each individual’s spirit. The church has expressed this reality in the doctrine of the Trinity.

God’s love and justice appeared intensively in Christ, and are still the universal love and justice toward all the world and humankind which are the actions of the Spirit God, namely, the Holy Spirit in Christ. So God’s love and justice which appeared intensively in Christ are universal love and justice. That is, a focus on Christology has never been of a specific and exclusive character, but, quite to the contrary, there is much universal and inclusive expanse. We go out to a wide road within the Trinitarian God through the narrow gate of Christ. Nevertheless, if a Christological concentration gives a very specific and exclusive impression, the reason is that Christological concentration may be not fully developed by the Trinitarian

<sup>7</sup> Jalaludin Rumi, “The One True Light, in Rumi: Poet and Mystic, trans. R. A. Nicholson, London and Boston, 1978, P.166; John Hick, ‘A Personal Note’ in: his Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion, London, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> H. Küng, Die Herausforderung der Weltreligion, In: Christ sein, München, 10. Aufl. 1980

<sup>9</sup> Yasuo Furuya, “Theology of Religion,” Jordan Publisher, 1986/1990.

God — because only the Son of God, Christ, is proclaimed and emphasized.

H.R.Niebuhr warned once about the danger of the theological Unitarianism which doesn't refer to the Trinity.<sup>10</sup> A denomination which believes only the Creator Father as God is usually called Unitarian, to which belong Monarchianism, Arianism, Deism, and Socinianism (the antitrinitarian movement, since 1579) from ancient times too. Next there is another Unitarianism which believes only the Son Jesus Christ. For example, Marcion of the early Christian era denied the God of the Old Testament. In modern times, the adoration of Jesus in Pietismus, Jesus-ethics-ism, and many kinds of Christocentrism come under this second kind of Unitarianism. A third type of Unitarianism emphasizes only the God of the Holy Spirit into which the Father and the Son may be absorbed. Joachim of Fiore of the Middle Ages and the spiritualism of Quakers as the Society of Friends in the Modern Age belong to this type as well.

As Niebuhr says, the problem of such kinds of Unitarianism is not what each emphasizes, but the problem rests in an exclusiveness which rejects the others. Unitarianism errs in insisting on the One, excluding the other Two; rather, the Three, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, should be emphasized as the one and only God. Although the three types of should always be in mutual dependence, Unitarianism occurs instead of Trinitarianism, if just "One" of the "Three" walks by itself.

If we grasp Barth's Christological concentration from this viewpoint, a danger of "the Unitarianism of Jesus Christ" must lurk behind it, although, to be sure, Barth does try to unfold a properly Trinitarian theology. Correcting the exclusiveness of Barth's theology, theologians of religion advocate a theocentric Christology. But the problem is not with the alternatives themselves — that is, not with God or Christ in themselves nor with Christocentrism and Theocentrism as such. Rather the problem arises when we do not affirm the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Trinitarian God, that is, as the Three but One and as the One but Three.

When this affair is rightly understood, the exclusiveness of Christ doesn't contradict his inclusiveness. And the particularity of Christ is not in conflict with his universality. In the following quotation about the Cross of Christ, Moltmann shows the relationship between the exclusiveness and the inclusiveness in Christ. "If the Cross becomes more central, an interest in other religions will be open all the more. The pneumatology will become richer and wider."<sup>11</sup>

The above explains a summary of what Furuya insisted. I think too that a key connection between the exclusiveness and the inclusiveness may be in the Trinitarian structure, just as chapter 4, from verse 7 through 12 in Second Corinthians presents the extent of Christ's death and resurrection within the Trinitarian structure. Paul interprets his apostolic

---

<sup>10</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, "Theological Unitarianisms" (1946), in: *Theology Today*, July 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes*, 1975, S.177.

suffering and hope as participation in Christ's death and resurrection, interpreting the apostolic experiences in close association with the Corinthian church members. So next, we will exegete this text.

### III. PAUL'S UNIQUE CHRISTOLOGY — EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATION OF 2CORINTHIANS 4:7–14

Steven Strauss points out that the source for ecumenical unity between the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches (separated into many denominations) is the ancient ecumenical creeds and the Bible as canon upon which the former were based.<sup>12</sup> Among the biblical books the primary example of such a function can be found in the Pauline letters written by a prominent systematic thinker. This is also true when we talk about Christology.

However, it should be noted that Paul's Christology has some features which differ from what we today recognize as "normal" Christology. For instance, in II Corinthians 10-12, we read:

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

The one baptism, which Paul refers to in Romans 6:3ff, namely the participation of believers in the death of the cross and the life of the resurrection of Christ, is perceived as an event repeatedly experienced in the Apostle's entire life. This Christology is mentioned moreover by the Trinitarian structure of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. a form of the Trinitarian benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:13) in a church community as vivid relationship between I (Paul) and You (the Corinthian church).

Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin insists that no other passage in the New Testament shows the evangelical character of the church more clearly than II Corinthians 4:7ff (cf.4:5). He says, "this is a classical definition of evangelism or mission".<sup>13</sup> This passage characterizes mission as an eschatological event. The tension between suffering and glorification is held just by hope in the believer's bodily and holistic resurrection at the last day.

This passage is "evangelical, or missional Christology" that reflects the experiences of the Apostle who spent all of his life preaching the Gospel. This Christology can be regarded as a specific development of traditional Christology, namely the understanding of Christ and faith in Christ, of the earliest church. Paul expresses the similar idea also in Philippians 1:29-30 and Colossians 1:24.

---

<sup>12</sup> Steve Strauss, 'Creeds, Confessions, and Global Theologizing', in: Craig Ott/Harold A. Netland(ed), "Globalizing Theology", -Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity-, Michigan, Grand Rapids, 2006, P.140-156.

<sup>13</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, "Mission in Christ's Way", Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1987, P.24.

## 1. Exegesis of verses 7-14

What Paul (“we” form) shares in Christ through his apostolic activities which are followed by death and life (7-11) — this works as life for the church (“you” in verse 12). When he says this in this paragraph — this paragraph being bound up with a preface in praise to God using the keywords “suffering and comfort” in 1:3-11 — Paul emphasizes his apostolic suffering, because he intends to defend against those enemies who will not admit his spiritual competence. Paul fully understands that he, in his suffering, doesn’t appear to be God’s

powerful messenger in Christ. Against his opponents, he enumerates stoically<sup>14</sup> his distress situations (περίστασις) which preventing human life<sup>15</sup> in 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, II Corinthians 6:4-10, and 11:23-29 as well. Of course he doesn’t show a stoic anthropology, that is, he does not tell about an immovable mind which may overcome bad conditions and not be influenced by them.

The valuable treasure (θησαυρός) of verse 7 includes service under the new covenant — where proclaiming the Gospel is closely connected with ministering in the new covenant. And it includes knowledge of God’s glory, transfiguring into the Lord’s likeness and God’s light to shine within “us” (=Paul). These are the excellence of the power (cf. ὑπερβολή τῆς δυνάμεως . II Cor. 1:8, 4:7, 17, 12:7, Romans 7:13, I Cor. 12:31, Gal 1:13) composing a “theology of glory.” But it is explained at once how this treasure is connected with the dis-appointments of our present reality. Ministering under the new covenant can indeed let believers participate in God’s righteousness and the new life of the spirit; however, the ministers have this treasure in fragile earthen vessels (ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν. Ge.2:7, Isa.64:7-8, Lam.4:2. Cf. Seneca Dial 6, 11, 3). In illness stricken, Paul had to proclaim the Gospel, being in derision by his opponents. The power overcoming various obstacles comes only from God, not from himself (12:9-10, 1 Cor. 2:4). His weakness is used only to prove this affair, not to veil or to prevent it (4:3, 3:12-13).

The effect of God’s power appears in a series of the antitheses in verses 8 and 9. On the one hand, the first half of each antithesis comprehensively<sup>16</sup> describes oppression by persecution, while on the other hand, the latter half asserts the maintenance and affirmation of life by

God’s intervention, not by self-supported human will (cf. 1:8). “Be troubled” (κλιβομαι of v.8a) is paired with “be comforted,” a central theme in 1:3-7. Its expression reminds us, beyond Paul’s personal experience, that an eschatological suffering will happen just before establishment of God’s reign (Matthew 24:21). “Persecuted, but not forsaken” (v.9a) concretely explains more strongly the situation of struggle and persecution. Just as a Stoic philosopher still lives by reason and the righteous man still lives by God’s help, so the

<sup>14</sup> Epik.Diss 1, 24, 1; 2,19, 24 so on. Cf. early Jewish writings like slav. Hen 66, 6; Test.Jos 1, 4-7; 2,4; Pesach X, 5 too.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. V. P. Furnish, II Corinthians, AnchB 32A, Garden City 1984,280-283.

<sup>16</sup> “On every side” (evn panti), the head of v.8

apostle knows that he is supported by God's power.

The first negative half of the each antithesis is summarized as “(the suffering of) death,” but then the second affirmative half is summarized as “life.” The origin of that power by which people can endure until the end is to be found in faithful unity with Jesus Christ who died upon the cross and was highly exalted. Notably, Paul repeats the simple name “Jesus” (v.5a and v.14 too), because he concentrates on the suffering of the earthly Jesus. He still refers to the life of “Jesus” in a passage where the resurrection-life is obviously considered, because he emphasizes the identity of the crucified Jesus with the resurrected Christ. Paul interprets his suffering experienced in his work as an apostolic as a concrete and bodily (ἐν τῷ σώματι) participation in the death of the crucified Jesus (1:5).<sup>17</sup>

There is herein Paul's incomparable, Christological understanding of suffering.<sup>18</sup> How the participation in the death of the crucified Jesus is concrete, is clear in Paul's scars (Gal. 6:17, ἐν τῷ σώματι<sup>19</sup>) as a result of the stripes he received as punishment and as a result of his being stoned during his missionary work (11:24-25). The apostolic servant's work together with poverty, pain, and persecution form a perpetual process where the death of Jesus appears in Paul's bodily life involved with the world. The Greek νεκρότης (death) characterizes medically bodily extinction, which differs from the present, one-time death in baptism (Rom.6:5), but which is a process of constant death in outward humanity (v.16). But the participation in the power of Christ's resurrection accompanies the participation in the suffering of Christ, because the death and resurrection are, for Paul, closely connected with each other.

The once-for-all death and resurrection by the sacrament of baptism is grasped as an extension into the entire apostolic life. This refers to each believer in Corinth whom Paul here addresses as “you.” When the believers proclaim and witness Jesus as messiah, as the disciples and the apostles did, they can participate in Christ's suffering.<sup>20</sup> Where then can the power of Christ's resurrection be seen in Paul's involvement? It appears now in what we are perplexed about, but not in despair about, and so allows us to continue proclaiming the Gospel.

In v.11, when he says “be always delivered unto death” (εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα) in this current earthly life, this surely signifies the acceptance of a central usage within the tradition on suffering — which Jesus experienced since he was delivered at the night (Rom.4:25, 8:32, 1 Cor.11:23). The accusative apposition, “for Jesus' sake” (διὰ Ἰησοῦν), clarifies that only suffering in obedience for Jesus can make the apostolic suffering meaningful, so that his suffering can be never be identified with Jesus'. The life of Jesus' resurrection appears in the continuing death of Paul and, thus, in our mortal flesh (ἐν τῇ κτήσῃ σαρκί). In this way, therefore, inexhaustible comfort and hope for immortal life, in spite of hardship, will be given. Flesh (σὰ ρξ) can't originally carry the life of ultimate resurrection (1 Cor.15:50).

<sup>17</sup> But the title “Christ” instead of Jesus in 1:5 is so used twice, that his pain realizing salvation (v.5a) and an existence-form of the resurrected (v.5b) are emphasized. This point is different in a viewpoint from 4:10ff.

<sup>18</sup> W. Schrage, *Leid, Kreuz und Eschaton*, *EvTh* 34, 1974, 165.

<sup>19</sup> Against circumcision of Jewish enemies who boast of self-flesh (Gal6:13).

<sup>20</sup> J. Moltmann, *Das Kommen Gottes*, *Christliche Eschatologie*, Bd. 5



However when he tells us that flesh will be the place where the new life appears, Paul shows consciously the fragility of the human body (σωμα, basar in Hebrew). So Jesus' life appears in the apostolic painful life now.

Unity in tension between the suffering of death and the life of resurrection comes to be rhetorically divided in v.12 to death for Paul on the one hand and to life for the church ("you") on the other. Of course, it doesn't mean that Paul will be excluded from the hope for ultimate life, but it means that life is endowed to believers precisely by the message of the cross Paul proclaims, meeting with suffering. So here Paul is not speaking ironically as he does 1 Corinthians 4:10 nor is he speaking in criticism ("We have already heavenly life, but you wait for only earthly extinction").<sup>21</sup> He doesn't keep "life" in v.10-11 for himself, but he offers it for the church.

V.13-14 supplies the present viewpoint of the former verses by pushing the conviction of future resurrection to the front, against the realized eschatology that the Corinthians' pneumaticers (=spiritualists) conceived. That the faith filled by the Spirit promoted his apostolic proclamation of the Gospel (τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως),<sup>22</sup> Paul tries to confirm by appeal to Psalms (LXX) 115:1 (MT: Ps 116:10. to Αὐτο "in the same"). "I believed, and therefore I spoke out". This Psalm's text is a hymn of personal thanks composed by death and hardship, relief and life, community and openness, thanks and grace. Paul certainly interprets his circumstances in the light of this Psalm. The faith defined by the Spirit makes the Apostle Paul a messenger of the Gospel.

An oldest primitive Christian faith form takes this Psalm's as its source. Namely, "he who raised the Lord Jesus" (participle: ἐγείραντος τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, Rom. 4:24, 8:11, Gal. 1:1. Cf. Rom. 10:9, 1Thess. 1:10, Apost.3:15, etc.) "will with Jesus raise us too". The Spirit (v.13) is a pledge (1:22, 5:4-5, Rom.8:23). This future form points to the eschatological resurrection of believers which was promised by Jesus' resurrection on the earth (cf. "with Jesus").<sup>23</sup> This incident let people come near to God. In other words, at the return of Christ, it will be allowed that the Apostle and church will stand (παραστῆσαι. 11:2 too) together ("with yours") as the saints before God (cf. Col. 1:22).

<sup>21</sup> E. Guif tgemanns, Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr, FRLANT 90, Göttingen 1966, 309.

<sup>22</sup> Pauline evangelism by the Spirit in faith is emphasized here. R. Bultmann understands the usage of "the spirit of faith" merely as way of faith in comparison with 1 Cor.4:21, Gal.6:1 (evn pneu,mati prau<thtoj,, nominative genitive. It is mind of faith, namely paraphrase of faith itself). But because of referring resurrection in v.14 (cf. pneu/ma of 5:5), pneu/ma is God's Spirit (V. P. Furnish, 258). Because "hope" is connected with the Spirit and faith in Gal.5:5, pneu/ma th/j pi,stewj, shows an interrelation between both words. As H. D. Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther, NTD 7, Göttingen, 190, indicates rightly, God's Spirit caused faith in mind (accusative genitive) and believers receive the Spirit. Moreover the Spirit put them into a new communi- cation with God and affirms them as God's children (Rom.8:15). Paul summarizes all of these affairs with us- age of "the Spirit of faith".

<sup>23</sup> Paul emphasizes here a close relationship between Jesus' resurrection and that of the believer.

## 2. The Trinitarian God

In the exegesis (see footnote 20) of “the Spirit of faith” in v.13, we said that the Spirit is God’s Spirit which has a interrelation with faith (cf.1Cor. 12:3). Then, we confirmed that the Spirit becomes a pledge for affirming the believers’ position as God’s children (Rom.8:15), so that the Spirit is a foundation of hope for the future (Rom.8:23, Gal.6:8).

Paul verifies in Rom.8:17 that believers will be, through God’s Spirit, not only God’s heirs as His children, but the believers may also be allowed to share Christ’s sufferings, if they are also to share his glory. He verifies that this is not for himself alone, but also applies to the Roman believers (“we”). The Holy Spirit put them both to suffering and to the glory of Christ that believers may experience these things in the world — that they may participate in the suffering and glory. The extremity of this suffering and glory is preached in this passage from 2 Corinthians 4 as a process of the participation in the death and the resurrection of Christ. The Lord’s Spirit clarifies the rich expanses and diversity. Besides these passages, the moral life of Christians (Rom. 8:4-5, 13, Gal.5:16, 25), service to God (Phil.3:3,) and prayer (Rom.8:15, 25-26) also happen by Lord’s Spirit. The Spirit explores the depths of God’s own nature (1 Cor.2:10). The Lord’s Spirit can reach into the depth of the human spirit and religiosity (cf. “the spirit” or “the hearts” in Rom.8:16, 26-27). It is interesting that the paragraph of v.7 ff. unfolds God as a Trinitarian God. V.7 talks of God as the origin of power, verses 10-11 talk of the working of Jesus’ death and resurrection, and v.13 mentions “the Spirit of faith.” It takes obvious form in 13:13 as a benediction of the Trinitarian God.

IV Significance of the Christological Trinity in Northeast Asia — The Case of Korea - In Asian countries of non-Christian tradition and culture, major religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism exist in national life, while Christianity coming from the West struggles as a minor religion in a heterogeneous society. Especially, when the colonization of Western countries conflicted with the native peoples in Asia, nationalism connected with indigenous religions and put up a strong resistance against Western countries and their religions. Therefore, when Christianity began to take root in Asian countries, it had to be persecuted politically and religiously. Japan is not an exception, because early Christianity called “Kirishitan” in Japan has a history of martyrdom. Such a situation is latently continuing in some sense even until the present. The percentage of Christians in Japan, which is the most modernized state in Asia, is less than 1% of the population.

Whenever the witness of Christ stands at the front of evangelism, the witnessing individual could suffer badly from the outside and yet endure. There are many reasons for this, and people have to find effective solutions to achieve better conditions. But suffering and struggle follow originally and inevitably whenever proclaiming the Gospel as the Word of the Cross in this world. This remains true even when the Christians are no longer a small percentage of the entire population. (For example, the percentage of Christians in South Korea is roughly 25%). It simply means participation in the Cross and resurrection of Christ, just as Paul explained in his letters. We recognize such suffering as a sign of God’s children and the gate through which they may partake in the glory of the Lord.

At the end of this presentation, I would like to refer to the case of Korea which, like Japan, has been influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism. In so doing, I will attempt to show how the Gospel could operate in culture, religion and political environment, how the Christological trinity could give meaning to the human world and become a source for its transformation, and what kinds of problems the Christological trinity leaves unresolved.

As a Christian theologian and a religious theologian, Yu Dong-Shik understands the ethnocultural spirituality, namely, “Korean” (= 韓) spirituality as “Pung-Ryu-Do,” which in Chinese characters 彌流道 means “wind-flow-road”.<sup>24</sup> Pung-Ryu is a word expresses generally the thought of “Shinseon-do” (□ 道 means holy hermit road), which is an aesthetic expression for the state of the complete harmony between nature, life, and art. The era of the three states, namely Shinra (□ 國), Koguryo (批 桂), and Baekche (◎) continues

from the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. until the 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.. Confucianism,<sup>25</sup> Buddhism and Taoism were conveyed to the three states in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D until the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Through the introduction of these higher religious cultures, the ancient Korean culture was largely changed and the primitive spirituality, which believes in a heavenly, presiding God (= Hanunim) and worships this God with ritual,<sup>26</sup> was sublimated by it — for example, “Farang-Do in the Shinra era of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. So it is said that “Pung-Ryu-Do” includes these three Asian religions. If the essence of these three religions is questioned, people can answer as follows. Confucianism is a “polite requital with self-control”. Buddhism is “the heart as source of ultimate unity”. And Taoism is “nature as unconsciousness”. The common thread running through these three religions is that human beings should return to “nature,” overcoming self-adherence in the egoistic world. In this case, “nature” means that human nature/self as given by the heavenly God. It is God’s mind. The single word “road” of “wind-flow” (=“Pung-Ryu-Do”), through which human beings can be unified with God, includes the common essence among the three religions.

As we can know from the affair mentioned above, “Pung-Ryu-Do” is not a concept characterizing a particular religion; rather, it is a spiritual principle or an ethnic spirituality flowing at the ground of Korean cultural history from antiquity until today. It is a place and a principle on which both the three religions and other many kinds of Asian religions could be accepted and unfolded.

<sup>24</sup> Yu Dong Shik, “Korean Christianity,” Tokyo National University Publisher, Toyo Series 5, 1994, p 6ff.

<sup>25</sup> Dealing with Confucianism being ethical thought as a religion is difficult. But if people estate it for a pseudo-religion which has a religious world view, putting it into category of religion can be allowed.

<sup>26</sup> A book “Wiseo”(挪) within Chinese historical book written about three states “Wi”(挪), “Oh”(e) and “Chok”(□) tells that there was such religious ritual in Puyeo, Koguryo, Samhan (Mahan, Shinhan, Beuonhan), etc which were the ancient tribal union states.

The elements composing the ethnic spirituality of “Pung-Ryu-Do” are understood by means of the following three concepts, which are important elements in our daily life and which are widely used with a depth of meaning. They are “Mo(t),” “Han,” and “Sam”. “Mo(t)” expresses cultural and artistic value, “Han” expresses religious and metaphysical value, and “Sam” expresses social and ethical value. Yu says that the three important concepts are structurally similar to the concept of the Trinitarian God in Christianity.<sup>27</sup> The Trinitarian structure of “Pung-Ryu-Do” with the three concepts can be grasped by the intrinsic existence of each in relation to each other. Each concept includes other two concepts. So “Mo(t)” is formed by the creative harmony between “Han” and “Sam.” Han means a transcendence that includes Mo(t) and Sam. And Sam should be the life based on Han. Namely, the three are three, but yet form one idea.

A typical cultural form of this “Pung-Ryu-Do” may be clearly observed in the ancient ritual of worshipping the heavens and in agricultural music. For example, a book called the “Wi-sa”(摶飢), which was part of a larger Chinese historical book written about three states (“Samguksa”, 三國志), describes an ancient ritual of worshipping Heaven in an ancient three “Samhan,” this being a religious ritual of agriculture.<sup>28</sup> Religion (Han), Production (Sam), and Art (Mo[t]) are in unity. These rituals continue even today. Most of the general and representative folk arts in performance are connected with the agricultural music.

Why then, if religion may be understood, accepted and unfolded by particular spirituality, also world religion including universal truth will be conveyed “into” and “along” the structure of indigenous ethnic spirituality, not into a perfect vacuum. Therefore, an ethnic religious culture is formed by the integration of the pre-existing ethnic spirituality and of the idea of a foreign religion, with a concrete historical situation as a place in which this encounter takes place. Then how is the case of Korea? The religious history in Korea was developed by the intermingling of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity. Buddhist culture dominated in Shinra-and Koguryo-era. Confucian culture dominated for 5 centuries in “Chosen (=Korean)” dynasty. And today, Western Christianity is playing dominant role. However, the three elements mentioned above (Mo(t), Han and Sam) are delicately involved together and operated throughout each era’s religious culture.

---

<sup>27</sup> Op.cit. p.10f.

<sup>28</sup> Op.cit. p.10f.

## Conclusion: A Critical Examination of Yu's Theory

Yu concludes as follows: "The Trinitarian structure in the three concepts, Mo(t), Han, and Sam, show mutual inner relations, not only in one religious culture, but also within Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Today's Korea is building a religiously pluralistic society; each religion should be aware of the ethnic spirituality and deepen an understanding of its own religion through mutual understanding and stimulus."<sup>29</sup>

But herein is a problem. Though it may be inevitable from the position of religious science, Yu tries to fix the ethnic spirituality, which has a Trinitarian structure, as the unchangeable "context," then interprets each of the three religions as a "text," and lets each religion adapt to the context. So he tries to make good use of the religions for ethno-spiritual creativity and activities. Also, in this view, Christianity is merely one religion among the world religions. Yu's theory is in danger of falling into religious syncretism — although in his book he argues that a compromising syncretism doesn't achieve a real dialog between religions,<sup>30</sup> and so he leaves himself open to falling into that very danger against which he complains. If we observe his theory from the position of Christian theology, we might well conclude that his argument is fraught with the danger of changing the truth of Christ's incarnation through the Holy Spirit (God's truth subsisting in humanity) to a truth matching well with the historical situation, excluding the transcendence of God, and also with the danger of reducing the Holy Spirit in the Trinitarian God to a religious spirituality of the human being.

Instead of doing as Yu does, we need a Christological Trinity as the principle of salvation.

According to it, Christ's Spirit should subsist in the Trinitarian structure of Korea's (幣

h) spirituality, clarify and change its limitation and sinful quality, revive radically Korea's (幣

h) spirituality and its elements of truth common among the three religions. What I regard as the elements of truth are as follows: a return to "nature" by overcoming self-adherence in the egoistic human world and belief in one heavenly god. This principle should be applicable to all the three religions which uphold the Korean spirituality; from a Christian theological point of view this can be a principle operative for Buddhism and Confucianism also. In order to take such a view, we don't need to bring up the theology of Rahner and of Protestant theologians, but it is enough for us to point out Pauline theology which can support this view.

The Republic of Korea is the Asian country in which Protestant Christianity is currently the most vigorous. People can find a reason for the growth of Protestantism in Korea's recent painful history (because of the Japanese colonial policy). But if people, in parallel with such a sociological explanation, were to seek another reason in Korea's native religious and spiritual soil, it would have to be found in Korea's ethnic spirituality and its idea of God (faith in the Heavenly One) as Yu excellently analyzed and explained.<sup>31</sup> But such theories are often

<sup>29</sup> Op.cit. p.18.

<sup>30</sup> Dong Shik Yu, "Korean Religion and Christianity", Youyou Publisher, 1975, p.199f.

<sup>31</sup> Op.cit. p.18.

attended by a danger of religious syncretism caused by a remarkable approach to Shamanism or Buddhism, so that doctrinal Christology and the Trinity based on the Bible become ambiguous which often results in heretical problems. Nevertheless, the mainline Protestant denominations in Korea are realizing healthy growth and a deeper self-understanding through the dialectic relationship, conducted by its leaders, with Oriental religions.

Choe Byeung-Heon who was a leader of the early Korean Protestant church was one such excellent leader. Choe was a pastor and theologian of the Methodist church. It was his mission to investigate the Gospel for his fellow countrymen who were living in religious traditions such as Confucianism and Buddhism. He serialized the literary articles

‘Seongsan- Yurangi’ (성산유랑기, “A Travel Journal on the Holy Mountains”) in the

Monthly Theological Journal (신학월보) published in 1907 and serialized another set of articles “Theology of Religion” in the Theological World, published from 1916 until 1920. His opinion shown in these articles stands even now, when we see it from today’s viewpoint. He presented us with a classic, traditional, and yet quite remarkable “theology of religion.” If we may summarize his teaching, we should say that he was sure that the truth of salvation Oriental religions were seeking will be realized by Christ, and the salvation of the Korean people, with their well-rooted religious and cultural traditions, will be accomplished by Christianity. He took never an exclusive and self-righteous attitude toward other religions. But at the same time, he took never the position of relativism such as the objectively observing religious science. He was the first Christian to produce a “theology of religion” for Korean Christianity.

We know that in the history of Christian missions, the proclamation of Christianity didn’t cause a dialog with Confucianism and Buddhism, rather, it caused violent conflict with them which resulted in hardship for both the Christian missionaries and the believers. In the ancient Confucian states of China and Korea, worshipping ancestors was not only a personal ritual act, but also obligatory courtesy which was expected of the people for maintaining the order of the state and society. Christianity being contrary to the custom was excluded as a heresy and therefore many martyrs shed much blood. Of course there was a significant issue as to how to proclaim the way of the Gospel and to develop an effective mission method. However on the other side, the conflict between Christianity and the indigenous traditions was essentially inevitable.

Given our analysis of the passage in II Cor.4, such distress had to be. It can be understood in terms of the believer’s suffering and hope for participating in Christ’s cross and resurrection. Such a meaningful participation in Christ’s suffering and hope, in his cross and resurrection, continues to be witnessed in Korean history. God’s Spirit in Christ is working through such participation even now.