Korean Feminists in Conversation

The Bible in the Modern World, 24

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Korean Feminists in Conversation with the Bible, Church and Society

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Preface

When feminist theology was introduced in Korea in the 1980s, Korean feminists began to apply feminist criticism to familiar Bible stories such as the creation account and the exodus, and to the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life. It was not long before they began to look at the Bible in terms of Korean women's experiences.

The issue of women's ordination, the suffering from the division of the country after the Korean War, exposure to sexual violence, and the harsh conditions of life during turbulent times, such as the period of Japanese colonization, the Korean War, over twenty years of military regimes, the Gwangju massacre and resistance in 1980, subsequent democratization movements and the current globalization and economic polarization of society—all these things have been the driving forces behind feminist interpretation of the Bible in Korea and have fuelled the commitment to read the Bible in the Korean context. The present volume provides readers insights into such factors as these, which have influenced the thinking of Korean feminist theologians.

The contributors to this book represent a wide spectrum of the Korean feminist Christian movement. They include university and seminary teachers, ministers, and field workers. This book is a product of their numerous meetings and discussions on the real and practical issues that define contemporary Korean women's lives. In it, the contributors reflect on the diverse situations modern Korean women have faced and continue to struggle with, among them, the traditional religious culture based on Confucianism, economic globalization, postcolonialism, the problems of migrant women laborers, the trauma of being forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers during World War II, and problems encountered by women engaged in ministry today. They view these situations in the light of the lives and experiences of the women in the Old and New Testaments, and they look to the Bible for resources for dealing with them.

In this book, readers will be able to find what makes Korean feminist theology unique. Feminist theology in Korea developed in order to provide guidance for field work rather than as a scholarly exercise. Korean society has gone through drastic changes since the early 1980s when feminist theology was first introduced in this country. If the sacrifices of women in the course of modernization and industrialization were key issues in the early

years of feminist theological inquiry, now a central concern is the destruction of humanity as a consequence of highly successful industrialization and modernization.

We hope that this book will contribute toward building a foundation for sharing our experiences and wisdom with those women all over the world who fight for the victims of the problems that their own societies and countries have created, and that all of us face today.

Kyung Sook Lee and Kyung Mi Park

* * *

The Editors have asked me to say a few words about the origins of this volume, and it is a pleasure to do so. The idea for the book arose out of a visit I made to Korea in 2007, at the invitation of Ewha Womans University, where I lectured at Ewha, Hanshin University, Hyupsung University, the Methodist Theological Seminary, and Samyook University. At these universities and on other occasions I met many Korean feminist scholars, and I was both very interested to learn about and impressed by the kind of work these women are doing. I therefore proposed to Kyung Sook Lee that she and her colleagues consider producing a collection of essays that would give scholars and students outside Korea, and particularly here in the West where it behooves us to be more attentive to the work of Third World scholars, some insight into what forms feminist biblical interpretation takes in Korea and what approaches Korean feminists adopt for dealing with the Bible in their writing and their professional lives.

A clear sign of Western colonial influence in Korea is the fact that, with one exception, all the contributors to this volume have received a Western theological education (two have degrees from Germany, six from the USA, and one from Australia). How have they used these Western credentials? They are looking at the Bible in relation to issues facing Korean society, especially as they relate to women.

This is socially engaged biblical interpretation. As the Editors observe above, it goes beyond the academic study of the Bible to a wider engagement with the church and with Korean society. Seong Hee Kim looks at the new Korean translation of the Lord's Prayer and how its language excludes women. Since language determines how we view the world, and the use of non-inclusive language is actually on the increase these days, it is all the more pressing to recognize the damaging effect non-inclusive language has on women. Using what she calls *Salim* hermeneutics, Kim offers her own translation, aimed at recognizing and thus empowering women (and men).

The difficulties encountered by women involved in ministry and women seeking leadership positions in the Korean church are examined by Soon Young Kim, who illustrates as well what feminist ministry can contribute to the church, and by Yani Yoo, who compares strategies used to minimize women's roles in the Korean church to strategies used by biblical writers to keep woman in their place. Although highly critical of these strategies, Yoo finds in the Bible, and in the church, an alternative model of leadership based on partnership. One of Kim's examples of rereading the history of the oppressed from a feminist perspective is the case of 'comfort women', women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II. The fate of these women and the deep scar their experience has left on the Korean psyche is the subject of Mi Kang Yang's article, in which she explores the process of healing by drawing on the story of the hemorrhaging woman healed by Jesus in Mark 5.

Taking as her point of departure marriage customs in the Hebrew Bible, Eun Ae Lee looks at the harmful effects marriage customs in Korea can have, especially on women. Among the issues she raises is that of protecting the rights of women who come to Korea as marriage immigrants, a topic that forms the focus of the article by Kuk Yom Han, for whom the book of Ruth provides a helpful biblical resource. Kyung Sook Lee also turns to the book of Ruth, showing how Korean readers have often interpreted the relationships between the protagonists, especially Ruth's self-sacrifice and obedience to her mother-in-law, as supporting patriarchal family values. Such an interpretation, she demonstrates, does not do justice either to Ruth or to Koreans' Asian cultural heritage.

Yeong Mee Lee also calls attention to social changes affecting the Korean family, and, drawing on biblical examples, proposes motherhood both as a counterpart to the model of redemption found in the image of the divine warrior and, consequently, as a basis for developing an inclusive theological language of redemption. An urgent social issue that shows up in some of these essays is the effect that the capitalist market economy has had on Korean society. A trenchant critique of this situation is offered by Kyung Mi Park, who offers a new reading of Mt. 20.1-16 that emphasizes the sharing of limited resources and commodities, even if it means sacrificing one's own material gain for the benefit of others. Recognizing both how the Bible has been used to legitimate such ills as authoritarianism, political conservatism, materialism, and social polarization, on the one hand, and its liberating power in people's lives on the other, Hyun Ju Bae advocates what she calls a 'hermeneutics of compassion in detachment'—a hermeneutical enterprise that seeks to situate biblical interpretation in the concrete context of Korean women's life experience. Applying this hermeneutic to the writings of Paul, she finds resources for inspiration and insight, despite the problems posed by Paul's negative pronouncements about women.

I hope that, in making Korean feminists' conversations with the Bible, church and society available to a wider audience, this book will contribute to an important, ongoing discussion and exchange of viewpoints.

J. Cheryl Exum

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Neo-Confucian Ideology in the Interpretation of the Book of Ruth: Toward a Cross-checking Hermeneutics

Kyung Sook Lee

Many Western feminists are attracted to the book of Ruth because of the close relationship between Ruth and Naomi, and practitioners of queer criticism are drawn to the book because of the potential support it offers for lesbian or same-sex love.[1] In Korea Ruth has been a beloved female figure of the Old Testament for different reasons. The present article considers some of the reasons Ruth has been so attractive to Korean Christian women, and scrutinizes them from the perspective of feminist theology.

Many Korean Christian women have loved Ruth because she was a good and obedient daughter-in-law, who converted to Christianity, married Boaz, and was blessed with a son. For Korean Christians, the key concepts for understanding Ruth are 'obedience', 'family trees', 'conversion', 'self-sacrifice', and 'devotion'. Are these words really proper concepts for understanding Ruth? What is the picture of Ruth we get from in the book of Ruth itself? Perhaps Korean Christians have been reading the book of Ruth through strongly biased Neo-Confucian lenses.

In my view, patriarchal elements of Korean society have been consolidated by the confluence of the Bible with the Korean ideology of Neo-Confucianism. This is a negative result of so-called Asian biblical interpretation. It would be unfortunate indeed if we only reinforced our patriarchal system when we interpret the Bible. It is a real question how we Asians can read the Bible using our cultural heritage for our empowerment and liberation, not for oppression and exploitation.

In this article, I shall explore the background of the Korean ideology that informs interpretation of the book of Ruth and give an overview of four

1. Celena M. Duncan, 'The Book of Ruth: On Boundaries, Love, and Truth', in Robert E. Goss and Mona West (eds.), *Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000), pp. 92-102; Mona West, 'Ruth', in Deryn Guest, Robert E. Goss, Mona West and Thomas Bohache (eds.), *The Queer Bible Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 2006), pp.190-94; cf. Alicia Ostriker, 'The Book of Ruth and the Love of the Land', *Biblical Interpretation* 10 (2002), pp. 343-59.

categorical concepts through which Korean Christians understand Ruth. In doing this, I will show how easy it is for Asian Christians to use the biblical text to affirm their own ideas, eliminating the real challenging message of the Bible. I will also explore new challenges the book of Ruth poses for Korean Christian women in the twenty-first century. Finally, I will suggest a 'cross-checking' and 'cross-cultural' method of interpreting the Bible in the light of our own Asian cultural heritage in order to discover the new inspiring messages for us in an Asian context. I hope thereby to illustrate the message of the book of Ruth as well as the message that Korean Neo-Confucianism has for us in this global era.

Four Categories used by Koreans to Interpret Ruth

Ruth in the Genealogy of Jesus

There are many women figures in the Old Testament who are highly respected among Korean Christian women. Deborah and Esther for example are highly praised because they rescued their people. Koreans experienced the brutal Japanese colonial yoke for thirty-six years and are acutely aware of the importance of national independence. Because of this history, many Korean Christian women took Deborah and Esther as their role models. But in spite of their great national contributions, Deborah and Esther are not mentioned in the list of Jesus' foremothers, while Ruth's name does appear in the family tree of Jesus. No wonder Ruth became the most beloved female character among Korean Christian women, who always keep family trees well in mind.

Indeed, Koreans are very much aware of their family genealogies. The distinction between royal, middle and lower class is also very clear, and everybody wants to belong to the royal (Yangban) class. The Yangban class was the ruling class, both civil and military, who could sit before the king during royal meetings and ceremonies.[2] In order to belong to the Yangban class, Koreans would either have to have been born into a Yangban family or have been raised to that rank by the government in acknowledgement of exemplary virtues, such as chastity or filial piety, or fidelity. It can be said that Koreans of the Chosun dynasty (1392–1910) lived until death to achieve the Yangban title and a Yangban family genealogy. So it was striking for Koreans to read the genealogy of Jesus in Mt. 1.2-16, because this genealogy clearly shows that Jesus Christ did not have Yangban ancestors.

Perhaps this explains why Christianity came to Korea in the late nineteenth century through the lower class, not the Yangban (royal) class. When the Christian gospel arrived in Korea, brought by progressive young

2. Yung-Chung Kim, *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Time to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1977), p. 47.

Korean intellectuals and by missionaries, Koreans had experienced inequality, oppression, and infringement of human rights under patriarchy.[3] The reason Christianity became so popular among poor people and women from the lower class is that Christianity proclaims the equality of all humankind and especially the equality between upper and lower classes and between male and female. Women whose husbands had many wives and concubines at the same time and widows, who could not remarry because of the ban against remarriages, were the women who first received the Christian gospel so willingly.[4]

This first generation of Christian women loved to read the story of Ruth because Ruth meshed with the ideal of Korean women during the Chosun dynasty. The greatest honor a mother living during the Chosun dynasty in Korea could receive was when her family became Yangban through her own virtue or the virtue of her children or daughters-in-law. Although Ruth was poor and from the lower class, she was faithful and obedient to her mother-in-law, and thanks to her filial piety she was able to marry a rich man, Boaz, and become the ancestor a the great king. To come from the lower class and yet became the ancestor of the king was the dream of Korean mothers throughout the Chosun dynasty, and also afterwards.

During the Chosun dynasty, the government controlled women's chastity quite strictly. 'Women of virtue' were officially recognized, and, to encourage them to preserve their chastity and discourage remarriage, prizes and tokens were awarded to widows and concubines of high ranking officials who maintained their chastity.[5] Such rewards from the government enabled women to improve their class status, because their descendants could apply for the examination for high officials. In the meantime, the names of 'wicked' remarried widows were carefully registered in Janyo-ahn[6] so as to prevent their offspring from getting into government service.[7] This anti-remarriage movement, known as the remarriage ban, has exerted its influence over Korean women up to modern times. The fact that Ruth's name appears in the family trees of David and Jesus was understood by Korean

3. Duk-joo Lee, 'An Understanding of Early Korean Christian Women's History', *Ewha Journal of Feminist Theology* 2 (Seoul: Ewha Institute for Women's Theological Studies, 1997), pp. 11-50 (21).

4. Lee, 'Early Korean Christian Women's History', pp. 13-19. The prohibition of the remarriage of Korean widows was enforced in 1485 by disqualifying the sons and grandsons of a remarried woman from taking the government service examination.

5. Uhn Cho, 'The Invention of Chaste Motherhood: A Feminist Reading of the Remarriage Ban in the Chosun Era', *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 5 (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1999), pp. 45-63 (51).

6. That is, the list of women's misconduct. This practice originated in the Koryo dynasty; see Kim, *Women of Korea*, p. 98.

7. Cho, 'The Invention of Chaste Motherhood', pp. 51-52.

Christian women as clear evidence of Ruth's virtues of obedience and chastity. Ruth became the foremother of King David and Jesus Christ because her virtue was recognized officially, by the government or by God.

Ruth as Naomi's Obedient Daughter-in-Law

Ruth and Naomi were widows. The concept of 'widow' is very important in the Bible and also in Korea. Widows are not simply women whose husbands have died, but rather are the ones who need financial support to survive. In Korea, widows who had no sons were constantly in a precarious state. Young widows of Yangban families often chose death by drowning or hanging because they were afraid of loosing their chastity. Lower class women were sometimes kidnapped by poor widowers or old bachelors. The so-called 'kidnap marriage' was allowed by society and the state;[8] otherwise, lower class widows often had to live as slaves or prostitutes.

In the book of Ruth, Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, counted herself as a dead woman, an unfortunate cursed woman. Therefore she urged her Moabite daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to return to their own people to find security with a husband. Naomi had considered the possibility of levirate marriage for her daughters-in-law.[9] But there was no hope because Naomi had no son and could hardly expect to conceive one later. Orphah followed Naomi's suggestion and went back to Moab, but Ruth did not listen to her mother-in-law but rather chose to go to Bethlehem with Naomi (1.16-17), saying, 'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!' (Ruth 1.16-17 NRSV).

In the text, there is no explanation why Ruth did not follow the advice of Naomi who urged her to go back to her mother's house. We can only infer Ruth's love for Naomi and the solidarity between these two women. 'Ruth's response has become well known because of its popularity in many Christian marriage ceremonies, sometimes as a commitment of bride to new husband, sometimes as words of mutual commitment'.[10] It is true that Ruth's words sound more like those of a spouse than a daughter-in-law. And so it is not surprising that some feminist and queer critics interpret her words as

8. Kim, *Women of Korea*, p. 99.

9. 'Levirate Marriage and Haliza', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1982), vol. XI, pp. 122-31; H.J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (OTS, 49; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 313-14.

10. K.D. Sakenfeld, *Ruth: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1999), p. 30.

allowing the possibility of a same-sex or lesbian love between Naomi and Ruth, with Ruth going so far as to vow to go, lodge, die and be buried with Naomi.[11] I think this interpretation is possible here.

Korean Christian women, however, have interpreted the relationship between Naomi and Ruth very differently. In the eyes of Korean Christian women, Ruth was simply an exemplary daughter-in-law who did not leave her mother-in-law alone in such a miserable situation. In Chosun-dynasty Korea, once a woman had married, she could never leave her husband's house. No matter what the reason was, if a daughter-in-law abandoned her parent-in-law, it was a sinful crime. Her name could be registered in the list of wicked women. So there was no necessity for Korean Christians to find in Ruth's words a special love between these two women. Ruth was simply the model of a good daughter-in-law, who was just following the morality of the Chosun dynasty.

The background of this strict morality in Korea was Neo-Confucianism, which became the principle of the reign of the Chosun dynasty. Every daughter-in-law was required to be loyal and obedient to her parents-in-law. The doctrine 'woman must not serve more than one husband' (the remarriage ban) was the starting point of the five cardinal virtues of Confucianism: the right relationship between father and son, between ruler and subject, between husband and wife, between elder and younger, and between friends, which became the ground for moral edification. These cardinal virtues originally emphasized equal and right relationship, but in the Chosun dynasty they were interpreted as a subordinated vertical relationship.[12] Accordingly, women should obey their husbands and parents-in-law, and these relationships of subordination became absolute imperatives which were strongly urged upon and enforced among Koreans.[13] Ruth was beloved by Korean Christian women because her words in 1.16-17 corresponded exactly to what Koreans expected from their own daughters-in-law. The remarriage ban and the expectation that daughters-in-law will be obedient have remained as an unconscious norm of behavior even to the present day.

Ruth's Conversion to Yahwism

When Naomi appealed to Ruth to return to her own people, Ruth answered very decisively that she preferred to follow Naomi. She went on to say, 'your people will be my people and your God my God' (1.16). We do not

11. See A.-J. Levine, 'Ruth', in C.A. Newsom and S.H. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), p. 86.

12. Lee, 'Early Korean Christian Women's History', pp. 15-16; G.H. Jones, 'The Status of Women in Korea', *The Korean Repository* (June 1890), pp. 223-24.

13. See above, n. 4.

know why she refused Naomi's advice, and thus these words have been variously interpreted. 'In Jewish tradition, Ruth is remembered as the paradigmatic example of conversion. Rabbinic writers interpreted her speech as a declaration of conversion and deduced from her words requirements to be accepted by all converts'.[14] But for Korean Christians this response of Ruth is clear evidence that Ruth declared her conversion from her own religion (Buddhism?, Confucianism?, Shamanism?) to Christianity. Koreans did not differentiate Judaism from Christianity here. For Korean churchwomen it was significant that Ruth converted to Naomi's religion, which was falsely understood as Christianity. If a daughter-in-law followed the mother-in-law's religion, it demonstrated that she had a good attitude. Such an act would be even more praiseworthy when the conversion was to Christianity.

It is well known that the introduction of Christianity to Korea in the late nineteenth century often caused religious conflicts among family members. Many families were torn apart because of religious conflict between older and younger generations and between husbands and wives. So for Korean Christian women, it was crucially important that Ruth declared she would follow the religion of her mother-in-law. For some Korean Christian women, this was Ruth's greatest virtue. Furthermore they even believed that the happiness of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz came about only through Ruth's conversion to Christianity, because Yahweh is the most powerful God in the world.[15]

In my opinion, the storyteller of the book of Ruth paid no special attention to Ruth's conversion. Ruth's commitment to Naomi's religion was expressed as a part of her personal 'clinging to' or 'bond' to Naomi. Her commitment to follow Naomi and accept Naomi's people as her own is a crucial decision. Her religious 'conversion' is merely one part of the decision to assimilate into Naomi's people. Amy-Jill Levine has correctly pointed out that 'Ruth, although she expresses fidelity to Naomi's deity (1.16), locates her confidence primarily in herself'.[16]

In the book of Ruth, Yahweh is mentioned three times: by Ruth in 1.17, by Boaz in 2.12, and by the village people in their blessing in 4.11. Throughout the book of Ruth, Ruth is described as a Moabite, and we have no way of knowing if Ruth was an outsider in Bethlehem as a Moabite, and not fully integrated into the covenant community.[17] The text, however, gives us the opposite impression. Not only Boaz but also all the people

14. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, p. 32.

15. This interpretation is very naive, but it has contributed enormously to the increase in the number of Christian converts in Korea.

16. Levine, 'Ruth', p. 85.

17. See Levine, 'Ruth', p. 85.

in the village seem to have affection for Ruth. The village people enthusiastically express their wish that Yahweh make Ruth and Boaz build up the house of Israel. Ruth seems to be fully accepted in the Israelite community through Naomi. Indeed, the story of Ruth appears to be reacting against post-exilic laws that strictly prohibited intermarriage with foreign women (Ezra 9–10; Neh. 10.30; Exod. 29.33; Lev. 22.10-16; Num. 3.10, 38; 17.5; 18.4).

We also do not know if Ruth wanted to abandon her Moabite culture entirely or if she was considering a double identity.[18] The important thing is that Ruth had made up her mind to follow Naomi and, therefore, she would automatically follow Naomi's religion. Ruth did not pay as much attention to her religious conversion to Christianity (actually Yahwism) as Korean Christians might wish to believe. We do not need to assume that Ruth abandoned her identity as Moabite. The story of Ruth does not claim that she totally assimilates or abandons her cultural identity. The repeated references to her Moabite ancestry point not only to her uniqueness in Bethlehem but also to her legitimate claim to participate as a Moabite in the life of the Bethlehem community.[19] So it seems to be an exaggeration to criticize the book of Ruth on the grounds that it shows us indirectly the imperialistic tendency to assimilate the foreign Moabite woman into the Jewish community. Nevertheless, Korean Christians want to interpret Ruth as a woman who has totally abandoned her personal identity and devoted her life to Naomi. Also, to interpret Ruth as a good example of a daughter-in-law is to read the story according to Korean ideology.

Ruth's Happiness through Marriage to Boaz

Readers of the story of Ruth will recognise that its happy end is closely related to the institution of levirate marriage.[20] Levirate marriage functions to retain the ownership of property within the family as well as to prevent the extinction of the family line. It is also a custom to protect poor widows who had no sons. It is well explained in Deut. 25.5-10. If there are two brothers living together and one dies, leaving no son, his widow should not be married into another family. Rather, the surviving bother is to take her as his wife, and the eldest son born to them is to succeed to the name and inheritance of the deceased brother (Deut. 25.5-6).

18. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, p. 32. Sakenfeld points out that we should not use Ruth's decision as a warrant for an assimilationist, melting-pot view of the proper role of immigrants to the USA. On this problem, see Ai Ra Kim, *Women Struggling for a New Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

19. Sakenfeald, *Ruth*, p. 32.

20. It is said that a similar institution existed in some provinces of China and northern Korea in ancient times, but this institution is not familiar to Koreans.

In the book of Ruth, Boaz is not the brother of Ruth's husband. So the marriage between Boaz and Ruth is not a real levirate marriage. Nevertheless, Boaz wanted to follow the process of the levirate marriage to marry Ruth. The book of Ruth appears to combine the institution of levirate marriage and that of the right of redemption. The goel-system is originally for the redemption of land or debts.[21] It is debated whether or not the role of the גאל ('redeemer') was ever linked to levirate marriage, or whether it was confined strictly to the economic realm, such as in redemption of property belonging to a destitute relative.[22] Yet in the book of Ruth, Boaz connects the ownership of the land with marriage to Ruth (4.3-5). Boaz promised to marry Ruth if the closer next of kin did not want to marry her. This man refused to fulfill the duty of marriage, so Boaz married Ruth. Their son would carry on the name of Mahlon, Ruth's first husband.[23] Through this marriage, Ruth's and Naomi's future could be guaranteed.

Korean Christian women love this happy end to Ruth's story in marriage to Boaz because Korean widows who had no husband and no son had experienced the threat to their livelihood. Here we can raise the question if marriage to a rich man could really guarantee a woman's happiness. Perhaps it was true in Old Testament times because marriage to a rich man could give women some protection and ensure their survival. It is not true any more, however, in the twenty-first century.

Challenges Posed by the Book of Ruth

Ruth as a Woman of Conviction

If we read the book of Ruth carefully, we can affirm that Ruth's character can not be fully described in the four categories discussed above. She has, rather, some challenging characteristics, which I will explore here.

Hearing that Boaz was kind to Ruth, Naomi was delighted and advised Ruth to approach Boaz secretly. She told Ruth to bathe and anoint her body and to wear her best clothes, like a bride. Then Ruth should observe the place where he Boaz lay down and go and uncover his feet. The text (3.1-13) does not tell us exactly what had happened at the threshing floor. And so the storyteller creates an atmosphere of ambiguity and mystery.[24] If we

21. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, pp. 7, 74-75; cf. J.J. Stamm, 'גאל', THAT Bd. 1, pp. 383-94; Erich Zenger, *Das Buch Ruth*, Züricher Bibelkommentare AT, 8; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992), pp. 21-22.

22. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, pp. 7, 74-75.

23. In the genealogy in Ruth 4.18-22, however, Obed is the son of Boaz, not Mahlon.

24. So Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, p. 57; Zenger, *Ruth*, pp. 67, 70-72; and numerous other commentators.

read the text more closely, however, we can guess what was happening that night and also recognize clearly the courage of Ruth. Ruth understood Naomi's intention and answered Naomi, 'All that you tell me I will do' (3.5). In this answer Ruth revealed her resolution. As Sakenfeld observes, 'Ruth, who argued strenuously against Naomi's seemingly conventional proposal that she find her security in her Moabite homeland and family (1.16-17), now responds to a new and quite bizarre proposal with a simple sentence of compliance and cooperation'.[25]

An important question is, what is the meaning of 'uncover his feet' (3.4.7)? In every Korean version, the phrase is translated as 'uncover the bedclothes near his feet'.[26] In the Hebrew text, however, the object of the verb *galah* (uncover) is 'his feet', not 'the bedclothes near his feet'. So the translation in Korean does not correspond exactly to the Hebrew text. The Korean translator took great care so that Ruth would not seem to be very seductive. Of course the term rendered here as 'feet' has been variously translated. Sometimes it is translated with 'legs' (NRSV) or 'feet'. But the use in biblical Hebrew of *raglayim* as a veiled reference to the genitals is well known (Exod. 4.25; Deut. 11.10; 25.9; 28.57; Judg. 3.24). In addition, the verb 'to uncover', used here, appears in idioms referring to sexual relations (Lev. 18.6-19; Deut. 22.30).[27] The verb 'uncover' appears in the Old Testament about forty times in connection with genitalia. 'Uncover his feet' in 3.4 and 3.7, most likely has a sexual connotation.[28]

The story of Ruth is idyllic, even though the midnight scene arranged by Naomi and Ruth is striking and obscure. A widow dresses like a bride and seduces her kinsman at midnight at the threshing floor, asking for protection. How can we judge the attitude of Ruth? Was she just an obedient daughter-in-law? Of course the idea came from her mother-in-law Naomi, but Ruth did not have any objections. Ruth dared to seduce Boaz. The reader should not overlook Ruth's active role. Koreans, who place emphasis on filial piety, have seen the obedient Ruth as a daughter-in-law, but not as an independent actor. I think the Korean view is a half-truth. In fact, Ruth's actions were brave and risky. If somebody had seen her at the threshing floor, she would have suffered disgrace. Ruth took a great risk to achieve her and her mother-in-law's security. In my view, Ruth was blessed not only because of her obedience to her mother-in-law but also because of her willingness to accept challenges.

25. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, p. 55.

26. *The Holy Bible, Hangul and Revised* (Seoul: Korea Bible Society, 1982), p. 405; *The Holy Bible with Aprocrypha, Common Translation* (Seoul: Korea Bible Society, 1983), p. 417. All Korean translations are the same in this regard.

27. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, p. 54.

28. Zenger, *Ruth*, p. 67.

Ruth as a Foremother of David

As many scholars have pointed out, it is very strange that the people's blessing at the gate is for Ruth and Boaz, not for the house of Elimelech or Mahlon as might be expected. According to the levirate law, the son of Boaz and Ruth should succeed to the name of Mahlon, and this idea is expressed in 4.10. But in David's genealogy in 4.18-22, the son of Ruth and Boaz is reckoned as Boaz's son. Perhaps we should assume a later redactional insertion here, as some scholars think.[29] The blessing concludes with references to Perez, Tamar, and Judah (4.11-12). This part of the people's blessing points to the concluding genealogy (4.18-22), where we learn that Perez is the ancestor of Boaz and David. Perhaps the reference to Perez, Tamar and Judah in v. 12 is preparation for the genealogy of David in vv. 18-22 (cf. 1 Chron. 2.1-15).[30] Whatever process of redaction the story went through, in the last stage, Ruth became the foremother of David. It would appear that not only the storyteller of Ruth but also a later redactor recognized the value of Ruth, finding it not so much in her chastity, filial piety or fidelity as in her braveness or challenge to her fate, like Tamar in Genesis 38. If Korean Christians see the value of Ruth as lying simply in the family genealogy, and not in her braveness or challenge to her fate, they miss the real message of the book of Ruth. Ruth is mentioned in the family tree of David because of her braveness and active commitment.

Ruth's House to Be Like Tamar's

Why does Tamar appear in the story? The striking story of Tamar and the birth of Perez appears in Genesis 38, where levirate marriage is also a key theme.[31] There are many similarities between Ruth and Tamar.[32] Some scholars think that the redactor of the book of Ruth wanted to draw attention to these similarities to make a point about these 'unlikely' ancestors of David. Both of them were widows who had no son. However, they eventually did have sons thanks to their own efforts and by means of tricks, although both of them encountered obstacles along the way. When Judah realized that Tamar tricked him into fostering her child,, he acknowledged Tamar to be 'more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah' (Gen. 38.26). Perez is one of the twins born of this unusual union of Tamar and Judah. It does, indeed, appear to be the case that the redactor of the book of Ruth wanted to stress the initiative taken by Ruth and Tamar in building up

29. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, pp. 76-77.

30. Zenger, *Ruth*, pp. 10-14, 93-95.

31. See G. von Rad, *Das Erste Buch Mose, Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 290-96 [= J.H. Marks (trans.), *Genesis* (OTL; Philadelphia. Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 350-57].

32. Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, pp. 78-79; Zenger, *Ruth*, p. 95.

the house of David.[33] No wonder, then, that Ruth's name appears in connection with Tamar's. In desperate situations, these two foreign women fought to survive, and they succeeded. Both of them were recognized not only in the book of Ruth but also in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1.1-16).

Korean churchwomen have often heard from their pastors that Tamar, as well as Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, are named in the family tree of Jesus to show God's love for sinners.[34] But why should Tamar be treated as a sinner, when Judah declared that she was a righteous woman (Gen. 38.26)? If we investigate these women figures in the genealogy of Jesus, we can discover similarities among them. They are all extraordinary. Three or four of these women are foreigners. Tamar was Canaanite, Rahab was Canaanite, and Ruth was Moabite and Bathsheba, if not foreign herself, was married to a foreigner, Uriah the Hittite.[35] They were all very brave, and risked their lives to survive. So we can conclude that these women were praised and included in the family tree of Jesus because of their braveness and righteousness as well as their otherness. If we still believe that they were all sinners, we will misunderstand the real message of the biblical story.

Mutual Understanding and Mutual Empowerment

It is a pleasure to read the book of Ruth because the atmosphere is peaceful and idyllic and all the characters are very supportive of one another and helpful. The relationship here is not vertical but horizontal. Ruth, Naomi and Boaz care for one another and know what is good for others and what to do for the security of others.

There is no control over women's chastity, filial piety and fidelity in the story of Ruth. Rather, the initiative Ruth takes for her own and Naomi's survival is highly praised. Thus, instead of reading the biblical text only to deepen Korean Confucian ideals of chastity, filial piety and fidelity, we should take up the new challenges presented by the book of Ruth. Ruth was not only a good daughter-in-law but also a brave and committed woman who acted out of love to ensure her and her mother-in-law's survival. She took a great risk to approach Boaz in the night, demonstrating courage, and she succeeded in attaining her goal. She married Boaz and had a son, whose descendant was King David.

Upon rereading the book of Ruth, we need to reflect upon the Confucian cardinal paradigm of human relationship again. Originally the Confucian ideal of human relationship was not a vertical but a horizontal one. But this ideal became distorted into a vertical relationship. The same process takes

33. Cf. Zenger, *Ruth*, pp. 93-95.

34. See the discussion of this issue in U. Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Continental Commentary* (trans. W.C. Linss; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 109.

35. We know the name of her father, Eliam, but nothing about him.

place in the interpretation of the book of Ruth when we Koreans read it uncritically.

Neither the Bible itself nor Confucianism itself brings us the good or the bad. The crucial thing is how to interpret them. Koreans have distorted the horizontal nature of human relations in Confucian tradition into a vertical model, and we are in danger of missing the real message of the Bible and simply deepening the traditional heritage of Asian patriarchy unless we pay careful attention. It is therefore better for us to clarify our goal when we interpret the Bible using our cultural heritages; for example, liberation from oppression, correct evaluation of our cultural treasures and heritage, and global ethics. When we keep such goals in mind in scrutinizing not only the biblical witness but also Confucian tradition, we can more easily attain them. I call this kind of interpretation 'cross-checking', 'cross-cultural' interpretation or hermeneutics. This means that we should check the biblical message against our Asian heritage, and also our Asian heritage against the biblical tradition. I believe that mutual understanding and mutual empowerment, which is the main goal of Neo-Confucianism, is also well depicted in the book of Ruth.

Conclusion

I have explored some reasons why Korean Christians are attracted to the book of Ruth, and observed that Koreans have deep rooted Neo-Confucian prejudices that influence the way they read the Bible. Koreans interpret the relationship between Naomi and Ruth, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, as a vertical relationship in which one woman is subordinate to the other. In this respect, Ruth corresponds to the ideal of Korean Neo-Confucianism: a woman should be obedient to her parent-in-law, sacrifice herself to rescue her family, bear a son, and become a member of the king's family. Such an interpretation of the book of Ruth, however, can not liberate oppressed Korean women and does not do justice to Neo-Confucianism. It is unfortunate when we grasp only such oppressive messages from the book of Ruth and Korean Neo-Confucianism. What we need, rather, is a 'cross-cultural interpretation' of the Bible, which takes into account not only the Bible but also our Asian religious and cultural heritage. This Neo-confucian emphasis on the proper relationship between human beings, for example, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger, is important and encouraging, but, unless we change our relational paradigm from a vertical model based on subordination to a model of horizontal and equal relationship, it remains oppressive. Originally the Confucian cardinal virtues of human relationships stressed equal and right relationship. 'Hesed', 'solidarity', 'friendship' and 'love' between Ruth, Naomi and Boaz are all signs of horizontal and equal relationship. We can call it 'mutual respect', 'mutual empowerment'

or 'inter-relationship'.[36] The book of Ruth enjoins us to show respect to 'the other' be it a foreign woman, members of another faith or those with different sexual orientations from ours. Human relationships should be right and equal, not oppressive and based on subordination.

The book of Ruth ends happily for its protagonists. This simple resolution is a limitation. The role of our three characters could be different in the twenty-first century: Naomi like a Mother Goddess, Ruth like a Daughter Sophia, Boaz like a Holy Spirit. Whoever empowers a woman in a difficult situation can be Ruth, Naomi or Boaz in our context.

36. Cf. Ha Tai Kim, 'Transcendence Without and Within. The Concept of Tien Confucianism', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3 (Fall, 1972), pp. 146-60.

Motherhood as a Theological Model for Redemption in the Hebrew Bible

Yeong Mee Lee

Feminism offers an extensive critique of patriarchy, which is built on a dualistic worldview, in particular the domination of men over women and that of human beings over nature. The goal of the feminist critic is, I believe, to create an alternative theory and praxis to that of patriarchy. This paper thus seeks to uncover a life-oriented model of redemption in the language of motherhood—a model that draws upon mutual partnership between God and humanity—in order to provide an alternative inclusive theology of redemption for modern churches. This model is a counterpart to another type of theological language for redemption in the Hebrew Bible, the image of the divine warrior. The latter is dynamic and powerful; the former is embracing and consoling. These two images together create a powerful theology of redemption. Since the image of the divine warrior has long been a major theme in theological debate in Hebrew Bible studies, this article will highlight the less familiar language of motherhood as a theological model for redemption. Furthermore, the exploration of the language of motherhood will provide the tools for overcoming the difficulty of the violent and exclusive representation of the image of the divine warrior, which has traditionally set the stage for an alienating dichotomy between God and human beings as well as between 'us' and 'them' among people.

The present study will first examine the feminist debate on the meaning of redemption and motherhood. Second, it will investigate two biblical paradigms of redemption which offer evidence that the language of motherhood is integral for understanding the concept of redemption. In both texts, the theme of redemption is drawn from women's experience surrounding life. Discoveries of biblical examples that are intrinsic to female experience are important not only because the Bible can shed revelatory light on contemporary women's lives and provide Asian Christian women with Christian identities in a non-biblical world, but also because it applies motherhood to both men and women who are agents in the work of redemption. The Bible also empowers the contemporary community to transform, revise, and recombine the traditional touchstones of meaning in new ways,

allowing new experiences to become new insights into the ultimate nature of things. For this reason, this study aims to contribute to the discovery of inclusive theological language for recovering the wholeness of creation and redemption.

The Meaning of Redemption

Redemption is a significant theological motif in the both Testaments. It also stands at the core of Christian faith, which is deeply rooted in many aspects of Western culture. The understanding of redemption, like the understanding of any concept, changes throughout the biblical writings. Rosemary Ruether points out that redemption originally had a very concrete social meaning, referring to the ransoming of a slave from bondage. Yet, Platonizing Christianity defined redemption through an individualistic and otherworldly lens.[1] In this traditional view, human beings are considered to be so corrupt that they must flee the earth in order to purify their souls for eternal life.[2] Redemption is limited to the deliverance of humans from a fallen world. In the course of redemptive history, God acts alone, while humanity remains passive and silent.

However, Third World liberation theologies have seriously challenged the individualistic and otherworldly concept of redemption.[3] Most importantly, they recover the social meaning of redemption. Leonardo Boff states that 'salvation is the human and cosmic situation totally liberated from all threat to life and fully realizing God's plan for creation'.[4] Similarly, Franklyn J. Balasundaram, an Indian theologian, claims that the idea of salvation envisioned in the Scriptures is 'historical and total'. For him, 'Salvation means not just salvation of the soul, but the totality of humankind and of the whole-created universe'.[5] Their emphasis on the social, communal aspect of

1. Rosemary R. Ruether, *Introducing Redemption in Christian Feminism* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998), p. 14.

2. Rosemary R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 245.

3. Liberation theology (or theology of liberation) is a generic term; there are many variants, ranging from liberation theologies of the Third World to black theologies of North America, to feminist, womanist, and mujerista theologies of the Americas. Here I use the term to refer to liberation theology of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including minjung theology of Korea.

4. Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor* (trans. Robert R. Barr; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 81.

5. Franklyn J. Balasundaram, 'The Use of Scripture in Liberation Theologies: The Bible, Interpretation and Contextual Relevance', *Bangalore Theological Forum* 31 (1999), p. 145.

redemption is deeply rooted in concern for people's pain and suffering and for their struggle for justice and freedom.

In addition, Third World liberation theologies, especially Korean minjung theology, emphasize the subjectivity of people in the process of redemption history. Yong Bok Kim, for example, explains that the emphasis on people as the subjects of history is 'not to exalt them in political terms but to affirm their identification of themselves authentically as the masters of their own history'.[6] Their social biography functions to integrate and inter-relate the dimensions and components of people's social and cultural experiences as historical protagonists.[7]

Despite Third World liberation theologies' contribution to shifting the understanding of redemption from an individualistic concept to a social phenomenon and from an otherworldly context to present reality, they share the traditional biblical theology of redemption rooted in the concept of God as Warrior.[8] This modern application of the military model of redemption, however, presents complex and numerous theological problems. The most serious theological problem is the violent nature of the concept of war itself, including its orientation toward hatred and the desire to annihilate one's enemy. It produces a dichotomy between 'self' and 'other'. Furthermore, it represents redemption as a single act of deliverance from God rather than an on-going participatory process in which the divine and humanity work together to sustain a right relationship between God and people and throughout all of creation.

The military model of redemption is not a sufficient model for the elimination of oppression, in one community or all, for all time, because violence remains an acceptable mode of relating to the world, for both the human and the divine. Although it seems to be easier for oppressed communities to resort to violent revolution rather than formulate a plan for massive nonviolent resistance against structural evil, we must remember that the violent overthrow of an oppressor rarely eliminates systemic oppression. The memory of violence and bloody battle will eventually cease to empower.

6. Yong Bok Kim, 'Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics over against Political Messianism', in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (ed. Yong Bok Kim *et al*.; Singapore: The Christian Conference of Asia, 1981), p. 188.

7. Yong Bok Kim, 'Minjung Social Biography and Theology', *Ching Feng* 24 (1985), p. 224.

8. For Gerhard and von Rad, war was not just a feature of Israel's experience, or even of its religion. Ancient Israel as the people of God was a military camp, and its God was a warrior. War was at the heart of Israel's religion and its identity, see G. von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (trans. Marva J. Dawn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 3.

Although feminist theology shares much of liberation theology's concept of redemption, it unequivocally rejects a hierarchical and violent nature of redemption. Instead, feminist theology highlights mutuality in the relation between God and humanity and considers that redemption is about the transformation of self and society into good, life-giving relations, rather than the escape from the body and the world into eternal life.[9] In other words, redemption signifies the transformation of unjust relationships, resulting in justice and peace within present history. In particular, feminist theologians redefine the analysis of injustice in the context of the gender hierarchy, which is central to the total system and ideology of patriarchy. Evil is defined in terms of external structures and cultures of domination to which human persons fall victim or identify with as victimizers. Korean feminist Oo Chung Lee states that evil is 'all the forces that damage a person's dignity and subjectivity and push him or her into a sub-human state'.[10] Therefore, redemption includes all expressions of human creativity that break through disconnecting and dominating relations, thus sparking experiences of mutual relation. Ultimately, the goal of redemption is to overcome the 'patriarchal subordination of women in all its forms and create societies and cultures of just and loving mutuality between men and women across classes and races'.[11]

In mutually affirming relationships, God is 'nothing other than the eternally creative source of our relational power, our common strength'.[12] God is with humankind in the world as a moving spirit, which creates, liberates, and blesses the world. Thus in the course of redemption history, God is not the power of dominating control from the outside but the matrix or ground of life-giving relationships and their ongoing renewal.[13] This God enters into the suffering of people as a dynamic and relational force, motivating them to wrestle with evil and encouraging them into deepening forms of mutuality and integrity of relationships with God and among themselves.

In sum, the feminist constructive theology of redemption briefly described above includes three features: (1) redemption is a social concept, the recovery of right relationship in this world, (2) redemption is a continual process, (3) redemption brings the divine and humanity together in the mutual work of redemption. In this view, God is seen not as an external superpower that

9. Ruether, *Introducing Redemption*, p. 64.

10. Oo Chung Lee, *In Search for Our Foremothers' Spirituality* (Seoul: AWRC, 1994), p. 7.

11. Ruether, *Introducing Redemption*, pp. 13-14.

12. I. Carter Heyward, *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality, and Liberation* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1984), p. 124.

13. Ruether, *Introducing Redemption*, p. 66.

controls human beings but as a creative source of our struggle for ushering into present reality a new heaven and earth.

Understanding Motherhood as a Social and Theological Concept

The experience of being a mother should be distinguished from motherhood as an institution. At the forefront of the Western feminist movement, Adrienne Rich argued that the potential relationship of every woman to her powers of reproduction and to children differs from motherhood as a social, cultural, and religious institution and ideology.[14] In other words, the 'mystique of motherhood' differs among different cultures and under different social conditions. The mother role is not necessarily exclusively linked to the ability of reproduction. It is true that biological reproduction can contribute to the performance of the mother role. Yet, mothering is not a role defined by biological functions. It is a social role that both women and men can assume. As Nancy Chodorow notes, sex does not make women's nature different from men's. Mothering is not inborn or natural but induced by social structures and reproduced by psychological processes.[15]

Motherhood and the role of mothering is not limited or defined by history. It is defined by the present and within particular societies as well. This can be better illustrated by two examples. One is Korean women's experience of motherhood, and how the role of mother has changed over time, according to changes in societal norms. The other example comes from the biblical presentation of motherhood.

Korean Women's Experience of Motherhood

There is a recent blossoming of debate among Korean feminist scholars on new understandings of motherhood in Korea.[16] Among these, Taek Rim Yun

14. Adrienne Rich, *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).

15. Nancy J. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 19.

16. For three major works on motherhood in the Korean situation, see Sung Sook Cho, *Ideology of the So-called 'Mother': Experience of Mother and Self-identity* (Seoul: Hanul Academy, 2002); Taek Rim Yun, *Motherhood in Korea* (Seoul: Jishikmading, 2001); Young Hee Shim, Sung Jung Jin and Jung Ro Yun (eds.), *Reality and Debate of Motherhood: Gender, Life, and Identity of Mother* (Seoul: Nanam, 1999) (all in Korean). While preparing this article, I was delighted to find a treasure, *Motherhood: Experience, Institution, Theology* (ed. Anne Carr and Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), which was published in 1989 yet came to my attention this late. To my surprise, I found that the format of the whole book is aligned with the flow of my ideas and I owed a debt to the authors of the book for

examines the changes in the understanding of motherhood in each stage of Korean history. Yun argues that the subjectivity of motherhood was formed in Korea at the beginning of industrialization in the 1960s. And so, her studies of motherhood and the role of mother in Korea is divided into three historical phases: motherhood before 1960, during the 1960s and 1970s, and after 1980.[17]

Before 1960, living in extended family systems, Korean women sacrificed their lives for their family. Their main responsibility was to support the family, ensuring the family's survival. Especially after the Korean War (1950–1953), single mothers had the sole responsibility for everything in the family, including the education of children. Mothers were concerned to secure the best education possible for their sons, since the success of the son was crucial for establishing the family's name and status in society. As Korea became an industrialized nation in the 1960s, rapid social changes occurred affecting the Korean family. First, because many families moved to urban areas for work, the primary family unit shifted from the large extended family to smaller nuclear families. The second change was the result of men working outside of the home, while women remained at home, taking charge of raising children, ensuring education, managing the household economy, and investing money in real estate. The sharp division between the public and domestic domain defined gender roles more specifically at this time, even while Korean society became more stable, with the establishment of a strong middle class. Education was important for improving one's social status; more education guaranteed better jobs. Motherhood in the 1960s and 70s revolved around the education of children, challenging them to do well in their studies so that they could graduate from the best schools.

By the 1980s and 1990s, the Korean economy had so improved that society became more focused on the quality of social and cultural aspects of life. However, during this period, one's level of education continued to be a symbol of high social status in Korean society. In fact, the acceptance of children in the best schools represented the success of mothers. Korean mothers continued to be highly invested in their children's education, creating supermothers who managed child rearing and home economy, all for the sake of children. The Korean family is not at all couple-centered, but child-centered, creating a problem of 'absent fatherhood' in contrast to the overpowering role of motherhood. It is during this period that the husband and

providing a rich resource for enriching my discussion in this article. I hope that the present article adds an Asian perspective to the development of a theological understanding of motherhood.

17. Her study mainly relied on personal interviews with Korean women, who are mostly middle class (*Motherhood in Korea*, pp. 35-118).

father becomes increasingly absent from the family, since the father players a small role apart from providing the paycheck.

In the new millennium, especially after the so-called IMF shock–nationwide financial crisis, the idea of a traditional Korean family has been widely abandoned. Divorce rates have rapidly increased. Recent statistics show the divorce rates as follows.[18]

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Divorce rate of married persons	5.3	5.9	6.3	7.2	6.0	5.5	5.3	5.2

The idea of a traditional family is no longer dominant in Korean society. The myth of strong fatherhood has all but disappeared. There are various forms of families that exist in society, from single parents to adopted families to blended families. In these new kinds of families, the understanding of motherhood as a nature-linked female reproductive role is seriously challenged, because there are mothering fathers and mothers who do not experienced childbirth.

Motherhood in the Hebrew Bible

Just as motherhood implies different roles in each stage of Korean history, motherhood for biblical women also differs, according to what the biblical authors wish to emphasize in their presentations. The biblical authors are not interested in presenting an ideal motherly role to their readers. Instead, they highlight certain aspects of motherhood in order to emphasize a particular message. Different understanding of motherly roles is often needed in different situations. The biblical idea of motherhood as experience and institution also varies. For example, some women are presented as charismatic mothers who guide, plan, and even provide a strategy for the lives of their sons. The characteristics of this kind of motherhood are more patriarchal than the traditional notion of subordination and devotion.

Deborah is the leading character in the narrative about a battle against King Jabin's general Sisera in Judges 4 and the song in Judges 5. She is referred to as 'a prophet, judging Israel', which means that she possesses authority. She is called 'a mother in Israel'; however there is nothing of a motherly character in the picture of Deborah. Her conduct reminds one of the goddess, pictured in several texts from Mesopotamia and Syria,[19] and,

18. Cited from the homepage of the Korea National Statistical Office (http://www.nso.go.kr/nso2006/) (August 27, 2008).

19. See F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

indeed, she appears to have taken on some aspects of the goddess.[20] In the song, she is the bellicose leader of the united tribes.

The barrenness of the Israelite matriarchs is a major concern in Genesis, which represents a time of origins, the establishment of a new people, when woman's role as child bearer was essential. In the stories of the Israelite matriarchs, the threat to the fulfillment of the promise for offspring is at issue, and the matriarch's role as child bearers is a central concern, even in a polygamous household like Jacob's, where strong ties of loyalty were likely to form among children of the same mother. The mother appears to be the center in special groups within the family.[21] Women as mothers can have special rights; for example, the mother is the one to name her child in twenty-five cases, as against the father in eighteen cases.[22]

Significantly, after Exodus 1 records the fulfillment of the promise of many descendants of Israel, the Bible is no longer interested in barren women or in co-wives fighting over the inheritance of birthright of their own son.[23] Moreover, after the stories of the monarchy, the Bible is scarcely interested in human mothers but rather presents a mother figure, often represented by personified mother Zion. She first appears as daughter Zion, who is a victim of war. Then she appears as a mother who laments the destruction of Jerusalem and who comforts her children, the exiles and returnees. The book of Lamentations introduces a mother weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are personified as the children of mother Zion, who is comforting and compassionate in response to her children's tragedy. During the exile, the role of mother as comforter and as a bearer of new life takes precedence over that of father, who fights against the enemy.

Overall, different understandings of motherhood in the history of Korea and in biblical texts reveal that over time and space, the role of mother is highlighted in different ways. The bond between the motherhood and gender is not biological but social. The following exegetical study will show how the language of motherhood is used to describe redemption.

20. Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, 'Blessed among Women: A Mother in Israel and a Virgin in the Church', in J. Bekkenkamp and F. Droes (eds.), *The Double Voice of Her Desire* (Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2004), p. 99.

21. D.R. Mace, *Hebrew Marriage* (London: Epworth Press, 1953), following P.A.H. de Boer, *Fatherhood and Motherhood in Israelite and Judean Piety* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 7.

22. In late texts assigned to the Priestly writers, it is always the father who names the child.

23. An exception is the story of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, but it has a different interest from the stories of the matriarchs.

Motherhood in the Redemptive History of the Exodus

Even when liberation theology developed the exodus story as the biblical model of redemption, women's experiences of suffering and liberation were excluded in the process of interpretation. Indeed, Asian women remark that the exodus story can be an oppressive model for women if the interpretation emphasizes the role of the male hero, Moses, alone.[24] By overturning the traditional male-centered and hero-centered reading of the exodus, Asian feminist theologians interpret the exodus narrative as 'a collective liberation movement of the slaves, male and female, to create a new community in opposition to the dictatorial Egyptian urban-centered power structure'.[25] From this point of view, they claim that Exodus 1–2 must be seen not as the introduction of a great future leader, Moses, but as the story of women's collective struggle to lead people to a transformed life, away from oppression and death. Exodus is an account of the victory of women's life-affirming experience of giving birth and nurturing over the male power of wielding death.[26] It is a call to change the culture of death to the culture of life, and women in the Exodus story are the ones who show the way.

In the first chapter of Exodus, death is linked to males, life is linked to females. The male king calls for the male children's death. Ironically, he chooses Shiphrah and Puah, the two midwives, to carry out his plan of genocide. However, the women choose to resist and save life. In the king's command, 'If he is a son, kill him; if she is a daughter, she shall live', gender is the deciding factor in determining the child's fate. Attention centers on two midwives whose profession is to help in bringing life into the world. The importance of their profession is highlighted by the repetition of the key word *yld* (to give birth) in its various forms in the chapter.[27] Even where

24. E.g. Lee, *In Search for Our Foremothers' Spirituality*, pp. 112-20; Elli Kim, Jung Su Kim, and Yeong Mee Lee, 'Women in the Exodus Story', in *Women of Courage: Asian Women Reading the Bible* (Seoul: Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology, 1992), p. 126. Criticizing the significance of the 'prototype' of a male savior, Dolores Williams also points out that redemption must be judged in terms of women's oppression and their struggle for survival and quality of life; *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), p. 6.

25. Kim, Kim and Lee, 'Women in the Exodus Story', p. 126.

26. Pearl Derego *et al*., 'The Exodus Story', *In God's Image* (September 1988), p. 48. Also, for an African women's reading, see Rosemary Kathuure Nthambur, 'A Female Facilitator of the Exodus: The Mother of Moses from an African Perspective', *In God's Image* (Summer 1991), pp. 15-18.

27. The root *yld* appears two times as verb (16, 22), two times as noun (17, 18), and seven times as a participle (15, 17, 18, 19 [2], 20, 21).

the word 'midwives' could be replaced by the pronoun ('they' or 'them'), it is repeated as if to draw attention to their role.

The chiastic structure of Exod. 1.15-22 clearly shows the conflict between life and death.

A The king's speech to the midwives (vv. 15-16): kill sons, let daughters live (vv. 15-16)
  B **Fear of God**: The two midwives' defiance (v. 17)
    C The king of Egypt *speaks* to the midwives (v. 18)
    C' The midwives *answer* him (v. 19)
  B' **Fear of God**: God blesses the midwives (vv. 20-21)
A' Conclusion: Pharaoh's command to all the people (v. 22): cast sons into the Nile, let daugters live (v. 22)

The command of death begins and concludes the unit. Two divinities, the Egyptian king and the Hebrew God, represented by the Pharaoh and the midwives—confront each other in the middle of the unit. The fear of God bridges the transformation from death to life. It first functions as the source of the two midwives' resistance to the king's command. Next, it becomes the source of blessing upon the two midwives, their families, and the whole people. God, representing the power of life, becomes the source of power that motivates defiance.

The two midwives are the first victors in the confrontation between the Hebrew people and the oppressive power of Egypt. Their retort causes the king to reconsider his policy. His new strategy is to command all the people to cast every son that is born into the Nile, but to let every girl to live. This command links chapters 1 and 2 and introduces the redemptive work of three women. Exodus 2.1-10 introduces a model of redemption that is highlighted in the introduction and conclusion.

Introduction: the birth of a child (v. 1)
First Stage (vv. 2-6)
  A the mother hides the baby (vv. 2-3)
    B the sister watches her brother (v. 4)
  A' the daughter of Pharaoh finds the baby (vv. 5-6)
Second Stage (vv. 7-10a)
  The girl calls the natural mother (vv. 7-8)
  The natural mother and adopted mother meet (vv. 9-10a)
Conclusion: the naming of Moses (v. 10b)

In this unit, all three women play important roles in saving life. First, the natural mother carefully prepares a basket to save her son, plastering it with bitumen and pitch to prevent its leaking for the child's safety. After settling him in the basket, she cautiously places the basket among the reeds of the Nile. While Pharaoh had commanded that every son be *cast into* the Nile, she *placed* him there. The repetition of the word 'placed' alludes to the fact

that the mother placed the ark in the water with the same tender care with which she had placed the baby in the ark.[28]

Second, the sister plays a crucial role in linking the two mothers. In the first stage (vv. 2-6), the natural mother and the adoptive mother embrace the sister, who plays the mediating role between them. In the second stage (vv. 7-10a), the sister's mediating role is concretely introduced. She persuades Pharaoh's daughter to find a nursing mother for the baby, and she brings the natural mother to the adoptive mother as the baby's nurse.

Third, the daughter of Pharaoh goes against her own father's decree that every Hebrew son shall be cast into the Nile. She draws a Hebrew baby out of the Nile. The decree was announced to all the people, so she must have known it. She immediately recognizes that the baby is a Hebrew, and is open-minded enough to allow a Hebrew mother to nurse the baby. At the conclusion of the unit, the daughter of Pharaoh gives the baby a name, Moshe, for she drew him out of the water. The name, however, is an active participle, 'the drawer out'. In a way, the Egyptian princess participates in the redemption history not only by saving Moses' life but also by designating him 'the drawer out' for Moses will 'draw' the Israelites out of Egypt. Indeed, she is a model of the kind of liberator the baby will become. The motherly roles of midwife, child-rearing, and caring represent the cooperative power that makes redemption possible. In conjunction with the theology of Holy War, this story of women's struggle to bring forth new life forms a biblical theology of redemption.

Motherhood in Isaiah's Vision of Redemption (Isa. 66.7-14)

Another biblical example that supports a feminist constructive theology of redemption comes from Isa. 66.7-14. Motherhood is again a central motif in delivering the message of redemption. Long-neglected female gender roles, childbirth and nurturing, become the source for understanding the divine action of redemption.[29] Although female gender roles are certainly not limited to childbirth and nurturing, they are central to many women's experiences throughout the history of the world, imposed by social and cultural appropriation of biological differences.

28. J. Cheryl Exum, 'You Shall Let Every Daughter Live: A Study of Exod. 1:8–2:10', *Semeia* 28 (1983), p. 75.

29. In New Testament studies, J. Massyngbaerde Ford provides a feminist interpretation of God as the redeemer, in the figure of friend and mother (*Redeemer, Friend, and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997]).

Isaiah 66.7-9 describes the redemption of the exiles in the language of 'birth' and 'caring'. The subject is a mother, later identified as personified Zion. Two different words are used for 'labor pains' (*ḥyl*[30] and *ḥbl*[31]) and two different words for 'child bearing' (*yld*[32] and *mlṭ*, in the *hiphil*).

> Before she-travailed (*ḥyl*) she-gave-birth (*yld*)
> Before came pain (*ḥbl*) to-her, she-delivered (*mlṭ*, *hiphil*) a-male (v. 7).

The varied vocabulary for childbirth points to two different aspects of childbirth, labor pains and birth itself.

In the Hebrew Bible, the language of birth is often employed to express the divine action of redemption. God, like a woman in labor, endures labor pains in order to bring forth a new people (Deut. 32).[33] Through the image of a travailing woman, the divine action of redemption moves in the direction of creation, a labor of new life. In Isa. 46.3-4 the verb *mlṭ* in the *piel* depicts the divine action of redemption. God is depicted as the one who has carried Israel in the womb, and who will bear them again. The maternal image of God is clearly biological.[34] Words for female organs (womb and uterus) are employed to declare the promise of deliverance for the remnant of Israel.

The application of the language of birth to both the divine saving action and to Zion may imply that Zion takes on a saving role on behalf of God. Here in Isa. 66.7-9 she functions as an agent of redemption,[35] similar to the role of the Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah. While help ultimately comes from God, Zion participates in the saving action with God. This image of redemption is a radical contrast to the image of redemption in which the warrior God fights alone for the people, while the people remain submissive in silence.[36]

The deity speaks in the first person in 66.9 to proclaim the divine role at this birth. Here God appears as the creative source of power that opens and

30. *ḥyl* expresses 'the writhing movements of labor contractions' (Andrew Bowling, '*ḥyl*', in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* [ed. Richard Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke; Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2003], p. 623).

31. *ḥbl* means 'pain, specifically that of childbirth' (Gerard van Groningen, '*ḥebel*', *TWOT*, p. 259).

32. *yld* refers in its narrowest sense to 'the act of a woman in giving birth to a child' (Paul R. Gilchrist, '*yld*', *TWOT*, p. 378).

33. L.L. Bronner, 'Gynomorphic Imagery in Exilic Isaiah (40–66)', *Dor le Dor* 12 (1983–84), p. 77.

34. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 164.

35. Zion's image as a mediator of the divine saving action challanges the dominant male vision of the future, which utilizes the model of King David, the Son of Man, and other kingly images of the Messiah for the main figures in a redemptive vision.

36. E.g. Exodus 14–15 and numerous passages in Joshua and Judges.

closes the womb (cf. Gen. 15.3; 20.18). God acts as a midwife who helps the mother give birth to the new baby (Ps. 22.9-10). The fact that Zion, not God, actually gives birth signifies that humanity participates in redemption history. Verse 11 transforms the imagery of a mother in labor into the imagery of a nursing mother. The prophet creates a vivid image of a nursing mother in the act of breastfeeding her child. The subject is second-person masculine plural, which might indicate that those who love and mourn for Jerusalem in v. 10 are included in the feeding. Not only can Zion's children enjoy the comfort she offers, but also all who love her are called to rejoice with her. Mother Zion becomes the mother of all persons of good will.[37] This metaphor of a nursing mother also occurs in a variety of ways in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Isa. 49.23). Here redemption is understood not as the single action of giving birth but as the continual work of nurturing that extends to all who love Jerusalem.

In Isa. 66.7-13, three main images, a travailing woman, a midwife and a nursing mother, reflect the unique female experiences of childbirth and nursing in the context of a male-oriented religion that often portrays female sexuality as negative. Here the role of woman as a life bearer is elevated to the divine role of redemption in terms of creation.

Conclusion

The two biblical texts discussed above provide a basis for an alternative theology of redemption using the language of motherhood. The language of motherhood in these stories moves beyond the biological function of reproduction. It is understood in direct correlation to the process of creation, which becomes the first characteristic of this theology of redemption. The image of God as a travailing woman and the highlighting of women's roles in relation to 'life', including life giver and nurturer, open an avenue to merge the idea of redemption with the theme of creation. The description of God as a travailing woman encourages us to break the social bond between motherhood and the reproductive capability of the female sex, particularly if one insists on viewing God as male. In addition, the application of the language of birth and care-giving to both the divine saving action and human experience indicates that not only God but also humanity participates in the act of redemption. By drawing on positive images of motherhood in the Bible, a biblical theology of redemption is able to include women in the work of redemption, women whose experiences are excluded from the theological language of war as metaphor for redemption. However, this does not necessarily mean that women alone take part in the work of redemption.

37. John J. Schmitt, 'The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother', *Revue Biblique* 92 (1985), p. 563.

On the contrary, the language of motherhood is applied to both women and men, who form one side of the partnership for redemption.

A second characteristic of this theology is that redemption is a continual process, not a one-time event, whose goal is to create a new heaven and earth as a present reality. In the exodus story, this continual working for redemption is reflected in the female characters' cooperative struggle to save the life of a baby, including preparing the basket, watching, saving, and raising the child. The work of mother is also an ongoing process. The human mother's role is projected onto God, who comforts the people of Jerusalem. God and humanity thus work together to care for life until wholeness is achieved and relationship reestablished.

Third, in this new understanding of redemption, God does not appear as a removed, omniscient, all-controlling super power, but as a creative source of life. In the exodus story, the fear of God that motivates the Hebrew midwives to resist the power of death becomes the basis of blessing for themselves as well as for others. In Isaiah 66, God, who opens and closes the womb, helps the Woman Zion to deliver her child. Through this child people find joy. Humanity is the partner of God in completing this redemptive scene of communal joy and sharing. This is the true nature of redemption—a relationship that includes God, individuals, community, and all of creation.

Finally, it should be noted that the motherhood of God does not directly lead us to conclude that God is female for God is neither male nor female. To speak of the motherhood of God is to speak of a caring and nurturing deity, not a divine sexual being. The motherhood of God, who is neither male nor female, will promote the self-images of both women and men. For women, affirming their daily experience of mothering as part of the image of God and allowing it a role in the theological discourse of redemption can improve their self image. For men, ackowleding the motherhood of God can promote their participation in the ministry of caring of nurturing, as they are reminded to imitate the divine in them. This new paradigm of divine motherhood has the capacity for overcoming the split between the roles of women and men. As creatures in the image of God, both are called to bear the character of motherhood within them.

Marriage by Purchase? *Mohar* in the Hebrew Bible and Korean Society

Eun Ae Lee

In Korea changes in the understanding of marriage have given rise to new social phenomena: the age of marriage is rising, the number of single people is growing, and the divorce rate is high. Some reasons for these changes are the increasing economic power of women and women's desire for self realization, but more important is the individual decision to marry or divorce.

Marriage in Korean society is not without its problems. Marriage should be a beautiful and happy event, the joining of two people who love each other. However, marriage is never this simple. Marriage is regarded as the blending of the families of the bride and the groom. A wedding ceremony is usually arranged by the parents of the engaged couple. The marriage also includes some financial transactions in order to help the newlyweds, following Korean custom. The two families send a gift or money to each other, thus confirming the engagement.

Korean marriage customs are similar to traditions and laws pertaining to the institution of marriage described in the Hebrew Bible. This essay will examine the passages about paying for a marriage in order better to understand the meaning and function of this custom in ancient Israel. It will then enquire into the message from the Bible for us today.

Mohar (מהר) *in the Hebrew Bible*

The Hebrew word *mohar* is generally understood as the bride-price that a man has to pay in order to take a woman as his wife. Bride-price is mentioned only three times in the Hebrew Bible. In the Book of the Covenant, it is prescribed that a man who has had a sexual intercourse with an unbetrothed woman had to pay the *mohar* for her (Exod. 22.16). In another case, Shechem, the son of Hamor, wanted to marry Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and mentioned paying a *mohar* (Gen. 34.12). In 1 Sam. 18.25, Saul, as the father of Michal, demanded the foreskins of a hundred Philistines instead of a *mohar* for her from David. While these two latter cases are located in narratives, the other case is in a legal text. In this article I will focus on the legal text in Exodus 22 and the extended law in Deuteronomy 22 and inquire into

the meaning and development of *mohar* in ancient Israel, especially as it relates to the status of women in an ancient patriarchal society.

The Bride-price for a Virgin

The Book of Covenant (Exod. 20.22–23.33) contains some of the oldest legal traditions in the Hebrew Bible. The marriage law (Exod. 22.15-16) is located in a section of cases involving monetary payments, and it makes the seduction of an unbetrothed virgin punishable by a fine. The fact that such an injury is found in the section on property damage reflects a view of woman as a kind of property. The law arbitrates between an offender and the injured party, like other laws in casuistic form in the Book of Covenant, e.g. laws against bodily injury (Exod. 21.18-36) or the compensation for damage to property (21.37–22.15). Carolyn Pressler argues that an unbetrothed girl's primary economic value is her sexual and reproductive capacity, and that she would be purchased for sexual purposes, for bearing children, and for general labor. She regards 'daughter' as a concept implying the purpose of the sale.[1]

The seduction of an unengaged girl, however, was not simply property damage, because the seducer would have to marry the girl.[2] Exod. 22.15-16 could therefore be concerned with bodily injury; it has equivalents in Exod. 21.18-32 and is different from the laws for compensation in Exod. 21.33–22.14.[3] The law is expressed in casuistic form:

> If a man seduces (פתה) a virgin (בתולה) who is not pledged to be married (לא־ארשׂה), and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price (מהר), and she shall be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price (מהר) for virgins (Exod. 22.16-17 NIV).

While Cassuto interpreted the verb *pth* as meaning without the consent of the girl,[4] it can be interpreted also as without force. It can simply refer to the act of persuading a girl to have sexual intercourse. This law does not necessarily condemn pre-marital intercourse, but it does require the male to take

1. C. Pressler, 'Wives and Daughters, Bond and Free: Views of Women in the Slave Laws of Exodus 21.2-11', in V.H. Matthews, B.M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (eds.), *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 155-56.

2. B.S. Childs, *Exodus* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM Press, 1982), pp. 476-77.

3. E. Otto, *Wandel der Rechtsbegründung in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte des antiken Israel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 9-11.

4. Cassuto distinguished this case from other cases in which a man persuades a girl and she consents or the girl is already betrothed. Such cases are treated not here, but in Deut. 22.23-29. See U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. I. Abraham; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1987), p. 288.

full responsibility for his action. The law mediates the conflict between a man who had tempted a virgin and her father.[5] Here 'virgin' is a misleading translation of the Hebrew word *betulah*, which refers to a pubescent young woman, often a woman of marriageable age.[6] Biological virginity is usually specified by the addition of phrases such as 'who has not known a man' or 'whom a man has not known' (e.g. Judg. 11.39). The additional phrase here 'who is not pledged to be married' indicates the woman's legal status, not her biological situation. An unmarried woman still belongs to her father, so that the man who slept with her injures the rights of her father and is guilty. Since the woman is not married, the man has to pay a *mohar* to the father of the woman and take her as his wife. The criminal is not punished, but forced to offer restitution. The law is concerned to prevent violence by requiring payment for the damage.[7] A father could refuse to give his daughter to the man who seduced her. The young woman's father might consider the man unsuitable for his daughter. In that case the man has to pay the same amount of the *mohar* for a virgin, but will not be able to marry her.[8] The sum is here not a bride-price but a penalty.

The Function of mohar

Mohar, usually translated as 'bride-price', is the money paid to the father of a virgin in order to take her as a wife. There is no clear definition of *mohar*, however. It could be interpreted simply as a gift to the bride's family, as recompense for economic loss or as compensation for the loss of virginity. John Durham understands *mohar* as compensation to a young woman's family for her transfer into another family, which becomes her property on the occasion of the death of her father or her husband.[9]

A marriage contract by paying of a *mohar* is, according to Paul Koshaker, comparable to a bill of sale, so the *mohar* is the purchase price of a woman. Raymond Westbrook draws the analogy between the institutions of adoption and marriage. In both cases there is a transaction involving three parties: 'a protagonist' (adoptor/groom), a person as object of the contract (adoptee/bride) and the parents of that person. The relationship between the person

5. S. Scholz, 'Exodus', in L. Schottroff and M.-T. Wacker (eds.), *Feministische Bibelauslegung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), p. 36.

6. It can denote an engaged woman, as in Deut. 22.23, but it can also be used for a married (Isa. 62.5) or even widowed (Joel 1.8) woman. See T. Frymer-Kensky, 'Virgin', in C. Meyers (ed.), *Women in Scripture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), p. 195.

7. Frymer-Kensky, 'Virgin', p. 196.

8. According to Law 56 of the Middle Assyrian Laws, which treats of such a case, the seducer must pay a third bride-money (Cassuto, *Exodus*, p. 289).

9. J.I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC, 3; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1987), p. 327; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* I (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 26-29.

who is the object and his or her parents is dissolved and a new relationship with the protagonist (either adopter or groom) is created.[10] Westbrook sees stages in the formation of a marriage. The first is the agreement between the two families that the bride will be given in marriage to the groom. The second is the bringing of the *mohar* by the groom, who would customarily hold a banquet on the occasion (Judg. 14.10). At this point the bride is betrothed. The third stage is the claiming of the bride by the groom, on the strength of the payment of the *mohar* (Gen. 29.21). In the fourth stage, the marriage is completed.[11]

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Codex Hammurabi §130, Codex Eshnnuna §26) indicate the time interval between payment of the bride-price and completion of marriage. The paying of the bride-price did not complete the marriage, but, as a first step, provided a legal basis for the marriage. G.R. Driver and J.C. Miles call this stage 'inchoate marriage'.[12] Even if the *mohar* is already paid, the bride still lives in her father's house and remains under his authority. However, she is recognized as married and has the rights and duties of a married woman.

The *mohar*, then, represents a binding legal agreement for marriage, not simply monetary compensation or a commercial trabsaction. E. Otto locates the origin of the *mohar* in the system of exogamy.[13] Money is used to establish a relationship between families, even if two families cannot directly exchange one's son for another's daughter. The *mohar* is therefore the equivalent to the direct exchange of a person for a person, not compensation for the capacity for work or the loss of virginity. By means of the *mohar*, a daughter is legally recognized as a married woman to whom her future husband has exclusive sexual rights. The *mohar* shows that marriage originally has the purpose of perpetuating the family by producing children, especially sons.

Fifty Shekels for a Raped Woman

The marriage law appears again in Deuteronomy in the section on sexual relations (Deut. 22.13-30). Two provisions seem to deal with a similar case, in which an unbetrothed girl appears as victim of the offence, and the penalty for this act is marriage, but there are important differences.

10. P. Koshaker, *Rechtsvergleichende Studien zur Gesetzgebung Hammurapis Koenigs von Babylon* (Leipzig: Veit, 1917), pp. 130-49; R. Westbrook, *Old Babylonian Marriage Law* (Horn: Berger, 1988), p. 58; cited by H.J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 88-89.

11. R. Westbrook, 'Biblical Law', in N.S. Hecht, *et. al.*, *An Introduction to the History and Sources of Jewish Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 10-15.

12. G.R. Driver and J.C. Miles, *The Assyrian Laws* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 322-24.

13. E. Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), pp. 53-54.

The verb used in Exod. 22.16-17 is פתה in the *piel* and is often translated as 'seduce'. The verb פתה includes deception, persuasion, allurement and seduction, but it does not denote force or threats. The man persuades the girl to sleep with him; פתה therefore includes the possibility that the girl has consented to do so. The verb תפשׂ in Deut. 22.28-29 appears in the context of violence and seems to describe rape rather than something milder.[14] Weinfeld argues that תפשׂ means 'held' and not necessarily 'attacked';[15] however, the verb implies an element of force when the object of the verb is a person.[16] The man might seize a girl and force her to have sex with him. Pressler thinks that the case in Deuteronomy is not different from the case in Exodus. In these cases, whether the girl consents or not is immaterial.[17] The penalties in the two cases are basically the same: payment and marriage.

In Deut. 23.28-29 the man who sleeps with an unbetrothed virgin has to pay the *mohar* to her father and marry the girl, even if this is against her wishes. This *mohar* is a means to settle the score between the wrongdoer and the father of the injured girl. All that matters is what the two men want. They have no interest in the wishes of the injured girl. Weinfeld regards this *mohar* as compensation for the economic loss to the father, because his daughter is no longer a virgin and he can no longer receive a bride-price for her virginity. In Exodus the amount of the *mohar* is not fixed. There was no need for it to be money in those days. The kind or amount of the *mohar* might be determined by mutual agreement between two men. In Deut. 22.28-29, the *mohar* is fixed as fifty silver shekels, and the injured girl must marry the rapist and he cannot ever divorce her. In this context the *mohar* is not mentioned. Weinfeld therefore sees this money as a fine unrelated to the bride-price. However, it seems to play a role like that of the *mohar* mentioned in Exodus, because the marriage is completed after this money has been paid. If the *mohar* is a payment for a bride, a fixed amount of fifty shekels here shows the financial value of a wife and the mercenary aspect of marriage. This law in Deuteronomy does not have 'a humanistic attitude towards women'[18] as Weinfeld argues, but shows rather the 'marginalization' of woman and her 'objectification'.[19] An unmarried girl is still

14. D.L. Ellens, *Women in the Sex Texts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008), p. 200.

15. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), p. 286.

16. C. Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), p. 38.

17. Pressler, *Deuteronomic Family Laws*, pp. 38-39.

18. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, p. 291; cf. Pressler, *Deuteronomic Family Laws*, p. 40.

19. Ellens, *Women in the Sex Texts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy*, p. 190.

under her father's authority and is only the object, not the subject, of the marriage arrangements.

In the situation described in Exodus, the father can refuse to give his daughter to the man, even though he had paid the sum equivalent to the *mohar*. The right of the father to refuse serves to prevent 'plunder marriage', in which a man had to marry a girl with whom he had sexual intercourse. The man who tempted a virgin and had sex with her could take her as a wife, but the rapist could not automatically get her as a wife, even though he paid the *mohar*. In the situation described in Deuteronomy, in contrast, the father's right to decide the fate of his daughter is limited.[20] He can not refuse to give his daughter to the rapist. Paying the *mohar* is the basis for an a agreement of marriage between the two men. The young woman is not the subject of the agreement, but only the object. Her wishes are ignored, and thus she is victimized twice.[21] But marriage is imposed upon the man, too. He is deprived of the right to divorce the woman and is under the obligation to support her for the rest of his life. This prescription is meant to protect the injured woman under the legal institution of marriage.[22]

According to Burnette-Bletsch, who interprets the verb תפשׂ as implying force, the man may not divorce the woman because he must offer her 'economic security in the absence of affection'.[23] Frymer-Kensky offers an interesting interpretation of this law. A young woman can effectively 'elope'; she could have sex with someone whom her parents may not have chosen for her, and her father would have to marry her to that person.[24]

The Nature of the mohar

Deut. 22.29 specifies payment in silver. In some biblical narratives, however, a groom can pay for a bride in other ways. Abraham sent his servant to his ancestral home to get a wife for his son Isaac (Gen. 24). The servant met Rebekah, a daughter of Bethuel, Abraham's relative, by a spring. As soon as the contract with the family of the girl was concluded, the servant gave silver and gold objects and clothes to the bride (v. 53). The silver and gold were not money, but jewelry, a supplementary gift from the father-in-law. Jacob worked for Laban for seven years in order to marry Rachel

20. T. Frymer-Kensky, 'Deuteronomy', in C.A. Newsom and S.H. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (London: SPCK, 1992), p. 64.

21. A.L. Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 17.

22. Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments*, p. 28.

23. R.J. Burnette-Bletsch, 'My Bone and My Flesh: The Agrarian Family in Biblical Law' (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1998), p. 203, cited by C.B. Anderson, *Women, Ideology, and Violence* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 40-41.

24. Frymer-Kensky, 'Virgin', p. 196.

(Gen. 29.18-30). In Genesis 34, Shechem, a son of Hamor, the ruler of the land, loved Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and asked to marry her. He said to her father and brothers, 'Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give you whatever you ask. Make the price for the bride (*mohar*) and the gift (*matan*) I am to bring as great as you like, and I'll pay whatever you ask me. Only give me the girl as my wife' (Gen. 34.11-12 NIV). The *mohar* and the *matan* appear side by side as two different things: the bride-price and the gift. Wenham distinguishes the *mohar* for the family of the bride from a gift for the bride herself.[25] In 1 Sam. 18.25 Saul, the father of the bride, asks for no *mohar* for his daughter Michal only the foreskins of a hundred Philistines.

Aspects of Marriage in Korean Society

Korean marriage customs date from the Chosun Dynasty (1392–1910). Marriage during the Chosun Dynasty was based on the Chinese custom of 'six proprieties' (in Korean, *yukrye*). 'Six proprieties' are formalities and processes which were required for a marriage to take place. Of these six formalities, only four took place in a private Korean home.[26]

In the Chosun period, the age of marriage for men was 15 to 30 years old. Most women married between the ages of 14 and 20. In the first step, the two families agreed to the marriage (in Korean, *uihon*). A female intermediary usually negotiated the terms of the marriage between the two houses. In this stage, information about the prospective bride was very important, especially whether or not she was healthy enough to bear many sons. For this purpose the family of a groom compared the year, month and time of the birth of a future bride with those of the prospective groom.

The next stage was *napchae* and *nappe*. *Napchae* was sent as a formal proposal of marriage from the groom's family to the bride's family. When the family of the bride accepted the proposal, the wedding date was set. The family of the groom then sent wedding gifts to the family of the bride; this is called *nappe*. The gifts were put into a box (in Korean, *ham*), usually material for dresses, a ring or an ornamental hairpin for the bride.[27] After the family of the bride accepted the *nappe*, the wedding ceremony was performed. The *nappe* was a binding contract between both houses, and the young man and woman were regarded as betrothed. This *nappe* has

25. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC, 2; trans. Sang Moon Yoon, Soo Chul Whang; Seoul: Solomon, 2001) [Korean], pp. 554-55.

26. Sung Hee Jung, *Sexual Customs in Chosun* (Seoul: Karam Kiwhek, 1998) [Korean], pp. 44-49.

27. It is advised by a Confucianist (Yi-Jae, 1678–1746) that the gifts should be more than two kinds, but not over ten, and that they should be gifts with one's best wishes, not a great many or great price (Notice 15: Ham Boneneun Soonseo, www.munhwa71.co.kr [October 25, 2003]).

been handed down to this day. The night before the wedding, a friend of the groom took the gift box (*ham*) to the house of the bride.

The *nappe*, gifts from the family of the groom to the family of the bride, is similar to the *mohar* in the Hebrew Bible. Just as the *mohar* ratified the marriage agreement between two families, the *nappe* was more than a gift to the bride: it confirmed the engagement. The private and oral agreements thereby became official and binding. This traditional custom concerning marriage remains up to this day in another form, *honsu*.

In Korean society today the arrangements for a marriage have a monetary aspect. The terms 'bride-price' or 'dowry' are never used, but an exchange of money or something comparable between both families still exists, because in Korean society the family is more important than the individual and a marriage is a combination of two families, not the union of two people. A groom prepares a house or apartment for his wife. A bride is expected to provide the household goods. There is also a gift to the bride, groom and each of their parents and families, called *honsu*. *Honsu* consists of both articles essential to a marriage ceremony and marriage expenses. According to a report by a marriage information company, average marriage expenses in 2007 were about US$ 132,250.[28] Apart from the cost of housing, which accounts for a large part of these expenses, the gifts to the bride and the groom, their parents and families take about 20% (US$ 25,900) of the total. The expenses impose a heavy burden on the couple and their families.

Although the *honsu* has been simplified, it can still be a problem. In a marriage between people of the same social position, *honsu* is never a problem. When, however, the prospective brides's and groom's personal circumstances and those of their families are different, the disparity is compensated for in the form of a bride-price or a dowry. When one family is dissatisfied with the *honsu*, the conflict begins between a bride and groom. If there is no resolution, the couple might break off a betrothal or even divorce after the wedding. The press often reports on the tragic consequences of *honsu*. In January of 2007, Koreans were astonished by the news about the divorce of a famous young couple only twelve days after their wedding ceremony.[29] The husband's physical abuse of his pregnant bride had caused a miscarriage. The real scandal, however, was the news that the cause of the breakup was the problem of *honsu*.

There are many other examples of the *honsu* problem. In one case, newlyweds who had been arguing since the early stage of their marriage committed suicide.[30] In another case, a court in a divorce suit filed by the bride ruled that

28. A periodical report to Marriage Culture in Korea 2007 by the Korea Marriage Culture Institute, https://www.couple.net (February 14, 2008).

29. A related article is founded in *The New York Times*, March 22, 2007.

30. https://www.hani.co.kr (November 9, 2004).

the groom and his parents must pay consolation money to the bride's parents because the parents of the groom had demanded more *honsu*, although they had already received an apartment and *honsu* in value over one hundred million won (US$ 77,912) from the bride and her parents.[31] Although marriage is theoretically a new beginning, when two persons become one flesh and start a new family, the marriage culture in Korea is characterized by empty formalities, vanity, and self-display. In this commercialized custom, a woman is considered as a commodity in the marriage market and evaluated in terms of her property, wealth, education, and appearance. This irrational consumption in the marriage process, which is continued simply for the sake of tradition, should be abolished.

A further problem with marriage arrangements in Korea is that, since 1990, international marriage is becoming popular. The serious gender imbalance, the increase in the number of well-educated women, the delays in marriage and changes in the understanding of marriage have produced a phenomenon in which unmarried Korean men look for wives in other countries. According to the National Statistical Office, international marriage accounted for 11.1% (38,491) of all marriages (345,592) in 2007, and 76% of these (29,140) were marriages between a Korean man and a foreign woman.[32] In December, 2007, the number of immigrants living in Korea, including temporary residents, exceeded one million. The immigrants by marriage account for 10.4% of all immigrants.[33] Unfortunately, many foreign women as marriage immigrants are regarded as property to be purchased, because their husbands usually pay a matchmaker, or 'shop', for brides and then quickly marry a foreign bride. These women are often exposed to domestic violence, as well as to verbal and sexual abuse. The protection of the rights of these women is a pressing social issue.

Commercialized international wedding brokers publicize the merchandising of women from developing countries on websites or banner ads. Phrases such as 'no matter if a first marriage or remarriage', 'the age of the man is not a problem', 'men with disabilities are welcome', 'post payable', 'buy cheap' reveal the mercenary nature of Korea's international marriage market. This marriage process resembles human trafficking. Most wedding brokers gather the bride candidates and make them live together. The brokers pay the family of the girl earnest money or promise them a sum of money upon completion of the marriage. If a Korean man who wants to marry a foreign woman pays a prescribed amount of money to the wedding broker, he consequently regards his wife as a something that he has bought.

31. https://www.chosun.com (April 23, 2004).

32. The index of international marriage in 2007 (https://www.nso.go.kr).

33. Data. 84: About human rights of immigrants in 2007 by the Korean Bar Association (https://www.wmigrant.org [May 15, 2008]).

She is not a partner in marriage, but her husband's possession. She is vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In early 2008, a nineteen year-old young bride from Vietnam was beaten to death by her Korean husband.

Marital problems of international couples are a social problem. Women who wish to leave abusive marriages need care and support. Their children need protection, and both the wives and children need to be accepted and integrated into Korean society. Korea's government needs to make a greater effort to protect the human and legal rights of foreign wives, but Korean society as a whole must assume some responsibility for them as well.

Conclusion

A marriage in ancient Israel was a contract between two families. Although the marriage was confirmed after both parties agreed to the terms of the marriage, the marriage itself was not yet completed until the bridegroom or his family had paid the *mohar* to the father of bride. At that point the bride is betrothed and is referred to as a wife. Examination of the texts in the Hebrew Bible that deal with the *mohar* confirms that the *mohar* functioned more as a legally binding arrangement for marriage than as monetary compensation or a commercial transaction. Originally the *mohar* could be goods, such as work, jewelry or spoils of war, but it was later fixed as a definite amount of money, fifty silver shekels according to Deuteronomy. Although this monetary payment can be interpreted as a protective device for a girl who has been raped, it is more indicative of the financial value of a woman as a wife as well as of the mercenary aspect of marriage in ancient Israel.

The *mohar* in the Hebrew Bible corresponds very much to the *nappe* as a traditional marriage custom in Korea. The *nappe* consists of various gifts from the family of the groom to the family of the bride and plays a major role in confirming the oral agreement between two families that the wedding would take place. The original meaning could be taken as a gesture of respect to the bride and her family. This traditional custom has deteriorated, in the capitalistic system today, into something more like a financial transaction. As seen in the problems surounding *honsu* and in many cases of international marriage in contemporary Korea, a bride, or a groom, is now regarded as a commodity, which comes at a definite price and is subject to partner's pleasure. The practice of paying for a bride may have arisen as a way of controlling promiscuity or discouraging plunder marriage by limiting a person's freedom in order to preserve a social system. Such a practice reduces a person to a commodity. The departure from the meaning of marriage as love and harmony between two people is common to ancient Israel and modern Korea.

Reading Matthew 20.1-16 from a Non-Developmentalist Perspective

Kyung Mi Park

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard in Matthew's Gospel can be analyzed from many perspectives. One could, for example, focus on the historical Jesus, or the author of the Gospel, or the history of interpretation of this parable—all with different results. In this article I want to offer yet another kind of interpretation, by contemplating how the parable might be analyzed in the light of contemporary Korean society, where materialism and the ideology of economic development dictates everybody's life, paralyzes their spirits, and victimizes laborers, peasants, women, and children. Using the tools of socio-economic analysis, I will move back and forth between the current Korean situation and the text in my interpretation of this parable.

Some of Jesus' parables do not seem to make sense. The parable of the laborers for the vineyard harvest is one of them. In this parable, the owner of the vineyard gives the same wages to all the laborers, whether they worked long and hard from early in the morning, or for just one hour at the end of the day. He proclaimed that his conduct was 'good' (v. 15). It is only natural for the people who started working from early in the morning to stage a protest at the owner's action. They had been expecting more after seeing what the late starters were receiving. This story does not tell us what their response to the owner's explanation was. That is left to the reader's imagination. Did they retreat without causing a scene? Or, did they push and threaten the owner, so that he made some concessions and gave them a few more coins?

It seems that the owner possessed a rather small vineyard, not a large plantation. As a matter of fact, the owner's behavior in this parable has long raised problems for commentators. The classical interpretation of this parable regards it as a metaphor of God's grace. The laborers' response is judged to be unreasonable, and a sign of their selfishness. However, scholars such as L. Schottroff, W. Herzog and J.D. Crossan take a different approach. They analyze the owner's conduct in the light of the Roman socio-economic system and the operating system of the daily labor market of the time. They go so far as to blame the owner, arguing that his statement in v. 15 ('I have the right to do what I want to') showed his belief in the notion of private land

ownership. That concept was Roman and contradicted with Jewish Law.[1] Traditional Hebrew belief was that the land was owned by God. Therefore, the statement amounted to blasphemy. These commentators remind readers of the social conditions of the time, when a large group of peasants lost their lands as a result of the expansion of vineyards. The introduction of market-oriented production to the agricultural sector led land owners to convert their farms into vineyards that yielded higher returns than growing crops. Such changes of land use caused many peasants to lose the lands that were the only basis for their families' sustenance.

For the adherents of this interpretation, the fact that a vineyard owner is the hero of this story is a problem in itself. It was a challenge to economic justice, given the socio-economic conditions of the time.[2] Indeed, Schottroff views the owner's going out to the market place several times a day to hire workers, which has traditionally been interpreted as evidence of the owner's eagerness to do the right thing, as the result of his calculations in order to save the labor costs for the work.[3] Schottroff says that the owner was able to minimize the labor costs by hiring workers only if they were needed. Herzog and Schottroff also observe that giving the same wage to the laborers, whether they started working early or late, was a common practice of the time among landowners. This kind of conduct, they argue, is in line with the acts of charity practiced by wealthy Romans. Romans who committed themselves to charitable activities knew that such actions could protect and advance their social and political status. Conduct such as the forgiving of other's debts, as shown in the parables of Mt. 22.1-14 and Mt. 18.23-35, was also engaged in by self-interested wealthy Romans who wanted to give the impression that they were practicing acts of charity.

There is another fact we need to take into account when reading this parable. The farm owners of the time preferred employing temporary laborers rather than using their own slaves for hard work, such as vineyard harvesting. Daily laborers were thus in a worse position than slaves owned by the landlords. Historic documents recording the employment of daily workers for large farms and vineyards during the harvest time, especially the harvest of grapes, show this trend.[4] Citing such circumstances as these, Herzog and Schottroff conclude that the vineyard owner's conduct as described in the

1. William R. Herzog, II, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. 94.

2. Luise Schottroff, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. Linda M. Maloney: Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), pp. 15-28, 210.

3. Schottroff bases her view on such works as H. Bolkestein, *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristlichen Altertum* (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1939), pp. 304-305; H. Kloft, *Liberalitas principis* (Cologne: Bohlan, 1970); Schottroff, *Parables of Jesus*, pp. 201-11.

4. Varro, *De re Rustica* I, 17.2-3; Columella, *De re Rustica* I, 7. 4.

parable is not unusually generous. If we accept their view, it is impossible to interpret this parable as a metaphor for God's grace. The vineyard owner of this parable acted precisely according to the common practices of the time. God's grace is fundamentally different. Therefore, Herzog and Schottroff argue, this parable must be understood as a reverse analogy to God's grace. It is meant as a contrast, rather than an analogy for the Kingdom of God.[5]

Crossan takes a similar position and refuses to interpret this parable as illustrating God's grace. He is also of the view that it is not clearly demonstrated in the parable that the owner's conduct was good. Of course, his conduct was not evil (20.13); however, it is not possible to say that it was virtuous. We would not dispute that the vineyard owner was good and generous if he had paid a denarius to the workers who came last, and more to these who came earlier. According to Crossan, the owner committed no injustice (20.2, 4, 13), and the laborers were not so lazy as to justify punishment (20.6-7). The owner was not a man of unusual generosity, but rather a person who simply defied people's expectations. According to Crossan, the focal point of the parable is the reversal of what is expected, and the parable is a metaphor intended to reverse our understanding of God's grace.[6]

The problem we face with these interpretations is that they defy the conviction that this parable is a good story. Can we possibly deny that the vineyard owner in this parable was meant to be understood as a generous person? Did Jesus give the example of the vineyard owner's conduct only to blame him? It can be argued that the scholars whose views are briefly summarized above place too many moral burdens on to the hero of the story. Such moral burdens were not in place at the time of the story. One thing that makes it difficult for me to agree with the negative assessment of the vineyard owner is that there is no implication whatsoever made by the author of the parable that the vineyard owner is to blame. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the vineyard owner did not pay more to the workers who came to work from the start. This leads to the question that resists resolution until the end, the matter of fairness.

What troubles readers is that it is impossible to reconcile the owner's generosity with fairness. We cannot help asking whether, since he had paid a denarius to the people who came to work at the last minute, he should have paid more to the people who started earlier. It is obvious that those workers who worked briefly but were paid a day's wages, must have appreciated the vineyard owner's generosity. On the other hand, those who worked from early in the morning, in the burning sunlight, would not have perceived the

5. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, pp. 95-96; Schottroff, *Parables of Jesus*, pp. 216-17.

6. John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 103-105, 111-20.

owner as a generous man upon receiving only a denarius. A denarius was the minimum wage of the time, which would just enable a person to survive a day. When they saw the people who worked only one hour receive the same amount as they did, it was only natural for those who worked much longer to feel that the owner was not fair. Should he not have paid them three or four times what the late-starting workers received, so that he could be regarded as a fair man? Could he not have been both generous and fair? Unless the owner's fairness can be reconciled with his generosity, we will not be able to perceive his conduct as a metaphor for God's grace. That is the point made by Schottroff, Herzog, and Crossan. For Schottroff, God is much more gracious than the vineyard owner in this parable. For Crossan, the parable reverses our expectation of God's grace. Thus, the first question to be resolved for understanding this parable is whether it was meant to be an analogy to or the antithesis of God's grace.

The Myth of Economic Growth

One of the most important facts to be considered when we attempt to resolve the question of the vineyard owner's conduct is the difference between the operating mechanism of modern capitalist society and that of an ancient agriculture-based society. Modern capitalist society is based on an ever-expanding economy, but ancient agricultural society based itself on limited resources. When we take these differences into account, we can properly understand the vineyard owner's conduct, and, more importantly, hear the message the story has for modern capitalist society. To appreciate the message of the story it is necessary to look beyond the history and the effects of the concept of economic development, which we accept as a time-proven maxim from its inception to the present.

In the modern world, 'development' has become the universal requirement for both individuals and society. This word has expanded its meaning to cover not only physical and mental improvement but also the growth of a society in general. It has not been long since the concept of 'development' acquired such value. This word, in the sense of economic growth, was first used in 1949 by the then US president Harry Truman in his inaugural speech, in which he defined most Asian and African countries that had been colonies before the Second World War as under-developed countries. Then he announced a plan to give economic aid and to provide technical support to those countries so that they might achieve a higher standard of living through development, or, in other words, through industrial activities.[7] This announcement appeared to be a generous gesture. It was only natural

7. Wolfgang Sachs, 'A Guide to the Ruins', *New Internationalist* 232 (June 1992), <http://www.newint.org/>.

that poor countries that had just come out of their colonial era welcomed this proposal, and participated in the development project. Korea was one of those 'under-developed countries' that eagerly took part in the project.

Politically speaking, however, the plan was quite different from what it appeared to be. It laid a foundation for a cunning system whereby every country in the world would copy and follow another country that was ahead of it in the economic hierarchy. This system replaced the pre-war colonial system where European countries occupied and exploited the colonies by means of military power. From this time on, countries were given a position on the global scale measured by their degree of development in comparison with the industrialized countries of the West. Every country in the world began treading upon one single road, namely, economic development. The idea that the more you produce and spend, the happier you are, has obtained the status of a universally accepted truth.

The US needed a vision of a new global order in order to sustain the status it had acquired after World War II as the most powerful country in the world. The ideology of development was the answer. Now the world became a congruent gathering connected by mutual economic reliance. As a result, every aspect of human life is now under the blueprint of development and growth. The lifestyle of the grassroots, which was politically autonomous and culturally diverse in its nature, has been lost, one after another, to the ruthless assaults of large capitalists and nationalism. They are sustained only as the object of anthropological research. Economic development is no less than a catastrophe for the weak and poor people of the world.

Korea is the best student in this program. The country had suffered ruthless exploitation under the Japanese occupation for thirty-five years. When Korea was liberated from Japan at the end of World War II, it was one of the poorest countries in the world. Since then, Korea has single-mindedly followed the course set down by the Developmentalists and has achieved astounding results. The country now has the world's eleventh largest economy and has been admitted to the OECD. No one now can call the nation an under-developed country. Korea is the best proof of the US-initiated global economic development project's validity.

One irrefutable result of the economic development is, however, that the fruit cannot be evenly divided. Even the Korean government's report shows that about seven million people, including the marginal classes, live in absolute poverty. People working as temporary employees make up more than fifty percent of the total work force. They are suffering from job insecurity and low payment. A highly competitive and money-oriented social atmosphere has been alienating and demoralizing people of limited means in this country.

We cannot help asking such questions as 'What is the righteous way of living?', 'What is the value of humanity?', 'Have we really become better

off?', when we look at the result of economic development in our society. The answers are not so positive. It seems that now is the time for us to leave behind the myth that economic development will make our lives better. Capitalist market economy imposes a system where wasting is an indispensable part of the system. However, the number of people who can enjoy such levels of expenditure is always limited. Polarization of the world in the ratio of 20.80 is also a result of the system. Industrialization-based, growth-oriented economy invariably leads to the centralization of power and capital, and the result is the massive accumulation of power and wealth by a small number of privileged people. Old people, children, women, peasants, and laborers are always alienated by the system. The fatal problem of development is that it encourages and justifies the exploitation of natural resources and the environment, and will eventually cause a global ecological catastrophe, which may end human life on earth.

These observations are not those of fundamentalists whose views on life and economics are drastically at odds with everybody else's. This school of thought does not urge people to endure difficult lives resulting from the total lack of the necessities of life, such as goods and services. It cannot be denied that economic activity, aimed at overcoming hardship and poverty, is necessary. The problem, though, is the expansion of capitalization. This expansion has been promoted by imperialism and colonization in the past, and is being promoted by the globalization policies of the new liberalism at present. Capitalism has destroyed the traditional lifestyle enjoyed by grassroot people, who are at the bottom of the global economic hierarchy.

Reading the Parable from a Non-developmentalist Point of View

Interpretations of Mt. 20.1-16 based upon the presuppositions of developmentalism are unable to make sense of the vineyard owner's conduct. Blaming him for not giving more to the workers who started early is actually based on the modern notion of endless growth. Living with other people in an ancient society, where the supply of goods was limited, involved sacrifice for the sake of others. Communal living is possible only when the whole society accepts poverty and inconvenience as a condition of living. The vineyard owner's conduct makes sense when we take this truth into account. The parable recognizes the principle of fair compensation for work. In v. 2, the people hired first and the owner agree on a denarius per person as their wage. However, in vv. 3-7, the owner goes out at later times in the day and calls for laborers, promising them that he will pay fair and proper wages. When we look at this arrangement in terms of the conclusion of the story, giving these workers a denarius is in order, in other words, fair 'for those people'. That the vineyard owner's conduct was good and generous is implied in his question in the last verse (15), 'Are you envious

because I am generous?' (v. 15 NIV). What is said here is that giving a denarius to people who came to work late is both fair and generous. How can it be so?

The complaint of the people in the parable who had started working early was based on the idea that wages should be paid on the basis of working hours and the worker's competence. This is the basic rule of a competitive society, which is established on the basis of the hierarchy of wages and the hierarchy of value. It leads to the hierarchy of people. We cannot help concerning ourselves with our monetary value. We constantly ask ourselves, 'What is my value?' If our value is insignificant, our very existence is at risk. We can survive in this hierarchy of wages if we continuously strive to increase our monetary value. One who fails in this struggle may become homeless. A homeless person is a useless person. Is this fair? It may be regarded as fair on the grounds that it uses the same scale to measure everybody. However, this faceless and emotionless fairness is nothing but a brutal rule of the jungle, the rule of the survival of the fittest.

We cannot find mechanical fairness, expressed in numbers, from the vineyard owner's conduct as described in this parable. His fairness is comparative and situational. It is possible to give different wages to people who did the same work. The laborer who worked less received enough to sustain his poor living conditions, and, on the other hand, the person who worked longer hours also received just enough money to sustain his life. Perhaps, in an ancient society where resources were limited, the community could survive only if some more able members were content with less than they were entitled to. The life of the community could be preserved only when its members were evenly poor. Therefore, granting the people who started work late the minimum wage that was just enough to sustain their poor livelihood was 'justice' and fairness. Accepting them as members of their community so that they could dine and live together might have been 'grace'. Fairness and grace of this kind would have been possible only when the laborers who worked three or four times longer than those who started later agreed to give up their full entitlement. In those societies where resources were limited and scarce, the foundation of the community could have collapsed if everybody insisted on payment based on mechanical and arithmetical justice. The vineyard owner in this parable would have gone bankrupt if he paid his workers on this basis.

The above analysis leads to the conclusion that the vineyard owner's conduct was carried out in a manner that would support communal life, therefore it was an act of fairness. Actually, mechanical and arithmetical fairness, which applies the same payment scale to anybody and everybody, is not real fairness. It does not support the community, and it does not take into account of the differences among people. It is the same as the principle of competition in capitalist society. It is not good enough as a principle of

communal living where the best and the less gifted mix and live together. For example, the disabled, the aged, or the women, whose starting points are usually far behind other people, however hard they work, cannot help being pushed to the edges of life if the same wage scale is applied to them. Their situation is that of the worker in this parable who arrived in the last round. If he was paid for one hour's labor, could he survive?

Where, then, is the grace of the owner? Perhaps it lies in the fact that he called everybody in a day. The owner called everybody and let them join the group of people who had already been working in the vineyard, in other words, called them to be members of the community. Though it is not explained in the parable, the vineyard owner might have some pressing reasons for going to the market place and calling workers several times in a day. This owner's urgency is the metaphor for grace, and his grace lies in his urgent calls for laborers. To the laborer who waited at the market all day for somebody to call him to work, failed to get hired, and was about to turn around to go back home, facing another night of starvation for his family, the call must have been an act of utmost grace and generosity. The owner could exercise this act of righteousness and generosity only if the workers who started early were willing to content themselves with the agreed-upon payment of a denarius for their work. When such conditions are satisfied, the early starters and the late starters could become real neighbors, who voluntarily help each other, and the community can be preserved.

Reading the parable this way is in line with the core character of the Kingdom of God movement initiated by Jesus. Jesus strove to revive the self-helping lifestyle of the traditional village community that was collapsing under the socio-economic exploitation of the Roman Empire. He promoted a social rehabilitation program that was aimed at re-establishing the egalitarian and mutually supportive socio-economic relationships of village communities, which were the primary units of people's lives in the region of Galilee. He asked people to help each other rather than blaming each other for the poverty they were in, making their lives unbearable. In practice, they could forgive others' debts and could allow a spirit of solidarity to take the place of suspicion and hatred.[8]

Reading this parable from the perspective of a non-developmentalist and anti-expansionist economy allows us to see that the expectation for workers to give up their entitlement to a larger share is in accordance with the basic principles of Jesus' teaching. Just as the Roman Empire exploited the people of the time under the slogan of Pax Romana, the growth-oriented

8. Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Augusburg Fortress, 2003), pp. 126-28; Horsley, *Archeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Harrisburg, PA :Trinity Press International, 1996), pp. 178-85.

economy of today also polarizes society and drives socially underprivileged people to the edges. The grassroots' lifestyle of helping each other, which Jesus pursued, appears in this parable as the call to accept equal, impoverished living. Today, it can be translated into the principles of equality and practical economic democracy that have been ignored by the growth-driven economy.

This parable has a message for people who tell themselves, 'I am fair': Is your fairness also generous? Does your fairness accept the losers as neighbors? Is it a fairness that calls a less gifted neighbor a legitimate member of the community? Are you prepared to give up what you have in order to live together with those less fortunate than you? If you cannot say 'yes' to all these questions, this parable says, your assertions of 'fairness' are false. Therefore, this parable may be read as asking us to pursue the possibility of moral economy in our economic activities of today.

Candlelight and Democracy: The Hope for a Moral Economy

The candlelight protest of Korea continued for more than three months. It began on May 2, 2008. This kind of protest was unprecedented in Korean history, and it will take serious long-term analysis by historians before its meanings and implications for Korean society can be properly understood. The protest started at Cheongye Square, with as many as 700,000 people and over 1.5 million in total took part in the demonstration. The protest was initiated by junior high school girls, in their early teens, and young mothers. Nobody expected that a demonstration lead by young girls and women would expand to such a scale and last so long. Furthermore, this candlelight protest proceeded so peacefully that the participants sometimes felt an air of festivity.

The protest was ignited by the government's decision to import US beef that might cause mad cow disease. The cause of the disease has not been fully determined, but many believe that it has some relation to feeding animal-based fodder to grass-eating animals. The first step in preventing the disease is the prohibition of feeding animal-based fodder to cattle. The next step is the removal of body parts that might contain specific risk material, when the animals are slaughtered. The last step is blocking the importation of body parts not suitable for human consumption.

The Korean government signed a new protocol in April 2008, granting the importation of beef from the US. The problem with the new protocol was that it did not contain those three steps required for the safety of consumers. The Korean people viewed the government's decision as a product of arrogance and incompetence. They also suspected lobbies by the American beef exporters behind the decision. The discussion to import American beef began at the request of the US, as a prerequisite for the Korea–US

Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Against this background, junior high school girls and young mothers raised candles for the sake of the safety of their school meals and their children's dining tables. It was neither a request for food by hungry people nor a demand of higher income. The people's attitude revealed their priorities. They regarded the safety of the food they consumed, and living with human dignity under a democratic system, as more important than the economic gain the Korea–US Free Trade Agreement might bring. The candlelight protest may be regarded as a resistance movement of the grassroots people against the worship of a market economy, which makes the world a colony of global financial capital and multinational corporations.

Korean society completed the establishment of 'procedural democracy' in the late 1990s. However, the governments of this country have, during the last ten years of the 'post-democratization era', continued, and even pushed harder than previous governments, for the policy of economic growth and industrialization. As a result, power and capital have been concentrated in the hands of a few. The 'completion of procedural democracy' was powerless in the face of the ruthless drive to expand the monopoly capital and the interests of the privileged few. The result was the extensive alienation of the weak, peasants, laborers, children, the aged, and housewives. The candle lights that burned hot in May and June of 2008 may be viewed as the explosion of the contradiction between the real lives of the majority of ordinary people and the conditions of formal democracy. The beef problem only ignited what was already ready to explode. The explosives were uncertainty about the future and a sense of betrayal by the government. Until then, people had been holding on to the scant hope that they might be able to survive in an invisible corner of this society. The hope completely vanished upon seeing what Myeong-bak Lee's government was doing. People became brave when they gave up hope and forsook expectations.

Junior high school girls, housewives, and the elderly, who had never organized themselves as a political force before, started this candlelight protest. What they had in common was that they had always been a target group for sales promotions and advertisements, but had never been recognized as a group to be taken seriously in the policy-making process. Now these people were expressing their views on Agora, an internet chatting forum, and were radiant and full of life on the demonstration line. They were the people who suffered ahead of others because they were living in conditions closest to the bottom of society. It was an extraordinary phenomenon for such people to mobilize themselves and start gathering in an 'open space'.

Two places, one in internet space (Agora) and the other on the streets, were excellent fields for a lesson in democracy. Diverse religious groups, such as Catholics, Protestants, and Buddhists, exhibited a new dimension of inter-religious solidarity by taking part in the same movement, organized

around a single issue. The most unusual feature of the candlelight demonstration was that it was not organized or lead by any political or social organization. The women's actions during the demonstration were astonishing. Young mothers cried out, 'No Violence!', when young male participants were behaving violently, and young women wearing miniskirts and high heels passed out food to the police, armed with batons and shields, and shouted, 'We love you!', to them. It was a phenomenon that completely changed the traditional grammar of demonstration. The lack of core leadership in the movement made the candlelight demonstration radiate a stronger energy. The atmosphere of the gathering, where each participant sounded their voices and those standing by responded sympathetically to them, created an air of festivity.

We have been, when thinking about people's economic activities, in the habit of devaluating intellectual or political motives. We regard only material motives as real and practical. What is desperately required today is reassuming responsibility for others. Political factors, or democracy, rather than market factors, must take first priority in economic discussions. The advocates of modern capitalism believe that production can increase indefinitely, but production takes place on the earth, and the earth has limits. Therefore, in addressing the question of eating and living, we must draw a line, and the line is that God created the earth as a place with limits. Food production cannot and, more importantly, should not increase indefinitely. If food is limited, it should be shared and saved. For these reasons, establishing democracy in the matter of eating and sustaining people's lives and livelihood should place limitations on development.

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard also demands us humans, who live as neighbors on this earth where the resources and commodities are limited, to practice moral economy and economic democracy. What we should focus on, as people living in a greatly expanded, growth-oriented economic system and aware of the danger and destructiveness of the system, is sacrificing material gain for the benefit of others as was required of the laborers who had started to work first in the parable. The early starters and the late starters will benefit as a community only if the early starters agree to accept a certain level of poverty and inconvenience, that is, the principle of democracy, namely, equality as a condition of their lives. I think that this is the message we need to take away from this parable.

Embracing Life and the Bible: Toward a Hermeneutics of Compassion in Detachment

Hyunju Bae

Life is the ultimate matrix of thinking, writing, and acting. Reading, which is inseparably intertwined with these activities and informs them, also takes root in life. Fully aware of this hermeneutical condition, feminist theological subjects take life experience seriously. The axiomatic feminist theological insight that feminist method arises from the 'process of interrogation between text and experience', which 'proceeds over time',[1] justly emphasizes the important and irreducible role that life experience plays in the reading of a text. Whether a presupposition or the 'text written on one's soul',[2] this 'nonhermeneutical origin of all interpretation'[3] claims its rightful status in reading the text.

What I term a 'hermeneutics of compassion in detachment'[4] has been gestated from my reflection of life experience as a Korean Christian woman; more significantly, it is inspired by a tradition of Korean women's struggle for meaningful life on both the individual and communal levels. I argue at the risk of oversimplification that some characteristics of Korean women's lives and struggles may be captured in terms of the spirituality of relationality,[5] and that some prominent traits of the spirituality of rela-

1. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, 'Every Two Minutes: Battered Women and Feminist Interpretation', in Letty M. Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), p. 98.

2. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, 'Love and Footwashing: John 13:1-20 and Luke 7:36-50 Read Intertextually', *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994), p. 192.

3. Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics,* II (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 99.

4. Hyunju Bae, 'Dancing around Life: An Asian Woman's Perspective', *Ecumenical Review* 56 (2004), p. 391; Bae, 'The Holy Spirit and Paul's Spirituality', *CTC Bulletin* 22 (2006), p. 22; Bae, 'Women's Leadership and Authority in Pauline Christianity (I)', *In God's Image: Journal of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology* 26 (2007), p. 25.

5. I use the term 'spirituality' here in a broad sense, as the fundamental orientation and mindset expressing itself in the decision, act, and life culture of a person or a group. Manja Choi, a Korean feminist theologian, defines spirituality as the capacity to

tionality can be construed in the mode of compassion in detachment. I also propose that the spirituality of compassion in detachment, which is a strategy for dealing with life, can be transposed to the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment, which is a reading strategy. This transposition is conceivable because both spirituality and hermeneutics are concerned with relationships. The former takes shape in relationship with life, while the latter operates in relationship with the text.

This essay aims to discuss briefly the historical and cultural context of modern Korea, first, against the backdrop of which I attempt to map out a constellation of compassion in detachment for Korean women's spirituality of relationality. Building on that discussion, I would like to construct a 'hermeneutics of compassion in detachment' in dialogue with the 'hermeneutics of wisdom' proposed by Rita Nakashima Brock.[6] Then, an interpretation of Paul, the controversial figure in feminist biblical interpretation, will be presented in light of a hermeneutics of compassion in detachment. This task has affinity with what Sandra Polaski attempts to do through 'transformational readings'.[7] Overall, this hermeneutical endeavor seeks to situate the reading of the Bible in the concrete context of Korean women's life experience, and, through the gesture of embracing life and the Bible, to point to a horizon where spirituality and the whole process of textual interpretation are closely interwoven.

Constructing a Hermeneutics of Compassion in Detachment

Space is too limited here to explore the complex and manifold characteristics of the spirituality Korean women have shown in their struggle for meaningful life in the past and the present, or to detail its historical and literary evidence. Among the complex layers that form the characteristics of Korean women's struggles, I limit the present discussion to the phenomenon from which I construct the spirituality of relationality in the mode of compassion in detachment.

build relations with ultimate reality and social environment (Manja Choi, 'The Korean Christian Tradition and Women's Spirituality', in *Spirituality and Feminist Theology* [ed. Korean Society of Feminist Theology; Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1999] [Korean], p. 229). For a stimulating postcolonial feminist investigation of *Jeong* as standing at the heart of the Korean understanding of relationality, see Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006).

6. Rita Nakashima Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor: A Hermeneutics of Wisdom', in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures.* I. *A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), pp. 64-75.

7. Sandra Hack Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005).

Modern Korean history has witnessed women's active participation in the struggle for national liberation, democratization and other social movements, which roughly define people's movements in the twentieth century. As has been the case with the Third World women's movements in general, Korean women's commitment to their own liberation has been inseparable from their participation in movements that focus on sociopolitical oppressions other than sexism, such as colonialism, military dictatorship, labor exploitation, and ideological division. It is noteworthy that a thorny dilemma of the Korean women's movement lies in the fact that this comprehensive framework, which pays due attention to diverse structures of oppression and their interlocking operation, assumes the potential danger of eclipsing the feminist vision. For instance, the nationalist framework is deeply intertwined with a patriarchal worldview and patriarchal practices, which frequently view a uniquely feminist agenda as secondary. Such a nationalist framework produces and values the ethos of androcentric hypermasculinity which operates on oppressive gender politics.[8] Moreover, the 'officially' democratized Korean society has a long way to go until the nature and quality of human relationships in general, and social transactions between men and women in particular, that transpire in both public and private domains on a daily basis, are democratically transformed on a substantive level. Without participatory feminist criticisms and their presentation of alternatives, it would be hard for democratic values and practices to take deep root in people's daily lives. Thus, Korean women's struggles for a better life have been situated within a quandary wherein their participation in the processes of national liberation and democratization entails working together with male allies who share a common general goal but fall short of feminist consciousness.

What are the fundamental spiritual resources, then, which have enabled Korean women to go on working, fighting, forgiving, laughing, and loving in the midst of such difficult conflict and multilayered oppressions? To answer this question fully would require another long essay, and I would like here to focus on compassion as one of those representative spiritual assets. Metaphorically speaking, compassion is like the flower blooming on a tree that symbolizes the deeply seated communal sense of life that Korean women have long cherished. A storehouse rich with the life stories of Korean women testifies to the power of compassion. Even under victimizing multiple oppressions, compassion inscrutably empowers a person to go beyond a sense of self-pity and victim mentality, and enables her to choose to live as a resistant, a visionary, a lover, and a creator.

8. 'Feminism and nationalism are the antinomic offspring of modernity. Feminism as a project of modernity stands at odds with nationalism which imagines a fraternal community'. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (eds.), 'Introduction', in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 7.

Caution is always in order, though. Unreflective naive commitment disables compassion. The tragic instances of Korean women who ended up becoming victimized at the cost of their genuine commitment sound an alarm. Korean feminists have learned from the experience of personal and social struggles that the libretto of liberation in general does not automatically guarantee feminist liberation. What we need is to sustain reflective distanciation and create a feminist space or feminist communities in which a feminist political vision can be enacted and solidarity nurtured. I locate this epistemological distanciation and political behavior in an axis of detachment. Leaving behind any hint of naiveté, the axis of detachment signifies a realistic evaluation of the deadly effects of patriarchal systems prevalently interlocking even with the claims of liberation. At the same time it actualizes a time and space in which feminists can articulate their own critical evaluation of the things around them, as they discover their own yearnings for independence as well as their even more fervent yearnings for building communities of life and peace for all. This epistemological and political positioning of detachment is far from reactive withdrawal or cynical apathy; rather it is indispensable in forming the originative feminist response to the world.

I imagine that Korean women's spirituality of relationality in the twenty-first century needs creatively to embody this dialectical tension, which I call 'compassion in detachment'. I foreground 'compassion' over 'detachment' despite my familiarity with the tragic stories of *han*-ridden[9] women sacrificed under the patriarchal systems in Korea, because the overemphasis of Korean women's *han* can unwittingly eclipse the active agency that Korean women have maintained despite multiple oppressions in history, and because the creative horizon of Korean women's spirituality needs to be brought to the fore for the next generation. Korean women living and working with passionate compassion are those who have perceived that personal *han-puri*[10] cannot be accomplished or completed without a commitment to the building of an alternative society based on life and peace for all.

9. '*Han* is a Korean word expressing a deep feeling that rises out of the unjust experiences of the people… So *han* designates the psychological phenomenon of people's suffering and is a feeling of the hopelessness of the oppressed, a feeling of just indignation, or a feeling of unresolved resentment against unjustifiable suffering. *Han* is sometimes compared to "the blues" in the black experience in the United States'; Nam-Soon Kang, 'Han', in Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (eds.), *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), p. 134.

10. *Han-puri* refers to the dissolution of *han*, which indicates a complex of anger, frustration, despair, and pain, accumulated under multiple oppressions without any vent over a long period of time. *Han* is not exclusively female, but its predominant victims are women. Korean women's *han* frequently expresses itself in a physical disease diagnosed as *wha*, a medical ailment accompanied by a variety of debilitating psychosomatic symptoms. Traditionally, *han*-ridden or *wha*-stricken women have often become shamans.

As the spirituality of compassion in detachment is cultivated in the complex living relationship with the prevalent patriarchal culture in Korea, it can be transposed to the feminist hermeneutical enterprise that negotiates with the Bible, which is embedded in the same problem. When the spirituality of compassion in detachment becomes attuned to the key of biblical interpretation, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment comes into play. The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment finds a sisterhood in the hermeneutics of wisdom, proposed by Rita Nakashima Brock, an Asian-American feminist theologian. Brock constructs a hermeneutics of wisdom through investigating the complex life experiences attested to in several Asian-American women's writings, and applies it to biblical interpretation. Our relationship to the Bible and its patriarchal traditions is 'akin to belonging to a difficult and troubling circle of kinship'.[11] In the hermeneutics of wisdom, the Bible ceases to be an authoritative command which demands blind obedience with a singular, consistent, unequivocal, and unified voice.[12] Rather it operates as 'a source of mirrors' and 'a resource for understanding our identities', which provide 'resonances, images for understanding the ambiguities and struggles of our own lives'.[13] The text can function to reflect the multiple voices inside us, and the multilayered text and the multifaceted self mutually resonate in a way that gives birth to responsible and active agency.

As feminist perspectives that seek to make sense of the ambiguities of the double inheritances of Asia and Christianity, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment and the hermeneutics of wisdom have numerous affinities. Both take root in the persistent remembrance of one's own personal history as well as that of one's family and people. More significantly, both are feminist hermeneutics that have come of age. Overcoming victim mentality and destructive reaction, going beyond a simplistic dichotomy between good and evil, leaving behind an inverse sense of self-righteousness, and taking up responsibility are all the work of maturity. Both hermeneutics embrace the insight that our individual search for meaning and identity are incomplete without taking into consideration the crucial importance of relationality within the whole of reality and its troubling ambiguities. As both hermeneutics continue to rage over destructive systems such as sexism, racism, poverty, militarism, totalitarianism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism, they are ready to accept the active agency for change through minimizing harm, pain, and destruction with a comprehensive prospect. A fervent hope for a better world for all is in the blood of these two sisters.

11. Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor', p. 70.
12. Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor', pp. 70, 72.
13. Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor', pp. 71-72.

The variance between the two hermeneutics arises from the difference of local contexts, Korea and the United States. While Asian-American women can ascribe oppressive patriarchal authority to the past 'in a new context that allows more dislocation from the tyranny of tradition',[14] for Korean women the cultural regime of patriarchal tradition, holding sway in the church and society, runs in the present tense.[15]

Another difference can be detected in the weight or the intensity of attention each hermeneutic grants to the Bible. While the hermeneutics of wisdom graphically represents its paradoxical choice both to dismiss and hold the Bible in the gesture of *dusting the Bible placed on the floor*,[16] the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment would maintain the posture of *placing the Bible on the kitchen table,* because it remembers the prominent tradition of Korean people who take the Bible for food. It is true that the Bible often works as poison. The Bible has functioned as the dangerous proof text for legitimating authoritarianism, obscurantism, anti-intellectualism, political conservatism, triumphalism, materialism, growth obsession, ecclesiastical and social polarization, and expansionist missionary enterprise, all of which wreak havoc with numerous sectors of the contemporary Korean church. Yet it is also true that Korean history has witnessed the liberating and politico-spiritual power that the Bible has exerted on people's lives. Particularly in the initial stage of the cultural interpolation of Christianity in Korea, people, traditionally accustomed to the phenomenon of religions of the book, such as Confucianism, became active readers of the Bible in order to construct the meaning of life and history. This was during a time when the country was running headlong into a catastrophic collapse. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Korea was deprived of the sustainable spiritual power of its traditional religions, and was endangered by the threat of Japanese colonialism. In Korea, Christianity began to take root not because it was unilaterally enforced by Western missionaries, but because of the will of the Korean people to adopt it as a means of constructing a new

14. Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor', p. 69.

15. Brock's essay discusses certain issues that appear in the works of Burmese-, Japanese-, and Chinese-American Women ('Dusting the Bible on the Floor', p. 73 n. 1). For an analysis of the complex negotiation of gender and racial-ethnic identities of churched Korean-American women, see Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean-American Women and the Church* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

16. Brock takes this symbolic gesture from the story of a Chinese mother in 'The Joy Luck Club' written by Amy Tan. The Chinese mother became disillusioned at the teaching of the Baptist church regarding the power of faith strong enough to bring back to life her son who had drowned in the California surf. Then, she placed 'the church's gift Bible on the floor, under the leg of a kitchen table, to steady it'. Her paradoxical behavior to dust carefully and keep it, however, was noticed by her daughter (Brock, 'Dusting the Bible on the Floor', p. 64).

cosmology in the throes of national demise and as a beacon of hope. Pioneering patriots, including Confucian scholars, took the initiative in accepting Christianity as an alternative spiritual resource for renewing and giving life back to Korea. Inherent in their adoption of Christianity were a yearning to reform Korea through Christian education, an expectation to renew life through faith, and the desire to regain national independence—something politics alone failed to achieve.

Reading the Bible played a crucial role in the conversion of intellectuals.[17] When the first Western missionaries reached the Korean Peninsula, they were carrying the Bible already translated into Korean. The translated Bible was neither merely a religious talisman nor a colonial fetish, but functioned as an anti-colonial hope. Under Japanese occupation, colonized Korean Christians easily resonated with the messages in the Bible, such as the vision of a land with milk and honey in Exodus, the cry for justice in the prophetic documents, and the portrait of the communities of mutual love and service, to name only a few examples. This kind of liberation-oriented reading of the Bible induced Korean Christians' active participation in the March 1 Movement against Japanese colonialism in 1919. Although this trajectory has taken a subterranean existence since the 1920s, the lava has continued to erupt and prove its overflowing power in the life of Christians who have committed themselves to the transformation of church and society.

The dual function of the Bible is also found in its relationship with women. In its initial stage, the introduction of the Bible provided life-enhancing chances to women. Women gained literacy to read the Bible translated into Korean, and the first women leaders of the Korean church were called 'Bible Woman'. These women worked as evangelists to secluded women, going about frequently as book peddlers (*Kwonseoin* or *Maeseoin*) who sold the Bible. Women were empowered with the message of the Bible that preached the dignity and equality of women as human beings created in God's image.[18] The introduction of Christianity accelerated the abolition of cultural institutions such as concubinage and slave trafficking. It also promoted the admission of remarriage, which was forbidden in the Confucian sociocultural system. The restoration of human dignity and of the agency of women gave rise to their sociopolitical commitment. Many Christian women actively participated in the anti-colonial independence movements.

17. Many intellectuals and leading activists became converts when they read the Bible during their imprisonment (The Association of Korean Christian History, *The History of Korean Christianity*, I [Seoul: Kidokgyomoonsa, 1991 (Korean)], pp. 264, 266).

18. Oo Chung Lee, *The Centennial History of Korean Christian Women* (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1985) [Korean], pp. 50-111. It is noteworthy that the indigenous religions, such as *Donghak*, also advocated women's dignity and equality with men.

However, the increasingly otherworldly and individualistic tendency of the Korean church fell short of nurturing women to strive for the transformation of legal institutions and the economic infrastructure.[19]

Many Protestant denominations, the conservative and fundamentalist ecclesiastical powers of which adhere to the literal interpretation of the Bible, still deny women's ordination. Nevertheless, the liberating and empowering function of the Bible continues to emerge among women. For instance, contemporary Christian women activists who work for marginalized poor mothers and their children confess that the proclamation of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth continues to remain the strongest inspiration for their commitment to the urban poor (Lk. 4.18-19).[20] Their quarterly pamphlet is designated as 'Good News'. The participants in the women's ordination movement in the Presbyterian Church of Korea had to confront the oppressive appropriation of Pauline letters by opponents, while they were empowered by such passages in the same letters that inspire courage against all odds (2 Cor. 4.8-9).

The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment seeks to cherish the tradition of reading the Bible creatively and transformatively. This attempt entails a dialectical tension between two movements. On the one hand, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment critically assesses the negative effect biblical interpretation provides in the complex political reality in both church and society. On the other hand, it is eager to construct creative meanings from the Bible. The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment does not want to throw away a nursery of babies with the bathwater. As suggested above, its endeavor evokes the posture of placing the Bible on the kitchen table and preparing food for the hungry.

The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment rejects an authoritarian claim of biblatory that dictates blind obedience. Yet being nurtured in Korean soil, it takes the issue of biblical authority seriously. Authority does not necessarily mean authoritarian control, or stifling hierarchy. The authority of religious scriptures is well established in the traditional culture of Korea. They are widely recognized and revered as unveiling cosmological and anthropological truth. As indicated above, this cultural heritage that derives from the traditional religions of the book prepared Korean people to take the authority of the Bible for granted once they accepted Christianity.

19. Young Mi Lee, 'The Biblical Interpretation in the Initial Stage of Missionizing Korea and its Ripple Effect: With a Focus on the Influence on Women's Status', *The Papers of the Symposium of the Biblical Studies for the Centennial Commemoration for Pyeongyang Great Awakening*, May 25, 2007 [Korean], pp. 532, 535, 538.

20. Eun Sun Lee, 'Sensing an Advent of Korean Christa', in Korea Association of Christian Women for Women Minjung, *The History of Life Written on Foot: The Twenty Years of Korea Association of Christian Women for Women Minjung* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2006) [Korean], pp. 80-81.

In such a context, it is natural to ascribe authority to the Bible, which has inspired countless people living in intimate dialogue with it and which has empowered them to make creative differences in life. The more urgent task here seems to lie not so much in eradicating the authority of the Bible, but in helping women subjects cultivate their own 'female authority' with which they can take responsibility for their own biblical interpretation.[21]

Interpreting Paul with a Hermeneutics of Compassion in Detachment

Paul, the 'Christian Proteus',[22] has brought about kaleidoscopic responses in history from diverse quarters. In feminist sectors, he is often discredited. According to Mary Daly, Paul is the 'arch-hater of life in general and women in particular'.[23] Whether one agrees to Paul's infamy as 'the eternal enemy of woman'[24] or not, few will deny that Paul's masculinity and his androcentric worldview permeate his theological reflection and anthropological understanding. David Clines points out that 'Paul is not just a Jew, a Pharisee, a scholar, a thinker, a traveler, an author—but also a *man*'.[25] This 'bachelor from Tarsus', a Jewish, Mediterranean male, is inscribed with the cross-cultural characteristics of masculinity such as strength (Rom. 15.19; 1 Cor. 2.4; 4.19; 16.13; Phil. 4.13; Col. 1.11, 29; Eph. 6.19, 10), violence (Rom. 13.12; 2 Cor. 6.7; 10.3-4; Eph. 6.14; 1 Thess. 5.8; 1 Tim. 1.18; 2 Tim. 2.3, 4), powerful and persuasive speech (2 Cor. 5.11; 10.10; 2 Tim. 4.2), male bonding (Rom. 16.21; 1 Cor. 4.17; 2 Cor. 1.1; Col. 1.1; Phil. 2.22; 1 Tim. 1.2, 18; 2 Tim. 1.2), and womanlessness (1 Cor. 7.7, 27, 29; 9.5) as well as the typically Mediterranean masculinity imbued with an honor/shame outlook.[26]

'Paul's male equipment, both for being, and for thinking',[27] evinces itself in numerous ways. A few examples suffice here: his insensitivity to the

21. By 'female authority' I mean the 'ability of a woman to validate her own convictions of truth, beauty, and goodness in regard to her self-concept and self-interest' (Polly Young-Eisendrath and Florence Wiedemann, *Female Authority: Empowering Women through Psychotherapy* [New York: The Guilford Press, 1987], p. 8).

22. Wayne A. Meeks, 'The Christian Proteus', in Wayne A. Meeks (ed.), *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), p. 438.

23. Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 8.

24. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 116.

25. David J.A. Clines, 'Paul the Invisible Man', in Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson (eds.), *New Testament Masculinites* (Semeia Studies, 45; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 181.

26. Clines, 'Paul the Invisible Man', pp. 181-92. Clines discusses the scriptural Paul, that is, Paul who is found not only in his authentic letters but also in the deutero-Pauline letters and Acts.

27. Clines, 'Paul the Invisible Man', p. 181.

abusive nature of patriarchy and slavery, which is revealed in his use of the story of Sarah and Hagar to contrast two covenants (Gal. 4.21-31); his will to control women's behavior in worship with recourse to the perpetuation of the cultural code of female shame (1 Cor. 11.2-16; 14.33-36); and his omission of women witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Cor. 15.3-8.[28] Galatians contains a pre-Pauline baptismal formula, which upholds the abolition of religious and cultural divisions as well as the dissolution of domination on the basis of slavery and sexual divisions (Gal. 3.28). Yet in the very same letter, the one-time occurrence of circumcision, which represents an exclusively male experience, rather than a daily all-inclusive communal practice like kosher law, appears as the crucial 'synecdoche of Law/Jewishness in Paul's letters'.[29] Paul's argument for a woman's right to marriage-free ascetical life in 1 Corinthians 7 effected liberating consequences for many women in the history of early Christianity.[30] Yet contradicting his own knowledge of the crucial contributions that married Christian women such as Prisca made to the life of Christian communities (Rom. 16.3-5; Acts 18.26), Paul asserts that married women are 'anxious about the affairs of the world', that is, lacking the full commitment to the work of Christ (1 Cor. 7.34).[31] Antoinette Clark Wire demonstrates, through the reconstruction of the voice of Corinthian women prophets based on rhetorical analysis of Paul's language, how Paul attempted to stifle their theological understanding manifested in a different set of behavior.[32] According to Elizabeth Castelli, the ideology of mimesis, deeply embedded in the Western cultural habit of privileging sameness and degrading difference, ensconces itself in Paul's language of imitation.[33] Such a political enterprise oppresses 'identity-in-difference',[34] not least of which is gender difference. In general, Paul falls short of incorporating women's experiences in forging theological ideas and Christian exhortations, and often makes them invisible.

28. 'Either Paul has never heard what the four Gospels consider the first resurrection accounts—hardly likely—or he choose not to mention them because of some meaning of these stories in Corinth' (Antoinette Clark Wire, '1 Corinthians', in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza [ed.], *Searching the Scriptures.* II. *A Feminist Commentary* [New York: Crossroad, 1994], p. 189).

29. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, pp. 15-16.

30. For instance, see the story of Thecla. See Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 'The Acts of Paul', in Wilhelm Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, II (trans. R.M. Wilson; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 239-46.

31. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 226.

32. Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

33. Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

34. Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, p. 127.

If one compares the viewpoint of Paul with that of Musonius Rufus, Paul's limitation comes to the fore. The Stoic philosopher of the second half of the first century, called the 'Roman Socrates', espoused the equality of men and women as well as perfect companionship and mutual love in marriage. According to de Ste. Croix,

> Musonius is both more rational and more humane than St. Paul in his attitude to women, sex and marriage, and he is exceptionally free from the male-dominated outlook, desiring the subjection of women to their husbands, which was common enough in antiquity but was stronger among the Jews than among many pagans (the Romans above all) and was implanted in Paul by his orthodox Jewish upbringing.[35]

Having said the above, why do I still want to engage seriously in struggling with Paul, who is prone to perpetuate the conventional patriarchal prejudice and an androcentric anthropology that marginalizes women? It is because of the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment, which responds to a context in which not only sexism, but other systems of oppression, such as colonialism/imperialism, military dictatorship, social marginalization, cultural dislocation, and economic exploitation, also destroy the well-being of women. Those who are oppressed by such dynamics and fight against them, such as Paul, are possible allies, whom Korean women cannot easily dismiss. The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment advocates neither blind acquiescence to a patriarchal worldview and practices nor a weak toleration of resignation. Because it is aware of its own limits and situatedness, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment seeks not to ignore what imperfect allies have striven to accomplish within complicated circumstantial restraints and their own limitations. Ultimately, it emerges because of its belief in a creative feminist agency that enables taking initiative. According to Ricoeur, 'the equivalent of initiative' is the 'force of the present', which is 'the force that gives to our ethical and political aims in the future the strength to reactivate the unfulfilled potentialities of the past transmitted to us'.[36] The text of the past becomes usable by the present active agency of feminist readers who take initiative in engaging in dialogue with it and desire to find food from it.

In this vein, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment resonates with 'transformational readings' proposed by Polaski for those feminists 'who function and expect to continue to function within the Christian tradition with some notion of biblical authority'.[37] Transformational readings

35. G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 110.

36. Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, p. 222.

37. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 4. Polaski introduces other types of female readers' reading strategies classified as conformist, rejectionist, and resistant

seek 'not merely the directives found within the text but also the directions that the text points', and attempt to identify 'the new paths the text blazes' and track 'those lines of thinking further than the text itself goes'.[38] This reading strategy takes interest not so much in where the texts 'stand', as in where they 'point'. It is concerned with 'the trajectories present in the Pauline texts'.[39] Feminist readers of the Pauline texts who identify 'new creation' as Paul's central conviction[40] and agree to it as one of the crucial divine messages for our own time can perceive two things simultaneously. On the one hand, we recognize that Paul stops 'short of full expression of the principles he professes' in Gal. 3.28 when he implements his own gospel.[41] On the other hand, we see Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles who fiercely committed himself to the task of abolishing the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. It was *his* calling. Keeping these two aspects in mind, we now regard it as our own task to pursue what the Pauline trajectory of radical equality among people points toward in the areas of gender and racial equality.[42] It is *our* calling. As we concur that we stand in 'the open-endedness of the trajectory of new creation',[43] not mechanically bound to ossified tradition, we take initiative to do our own job in the present through galvanizing the 'unfulfilled potentialities of the past'.[44]

In concert with Polaski's transformational readings, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment finds resources for inspiration and insight from the Pauline texts to inform and strengthen women readers in the contemporary world. First of all, research has illuminated the imperial context of the production of Paul's letters and his anti-imperial agenda.[45] Paul's apocalyptic worldview is construed as anti-imperial divine politics, while his undertaking of the international collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem is understood as the creation of a network of horizontal reciprocity and solidarity among colonized people. Paul's enthusiastic effort to

readings (pp. 2-4). Osiek proposed five feminist reading strategies: rejectionist, loyalist, revisionist, sublimationist, and liberationist (Carolyn Osiek, 'The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives', in Adela Yarbro Collins [ed.], *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985], pp. 93-105).

38. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 4.
39. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 11.
40. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, pp. 74-75.
41. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, pp. 122.
42. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, pp. 4, 75, 121.
43. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 120.
44. Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, p. 222.
45. Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994); see also Richard Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

build faith communities throughout the Mediterranean world is interpreted as an endeavor to organize an international anti-imperial alternative society (the 'assembly') based in local egalitarian communities ('assemblies').[46] The anti-imperial enterprise of Paul engages the attention of those feminists who yearn for an alternative globalization in the time of neo-liberal globalization.[47]

Secondly, Paul's adoption of the metaphors of birth pangs (Gal. 4.19; cf. Rom. 8.22), a breast-feeding/nursing mother (1 Cor. 3.1-2), and a nurse who provides tender care (1 Thess. 2.7) in order to delineate his apostolic identity and activity is striking in that it brings to the fore the female role, characterized by physicality and weakness in the ancient culture and despised as such, and makes it indispensable to the being and working of an apostle.[48] These metaphors prevent the image of apostolic authority from falling prey to exclusively masculine colorings. Clines argues that Paul has found a way of having a son without the burden of having a wife, and that 'painless male reproduction is the goal of a real man'.[49] However, birthing and mothering are not pain-free, either actually or figuratively. 'Unlike metaphors that have to do with paternal "begetting", these maternal metaphors emphasize care that takes place over a period of time'.[50] The androgynous conception of religious leadership could inspire those women, who, with or without the actual experience of biological childbirth, take maternity seriously and, while avoiding the fallacy of essentializing maternity, hope to cultivate it as a spiritual resource for sociopolitical and pastoral engagement.[51]

46. Horsley, 'General Introduction', in *Paul and Empire*, p. 8.

47. When I was invited to speak in the Fourth CCA-McGilvary Ecumenical Lecture Series at the McGilvary Faculty of Theology of Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand, January 2006, I designated the entire lectureship, which consisted of a sermon and two lectures, 'Journey of Faith in the Empire'. In those two lectures, I shared my own struggle with Pauline texts as an Asian feminist Christian who sees both the promises and failures of Paul's anti-imperial enterprise. An Asian feminist evaluation of Paul's agenda was presented in the sub-sections of two lectures, respectively titled 'When Persis Heard Paul's Sermon on Hagar' and 'An Asian Feminist Evaluation of Paul's Spirituality'. See Hyunju Bae, 'Paul, Roman Empire, and Ekklesia', *CTC Bulletin* 22 (2006), pp. 5-14; Bae, 'The Holy Spirit and Paul's Spirituality', pp. 15-23.

48. Beverly R. Gaventa, 'The Maternity of Paul', in Robert T. Fortuna and Beverly R. Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), pp. 189-201; Gaventa, 'Our Mother St. Paul: Toward the Recovery of a Neglected Theme', *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 17 (1996), pp. 29-44.

49. Clines, 'Paul, the Invisible Man', pp. 191-92.

50. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 25.

51. Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995); Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994).

At this juncture, Paul's rhetoric of weakness in 2 Corinthians 10–13 deserves our consideration. In an attempt to construct his personal authority and leadership, Paul often draws on the cultural models of powerful masculinity, such as a Roman paterfamilias (1 Cor. 4.14-15, 21; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; 12.14; 13.2; cf. 1 Thess. 2.17), a victorious athlete (1 Cor. 9.24-27), and a warrior (2 Cor. 10.3-5). Wittingly or unwittingly, however, Paul also employs a dangerous strategy in 2 Corinthians 10–13, by which he proceeds like a woman, not merely like a fool. Jennifer Larson argues that in a cultural milieu where authority, rhetorical skill, and manliness were virtually synonymous, Paul's opponents must have found his self-presentation in the mode of weakness and suffering offensive, because it is associated with femininity.[52] In particular, elite Roman males would have regarded the idea of 'strength in weakness' as repulsive. Paul's rhetoric of weakness, then, subverts the conventional concept of leadership and opens a new vista for imagining authority and leadership in a way which is free not only from aristocratic values but also from a patriarchal standpoint.

Furthermore, the inconsistencies and incoherencies in Paul's argument help us identify where 'the growing edges of his theology' stand.[53] We might trace and grapple with the possibilities they unveil for us. While Paul often reinforces the conventional cultural script in terms of sexuality and gender, he nevertheless takes women's membership and leadership seriously, and he cherished his partnership with women (Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 1.11; 11.5; 16.19; Phil. 4.2; Phlm 2). An exclusively male religion like Mithraism was not his option. While Paul shows 'an underlying suspicion of women's dangerous sexuality, a suspicion that seems to be grounded in a fear of difference',[54] he is bold enough to advocate the liturgical practice of the holy kiss in churches, which creates the space for communal celebration with tender physicality (Rom. 16.16; 1 Cor. 16.20; 2 Cor. 13.12; 1 Thess. 5.26), and thus does not endorse a dualistic discrimination against women and the body. Easily abused, this practice came to spawn various rumors.[55] While Paul definitely maintains the binary dualism between flesh and spirit in Romans 8,[56] one can note the emergence of the 'positive, generative eschatology' in Romans 8.18-23, which is expressed through 'the

52. Jennifer Larson, 'Paul's Masculinity', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004), pp. 85-97.

53. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 83.

54. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 56.

55. 'A personal kiss, holy or not, involves the intimate touching of another persons' body' and 'the kiss creates a relationship between two bodies and carries with it a certain significance that both parties understand' (Stephen Benko, 'The Kiss', in *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986], p. 79).

56. Castelli, 'Romans', in *Searching the Scriptures,* II*,* pp. 272-300.

laboring-toward-birth metaphor' as well as the solidarity of humanity and nature that 'share status as creatures of God'.[57]

While Paul is interested in consolidating his own authority, he also acknowledges that he is an implausible vessel of authority.[58] Paul decenters himself through admitting his own epistemological limitation (1 Cor. 13.12). He stresses the importance of thinking and the reasoning faculty of individual Christians, which is the very seat for the construction of individual authority (1 Cor. 10.15; 11.13; 14.20, 29 etc.). Indeed, the ordinary saints are expected to be equipped with the authority of wisdom which would enable them to judge not only the world but even the angels (1 Cor. 6.2-3, 5). In addition, the theme of reversal (1 Cor. 1.18-31), the value of each and every member for the community and mutual interdependence (1 Cor. 12), and the praise of tender love (1 Cor. 13), to mention only a few, are also fertile ground for feminist engagement.

Finally, numerous aspects of Paul's life are also noteworthy, such as the radical commitment to his own vocation, a full life lived as a thinker, mystic, and activist, and the dauntless spirit of joy in times of affliction. His life was permeated with the conviction that God initiated a new creation in Jesus Christ, a new horizon of life beyond tragedy. In particular, his existence as a multicultural nomadic with multiple fronts and multiple boundaries such as Pharisaism, Hellenism, Roman citizenship, and Christian apostleship, is revealing for feminist readers in the contemporary world, in which few are free from the clash of conflicting norms and different cultural codes. Lastly, Paul had to claim his own authority in an unfavorable environment. Ironically enough, Paul's claim for authority, which often troubles women, turns out to be the very topos which captivates the imagination of feminist readers who have to function as speaking subjects in a world shot through with the sociocultural suspicions of female authority.

Conclusion

A social location situated within a complex context engenders complex strategies for living and reading. Korean women have considered the issues of sociopolitical movements that focus on agendas other than sexism to be inseparable from the achievement of a better life. However, the dilemma of Korean women lies in the fact that a comprehensive approach to the systems of diverse oppressions sometimes fails to unmask the patriarchal norms and practices closely interlocked with them. Out of this context full of ambiguities, tensions, and ruptures, a spirituality of relationality grows, the constellation of which I constructed in terms of compassion in detachment.

57. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, pp. 89-90.
58. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 83.

The posture of compassion in detachment foregrounds, as an overarching theme, compassion that presupposes the web of interrelatedness in reality, and has it conditioned by detachment. Detachment is the locus of sober attention, critical independence, and vigilant resistance. The spirituality of compassion in detachment hopes to create a fertile space for mature feminist subjectivity, female authority, and creative imagination, making use of epistemological privileges as women. The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment takes as its point of departure the spirituality of compassion in detachment, just as the latter, stemming from the ambiguous and complex experiences of life, sheds light on the reading of the Bible in its own ambiguity and complexity.

When the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment is applied to the interpretation of Paul, it becomes a matter of 'bearing with Paul'.[59] As for me, Paul often feels like a guide whose finger points to the spring of water I am looking for in the middle of a desert, and yet with whose voice my mind cannot be quite relaxed. Some aspects of Paul's character, speech, and manners turn out to be disagreeable. Nevertheless, other dimensions of the message and life of this prophet in divine madness clearly strikes a cord within me. I choose to bear with him and continue to be in dialogue with him about our common concern. I acknowledge my indebtedness to him in my journey of faith in the empire.

The gaze of compassion in detachment has something to do with the 'attention' Simone Weil describes. Weil proposes a mode of attention as suspending our thought. Our thought should be 'empty, waiting…ready to receive' the truth that the object of our sight provides. Yet this gesture of attention keeps 'the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of' on a lower level. It is like a person on a mountain who, as she looks forward, sees also below her 'a great many forests and plains'.[60] The spirituality of compassion in detachment sees a great many conflicts, contradictions, and wounds in life, yet it rejects being enslaved by them and continues to look forward with the hope for a new reality. The hermeneutics of compassion in detachment sees the contradiction and ruptures in the Bible and the dangerous history of its abuse, yet it acknowledges that the Bible continues to function as 'the face of transcendence'[61] for those who resonate with the biblical proclamation of a new creation and commit

59. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul*, p. 121.

60. Simone Weil, 'Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God', in Emma Craufurd (ed.), *Waiting for God* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), p. 62.

61. Ivone Gebara, 'The Face of Transcendence as a Challenge to the Reading of the Bible in Latin America', in Elisabeth Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures,* I, pp. 172-86.

themselves to this vision. Despite a view of the dark valleys of a variety of human fallacies, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment looks forward, waiting for the expansive sky that symbolizes the sacred horizon of life in divine grace. It invokes the courage to be, and the courage to create. An ancient wisdom says that the Bible grows together with the reader. Learning out of thirst, the hermeneutics of compassion in detachment hopes to open a way to embrace life and the Bible patiently and joyfully.

Our (Neither) Mother and (Nor) Father in Heaven: A Postcolonial Reading of the Lord's Prayer

Seong Hee Kim

When Korean Christian women read the Bible, they have specific expectations and purposes. They read the Bible because it provides them emotional fulfillment and answers to what they have been looking for. They believe reading the Bible can solve issues for them because through it they can discern God's will and wisdom. Likewise, they apply biblical messages to their current situation in order to encourage themselves to accomplish God's will and justice, and to give life meaning. In my book *Mark, Women and Empire*, I explore Korean women's biblical interpretation as '*Salim* hermeneutics'.[1] *Salim* (life) in Korean is a very familiar term, which basically refers to Korean women's everyday household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and raising children. However, this term also includes deeper meanings like saving, restoring and affirming life in desperate situations, I adopt the concept of *Salim* when engaging ordinary Korean women because they read the Bible to pursue *Salim* in various situations.

Salim hermeneutics involves three steps. First, it starts from readers' social, political and cultural locations, scrutinizing the power dynamics and systems used by oppressors or the powerful to keep the powerless and the oppressed in their place. Second, it studies the biblical text, using the most appropriate methods of biblical criticism. In this process, readers scrutinize how biblical texts reflect their authors' cultures and ideologies, and how conventional biblical interpretation often reflects biblical scholars' or interpreters' interests and social locations. For this task, readers should be trained to read the Bible in decolonizing and liberating ways, which is the task of postcolonial biblical interpretation. Third, readers establish a dialogue between their situation and the biblical text in order to discover meanings and applications that allow them to realize *Salim* in their lives. What *Salim* hermeneutics emphasizes is that reading the Bible is ultimately driven by the desire to improve life and give freedom to human beings.

1. Seong Hee Kim, *Mark, Women and Empire: A Korean Postcolonial Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010).

In this essay, using *Salim* hermeneutics, I attempt to reinterpret the Lord's Prayer for Korean women today. I chose this theme because Korean Christianity initiated a project to retranslate the Lord's Prayer in 2004 and promulgated the new form in 2005. This new translation is oppressive and uncomfortable for Korean women because it is still male-dominated in terms of both process and result. In what follows, I criticize how male-dominated Korean Christianity has produced this new translation of the Lord's Prayer, which consists of patriarchal expressions and fails to take into consideration women's perspectives. I suggest a new reading of the Lord's Prayer from a Korean woman's perspective as an example of postcolonial biblical interpretation for giving life and freedom to both women and men in their use of the Lord's Prayer. For this task, I first discuss specific ways to interpret the Bible from a Korean feminist postcolonial point of view. By using *Salim* hermeneutics as an example of Korean postcolonial biblical interpretation, I reinterpret the Lord's Prayer for today.

Korean Feminist Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation

Postcolonial biblical interpretation is a relatively new hermeneutical horizon in biblical studies, developed along with other postmodern discourses. It deconstructs myths of objectivity and neutrality and openly accepts diversity. It acknowledges the Bible as the product of colonial/imperial realities, and examines how the ideologies of both the colonizer and the colonized are complexly embedded in the text.[2] It also scrutinizes how biblical interpretation has been used for the benefit of specific individuals or groups, with their own particular ideologies. Generally speaking, there have been three strategic tendencies in applying postcolonial biblical interpretation. The first strategy is an anti-colonial or resistant stance against the Empire.[3] This position views the Bible as a resistance book which condemns imperial power and exploitation of the colonized/the oppressed and encourages readers to oppose the abuse of the Empire. The second strategy is to disclose how the colonized/the oppressed consciously and unconsciously mimic and follow the ways of those they initially resisted.[4] This strategy

2. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia, 'Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Beginnings, Trajectories, Intersections', in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 1-22.

3. Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001); Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Exploration* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001).

4. Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999).

thereby reveals the changing subjectivity of the colonizer and the colonized in different situations and warns against analyzing complex realities as if they were certain and unchanging. The third strategy is to show the ambiguity of the Bible.[5] On the one hand, the Bible has been used for giving messages of hope to the oppressed and the marginalized to help them endure and resist their painful situation. On the other hand, it also has been used to justify their oppression and colonization.

Currently, biblical scholars from the Two-Thirds World have become increasingly interested in exploring postcolonial ways of interpreting the Bible.[6] R.S. Sugirtharajah views postcolonial interpretation as 'a way of looking at Asian biblical interpretative practice',[7] and insists that postcolonial biblical interpretation make a space for the voices of the marginalized to be heard. Indeed, biblical scholars in marginalized societies try to raise their voices, using their own creative methodologies and interpretations. In my view, there are several tasks that postcolonial biblical studies faces. The first is to examine the ideologies of the colonial and the colonized embedded in the biblical text and to criticize how the powerful or the powerless have used the text for their benefit. A second task is to reexamine the biblical text from the perspective of the marginalized, deconstructing the main-character oriented interpretation so that the voices of the minor characters may be heard and new meanings can be produced from a marginal perspective. The final task is to develop natives' own hermeneutics based on their traditions, history, culture, and contexts. Then, native people need no longer to view the Bible as an Israelite story or a Western book. Rather, they can accept it as their story and their own book, enabling them to hear God's words.

Postcolonial biblical studies has been criticized by postcolonial feminist scholars for its lack of serious concern with gender issues.[8] Postcolonial feminist interpretation began with criticism of male-centered postcolonial work that overlooks women's struggles and gender difference, and of First-World feminist scholars' work that has tended to ignore colonial issues.[9] Postcolonial feminist critic targets and discuss two things at the same time:

5. Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007); Young-Sung Ahn, *The Reign of God and Rome in Luke's Passion Narrative* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006).

6. R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah (eds.), *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007).

7. R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), p. ix.

8. Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005), pp. 77-79.

9. Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), pp. 3-16.

sexism and colonialism (imperialism). They reveal how First-World scholars (including feminists) and male postcolonial scholars have again paradoxically marginalized women living in the Two-Thirds world. The unique reading strategy and interpretation used by postcolonial feminists brings the gender issue to the fore, investigating the role gender plays in the biblical text in relation to other issues, such as empire, class, identity, and culture. It also reads the biblical stories of women in the light of colonized women's stories in order to construct a counter narrative against the imperial (colonial or oppressive) realities. Postcolonial feminist interpretation respects ordinary women as the subjects of reading the Bible and gives credit to their interpretations, even though they might seem to be different from academic research.

Korean *postcolonial* feminist interpretation considers Korea's unique situation important. Korean women should consider the neocolonial situation in which Korea is still subject to the USA in areas such as economy, politics, and the military system. Korea also has the task of unifying South and North Korea. Korean Christianity is still dominated by male leaders and patriarchal culture. Diverse religions and Christianity co-exist harmoniously in Korea. Korean society is becoming more culturally diverse as an increasing number of South Asian women are marrying Korean men in hopes of a better economic life. Also, many foreign workers come to Korea to realize the Korean dream. Public schools seek to hire English-speaking teachers from the First World. In these diverse and hybrid cultures, Koreans are not only victims of neocolonialism but also can be seen as invaders and colonizers of other poor countries. Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should consider all this complexity as the context where it needs to start for the transformation of life for God's justice. Considering these situations, I propose that Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible offers a means of decolonization of the Bible and the liberation of human beings.[10]

First, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should recognize that the Bible, itself has dual characteristics that might be either harmful or useful for women's liberation. Thus, we should start reading the biblical text with a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' and scrutinize how the ideologies of the colonizer/the powerful and the colonized/the powerless work themselves out in the biblical text and how the biblical text may influence readers.

Second, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should acknowledge that the Bible and Christianity were brought to Korea under Western neocolonialism in the nineteenth century. Foreign missionaries regarded

10. Seong Hee Kim, 'Reading the Bible from the Perspective of Korean Women: Toward *Salim* Hermeneutics', *Ewha Journal of Feminist Theology* 5 (2007), pp. 109-111.

our own religious tradition as idolatry or heresy, so we lost our traditions, songs and stories. We need to rediscover, develop and adapt the tradition into Korean Christianity. Thus, we can read the Bible in conjunction with our traditions and create a new hermeneutics for Korean reading of the Bible.

Third, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should recognize that Korean Christianity is still dominated by a patriarchal, hierarchical, and male-centered system and culture. We must decolonize the colonial/patriarchal ideology/theology and biblical interpretation which tries to perpetuate patriarchal ideology for men's benefit.

Fourth, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should consider the changing Korean society. Due to globalization, Korea is now becoming a diverse society in terms of people, language, food, lifestyle, religion and culture. Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should be open to diverse voices and be sensitive to marginalized foreign people as well as the Korean minority within Korean society.

Lastly, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should be cautious of interchangeable or unfixed subjectivity in different situations. In other words, the oppressed might become the oppressor when a situation changes, and vice versa. In this sense, we should be careful of idealizing certain individuals as models to follow.

In sum, Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation should seek for decolonization and liberation so that Korean women and men recognize themselves as reading subjects and resist any kind of oppressive power and system. Then the Bible can be read as our own book which contains our stories and God's message for contemporary Korean readers. In what follows, I offer a Korean postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, considering these guidelines and using *Salim* hermeneutics. I begin by describing what is happening these days with the new translation of the Lord's Prayer in Korean Christianity, which inspired me to try this postcolonial reading. Then, I suggest a new form of the Lord's Prayer which sets women readers free in their reading and use of it.

A Postcolonial Reading of the Lord's Prayer

Reading from the Reader's Location

The Lord's Prayer is recited in every worship service in Korea. It is taught as a pattern of how to pray, and is regarded as special because Jesus himself taught it to the disciples. This liturgical prayer has influenced Korean Christians both consciously and unconsciously, forming their faith and theology. Thus, a correct translation and interpretation is important. In December, 2004, the Special Committee for the Study of the Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed (SCLA), an alliance between the Church Council of

Korea (CCK) and the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) promulgated a new form of the Lord's Prayer. This form is highly patriarchal and oppressive to women in terms of the process of its composition and translation. The fifty-nine members of the SCLA are all male biblical scholars, theologians and pastors. As a result, the newly translated form of the Lord's Prayer inserted a male-gendered term, 'Father', in a number of places where it does not appear in the Greek text. Without concern for feminist viewpoints, the translators reinscribed the male image of God in keeping with the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of Korean Christianity. Korean feminist theologians opposed using 'Father' for God in churches, and suggested using inclusive language. The SCLA answered the women's objection with three points: first of all, Jesus called God 'Father'; second, calling God 'Father' is not related to patriarchal oppression, but rather is an expression of an intimate relationship between God and human beings as God's children; third, it is not appropriate to apply the second-person pronoun to God in Korean because it does not properly express reverence or the dignity of God. Thus, they insisted on replacing the term, 'your Father's' with 'Father's' in the Korean translation. The new form of the Lord's Prayer by the SCLA is as follows:

> Our Father who are in heaven,
> Make Father's[11] name holy.[12]
> Father's kingdom come,
> Father's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
> Give us today the daily bread;
> Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
> Lead us not into temptation;
> Deliver us from evil.
> Father's is the Kingdom, power, and glory, forever. Amen.

As we see, this translation has inserted the male term, 'Father' several times in place of second pronoun, *σου* (your). This is problematic because it perpetuates male and paternal language for God. If you ask Sunday-school children how they imagine God, most of them answer that God is a father with a long white beard, who wears a white robe, and holds a long wooden staff. Even though calling God 'Father' is just a metaphor, it creates associations with a cultural experience of fatherhood. Thus, when 'Father' language is used of God, it affirms and legitimizes patriarchal values, such as the domination of mothers by fathers and of children by parents. As Ruth Duck states,

11. The new interpretation, in a footnote, explains that the Greek text's 'Father's' is a second person possessive, *σου*.

12. The new interpretation also notes that the implied meaning is 'Father makes his name holy through us' in a footnote.

> The embedding of gender expectations in language through the false generic, word order, and gender marking reflects and reinforces the male domination of society. So does the association of God with the masculine and evil with the feminine. Other aspects of language reinforce domination and subordination based on race, class, differing abilities, and so on, so that for example, God is identified with whiteness…Linguistic bias helps to keep oppressive social systems in place.[13]

Indeed, referring to God as 'Father' in the Lord's Prayer is not only uncomfortable for women but also limits God's character and scope, making God a reflection of male-centered, dominant, and colonial ideology.

Unfortunately, since this new form of the Lord's Prayer was produced in 2004, a number of churches have been using it in their worship service. A contemporary Korean woman reader attempting a postcolonial reading of the Lord's Prayer must criticize how male Korean Christian leaders have produced a patriarchal form of the Lord's Prayer, excluding women's perspectives. *Salim* hermeneutics, as a mode of postcolonial reading for making things alive and solving issues facing the reader, can help us reinterpret the Lord's Prayer by using inclusive language, which both includes women and encourages readers to meditate on God's unfathomable characteristics described in the Lord's Prayer.

The Biblical Text (Mt. 6.9-13//Lk. 11.2-4)

There are two versions of the Lord's Prayer, Mt. 6.9-13 and Lk. 11.2-4. These two versions are slightly different in terms of length, content, terminology, and context. Luke's form is shorter than Matthew's. Generally, the Lord's Prayer consists of an invocation, God-petitions, we-petitions, and a doxology. In the petition to God, Matthew has three parts, while Luke has two and there is no doxology in Luke. Luke uses 'Father', while Matthew uses 'our Father in heaven'. Matthew's σήμερον (today) is καθ᾽ ἡμέραν (everyday) in Luke. Matthew's ὀφειλήματα (debts) is expressed as ἁμαρτία (sin) in Luke. The literary context of Matthew's Lord's Prayer is the so-called Sermon on the Mount (5–7). Jesus uses it as an example of how to pray, in contrast to the hypocrites who pray in public, to be seen by others, or the Gentiles, who pray with empty phrases (Mt. 6.5). In Luke, however, one of Jesus' disciples asks Jesus to teach him how to pray, just as John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray (Lk. 11.1-2). Jesus teaches the right attitude when we pray (Lk.11.5-13).

Biblical scholars have long debated whether the Lord's Prayer originated with the historical Jesus, the Gospel authors, or the early Church.[14] We do

13. Ruth C. Duck, *Gender and the Name of God* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991), p. 37.

14. M.D. Goulder, 'The Composition of the Lord's Prayer', *JTS* 14 (1963), pp. 32-45;

not need to regard these origins separately; for example, Hans Dieter Betz argues that the prayer originated in oral tradition and became textually fixed later in variant forms by the Gospel authors according to their needs and situations.[15] According to Joachim Jeremias, Matthew's audience was Jews who would have been familiar with traditional prayers such as the Kaddish and the Eighteen Benedictions, whereas Luke uses the Lord's Prayer in order to teach Gentile Christians how to pray.[16] Scholars assume that both Gospels adapted the Lord's Prayer from the Q source. Most think that Luke's shorter form is closer to Q than Matthew's longer one and that Matthew has extended it to fit a liturgical setting.[17] In what follows I will focus on Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer.

In terms of its literary structure, the prayer consists of three parts: the invocation (6.9a, b), the main section (6.9c-13a), which includes two sets of three petitions about God's glory and about human needs, and the final doxology (6.13b), which seems to be an insertion by the Matthean community.

The prayer starts by calling God 'Father'. Feminists object to calling God 'Father' because of the negative effects of such gender-biased language. However, Jesus' calling God 'Father' is ambiguous and can even be read as a resistance strategy. Most scholars see Jesus' use of 'Father' as pointing to the unique relationship between God and Jesus as Son of God. Although God's fatherhood is recognized in Judaism, Jesus' calling God 'Father' illustrates his own intimate approach.[18] Others, however, challenge

Choi Gab Jong, *The Study of the Lord's Prayer in First Century Palestine* (Seoul: Sung Kwang Press, 1992) [Korean], pp. 17-26.

15. Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20-49), including the Sermon on the Plain* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 370.

16. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 88.

17. See Jeremias (*The Prayers of Jesus*, pp. 11-65) who states that Luke looks original in terms of length on the one hand and Matthew seems original by his choice of words on the other hand; see also R.E. Brown, 'The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer', in *New Testament Essays* (New York: Image Books, 1968), p. 279; R.A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), p. 284; M.W. Meyer, *Who Do People Say I Am?: The Interpretation of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 93. A few scholars argue that Matthew's form is original; see C.M. Laymon, *The Lord's Prayer in Its Biblical Setting* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 69-70; J. Lowe, *The Lord's Prayer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 6-9.

18. N.T. Wright, 'The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer', in Richard N. Longenecker (ed.), *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 134. Jeremias (*The Prayers of Jesus*, pp. 29, 62) notes that Jesus refers to God as Father 4 times in Mark, 15 times in Luke, 42 times in Matthew, and 109 times in John.

the uniqueness of Jesus' use of 'Father', citing its general usage in Jewish circles.[19] So is there anything distinctive in Jesus' use of the term?

We can read it as a counterpart to the patriarchal/colonial and religious/political system of the times. The word *pater* was used as a reverent way to address both parental and national fathers and teachers. In addition, the Roman Empire regarded the emperor as the son of god, king and even god himself. However, Jesus says, 'Call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven' (Mt. 23.9). Jesus criticizes the Roman Empire and the Jewish leaders who cooperated with the patriarchal/colonial system, declaring that only God is Father. Thus, Jesus' calling God 'Father' is an act of resistance against the imperial ideology system. He uses the term 'Father' not as imperial or patriarchal imagery but to refer to one who cares and loves human beings, refuting and subverting any oppressive domination.[20] However, we need to be aware that naming God 'Father' can serve patriarchal interests and reflect patriarchal values. Thus, in male-dominated Korean Christianity, Koreans need to avoid calling God 'Father' and to provide alternative imagery for God that corrects imperial/patriarchal abuse. The fatherhood of God is however not a closed or exclusive symbol. It is open to correction, enrichment, and completion from other symbols, such as 'mother', 'brother', 'sister', and 'friend'.[21]

Jesus' prayer also teaches the importance of community, implying that God is not *my* God but *our* God. The plural pronoun 'our' serves as an act of addressing a common God, open to every race, gender, and class. God cannot be used for one particular party's benefit. Our God is described as being in heaven. Matthew's insertion, 'in heaven' basically follows traditional Jewish thought. 'Father' does not mean blood-kinship relationship, but rather identifies a new community that Jesus mentions: 'Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother' (Mt.12.50). In ancient Judean society, the family was the basis of society and the patriarch was the leader of both family and society. All members had to obey their patriarch to sustain the family and society. However, Jesus

19. Dieter Zeller, 'God as Father in the Proclamation and in the Prayer of Jesus', in Asher Finkel and Lawrence Frizell (eds.), *Standing before God* (trans. Nora Quigley; New York: Ktav, 1981), pp. 117-30; Asher Finkel, 'The Prayer of Jesus in Matthew', in *Standing before God*, p. 157; Briger Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 55.

20. On Jesus' resistance to the Empire in Mathew, see Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, pp. 57-74. The Gospel authors' tendency to refute patriarchal/colonial domination is more emphasized in Mark. See Seong Hee Kim, 'Absence of Father in the New Community: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of the Family in the Gospel according to Mark', *God's Image* 27 (March, 2008), pp. 15-19.

21. W.A. Vissert't Hooft, *The Fatherhood of God in an Age of Emancipation* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 133.

breaks this conventional concept of family and proclaims a new community in which all are equal if they are doing God's will.[22] This new community does not allow any imperial/patriarchal abuse and seeks for an egalitarian community, where God's justice and peace prevail.

The new translation of the Lord's Prayer by the SCLA uses 'Father' instead of the second person possessive pronoun 'your'. According to the SCLA, the primary reason for this change is that the Korean language never uses the second person pronoun in the Korean honorific system. However, the Korean language has been changing, not only in the linguistic markers of social differentiation but also in honorifics. Most of the younger generation do not feel it is wrong to adopt 'your' in reference to God, but rather feel an increased nearness and intimacy. In fact, it has been used for a long time as an expression of intimacy, nearness, and even respect in Korean literature and prayer.[23] Thus, there is no legitimate ground to replace 'Father' with 'your' in the Korean translation of the Lord's Prayer.

The key word of the You-petitions in Mt. 6.9c-10 is βασιλεία (kingdom). Verse 9a, 'Hollowed be your name', refers to the spread of the reign of God. The name was a symbol of power. Roman emperors called themselves the son of god, 'lord' or god himself so that the people would revere them. In fact, emperors' names were the object of reverence and fear. Jesus here calls for God's name to be revered, not the emperor's. The Greek term βασιλεία is also used to mean 'Empire'. Jesus asks for God's βασιλεία, God's reign, to be realized on earth as it is in heaven. Heaven and earth no longer divide reality. They are merged and become a hybrid reality which crosses borders. Realizing God's will on earth as it is in heaven takes place through our commitment to do God's will.

After invoking God, praising God's name, hoping for God's kingdom, and for God's will to be realized, the Lord's Prayer addresses human needs such as daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from harm. The fundamental need of life is symbolized as 'bread'. God provides for us and we need to ask for this provision. However, human beings often try to take as much as possible, beyond what they essentially need. Many even try to make gains for themselves by taking from the poor and the powerless. This is why (post)colonial situations still exist; the powerful exercise this control

22. Seong Hee Kim, 'Absence of Father', pp. 16-17; Warren Carter states that this prayer offers 'the vision and experience of another community, of an alternative order. In deconstructing everyday reality the prayer's alternative community reveals the falseness of any claim that the social structure of the status quo is ultimate' (Warren Carter, 'Recalling the Lord's Prayer: The Authorial Audience and Matthew's Prayer as Familiar Liturgical Experience', *CBQ* 57 [1995], p. 526).

23. Young-Jin Min and Ji-Youn Cho, 'Korean Translation of the Greek Personal Pronoun *σου* in the Lord's Prayer', *Journal of Biblical Text Research* 17 (2005) [Korean], pp. 133-47.

over the powerless in nation, society, local community, and even family. Jesus' petition for bread for each day means that we need to realize that everything we need comes from God; we cannot take others' possessions for our benefit without consideration for our neighbors.

The second we-petition is about forgiveness of sin. Sin is not just the violation of ritual codes, taboos or purity laws, but is the failure to fulfill our obligations to others.[24] Matthew emphasizes the theme of forgiveness after the Lord's Prayer, 'If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses' (Mt. 6.14-15).[25] The powerful/the colonizer has to ask the powerless/colonized for forgiveness and to return what they took from them as surplus. The powerless/the colonized have to accept their apology and be careful not to do the same thing to others should they ever be in the position of the powerful/the colonizer.

The third we-petition is deliverance from trial and the evil one. The meaning of πειρασμός is debated; it can mean either 'test', 'examination' or 'temptation'. According to Jeremias, πειρασμός is used twenty-one times in the New Testament as a noun form (38 times including verb forms). Only once, in 1 Tim. 6.9, does it refer to temptation; elsewhere it means 'trial' or 'testing'.[26] Thus, what Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer is to ask God for protection in time of trial and for deliverance from the evil one.

The doxology (6.13b) is bracketed in the Korean Bible. This is fitting because it is not found in manuscripts before the fifth or sixth century BCE. It is assumed that the Matthean community or the early church inserted this doxology because it was used in their liturgy. It sums up the entire prayer, mentioning God's kingdom, power, and glory. As noted above, God's βασιλεία, or God's reign, overtures all kinds of oppressive systems, and ideologies and reconstructs a place for us to live in God's justice and peace.

Salim *Interpretation of the Lord's Prayer*

Having looked first at the reader's context, I then considered the Lord's Prayer as it appears in the Gospel of Matthew. The next stage is to create a dialogue between context and text in order to produce a *Salim* interpretation which responds to readers' issues, giving freedom and life. In the Korean context, we first have to deal with the use and repetition of the gendered term 'Father'. Then, we have to seek a new way of expressing the essential

24. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 380.

25. See also Mt. 18:35, 'So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart'.

26. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, p. 29.

message that Jesus wanted to teach for contemporary readers. Indeed, this is possible because Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer as a way to pray, not as the object itself, and the prayer, moreover, consists of performative language.[27] The Lord's Prayer is not a creed, but a theological and confessional act. Thus, it should be performed using contemporary language for today's readers. The Female Translation Team of the Lord's Prayer (FTLP) in Korea was constituted in June 2005, in order to resist the patriarchal form of the Lord's Prayer and suggest basic principles for a new translation. Its mandate was (1) use of inclusive language, (2) delete the gender-biased term 'Father' and replace it with 'God', (3) allow using the second person possessive pronoun, (4) keep the passive tense of the Greek text, (5) unity of expression and style, and 6) use contemporary language.[28] These are critical points for any translation of the Greek text into Korean. In fact, others have already attempted to translate and perform the Lord's Prayer in ways that reflect their concerns, contexts, and theology. I cite some of them[29] before presenting my own.

Aramaic Lord's Prayer

O Divine Womb,
birthing forth the river of blessing which runs through all,
Soften the ground of our being,
and hallow in us a space for the planting of thy presence.
In our depths,
sow thy seed with its greening-power that we might be midwives to thy Reign.
Then, let each of our actions bear fruit in accordance with thy desire.
Impart to us the wisdom to bring forth the gifts of the earth
and share them daily according to the needs of each being,
And restore that which has been usurped by injustice to its rightful owners,
as we restore to others that which is not our own.
Do not let us be seduced by that which would divert us from our purpose,
but make us sensitive to the movement at hand.
For from thy fertile soil is born the creativity, the life-energy, and dance,
from birthing to birthing. Amen.

Anonymous

27. Warren Carter insists that the language used in the Lord's Prayer is a peformative statement. In speech act theory there are constative statements and performative statements. While constative statements describe or report information, performative statements perform an action, creating a new situation, relationship and commitment. See Carter, 'Recalling the Lord's Prayer', pp. 520-21.

28. Young Sil Choi, 'A New Translation of the Lord's Prayer, What is the Issue?: From the Perspective of Feminist Theology', Paper presented at the conference for the New Translation for the Lord's Prayer, 30 August, 2005. [Korean]

29. The National Council of Churches in Korea, *A New Translation of The Lord's Prayer, What is the Problem?* (Seoul: NCCK, 2006) [Korean], pp. 85-105.

A New Consciousness Lord's Prayer

Oh beloved Father aspect of All Creation
Who resides in the eternal cosmos
And Who art present in all things
And all levels of creation,
May thy name always be held sacred
Within our hearts, our minds and our soul,
And all of the earth. May thy Kingdom reign
Upon the Mother earth as it is in the heavens
Through our attunement to Thy will
May we be open enough to receive the sustenance of Thy eternal life every day henceforth,
Which ensures our daily bread upon the earth.
And may we be open to Thy all-loving Grace
Which cleanses us of all imbalances and impurities,
As we also open ourselves to be a channel of Thy all-loving Grace for others.
And may our attunement to Thee keep us from straying from Thy Kingdom,
And deliver us from any illusions of our separation from Thee which spawn darkness.
For we recognize that the only true power, Glory and kingdom is Yours
And can manifest within us, And our world, And is eternal. Amen.

Rev. Simeon Nartoomid

The Lord's Prayer for Justice

Our God who is in heaven and in all of us here on earth, the hungry, the oppressed, the excluded Holy is our name. May your reign come.

May Your reign come and your will be done in our choice to struggle with the complexities of this world and to confront greed and the desire for power in ourselves, in our nation and in the global economy. May your reign come.

Give us this day our daily bread. Bread that we are called to share, bread that you have given us abundantly and that we must distribute fairly, ensuring security for all. May your reign come.

Forgive us our trespasses: times we have turned away from the struggles of other people and countries, times we have thought only of our own security. May your reign come.

Lead us not into temptation, the temptation to close our minds, ears and eyes to the unfair global systems that create larger and larger gaps between the rich and the poor, the temptation to think it is too difficult to bring about more just alternatives. May your reign come.

Deliver us from evil, the evil of a world where violence happens in your name, where wealth for a few is more important than economic rights for all, where gates and barriers between people are so hard to bring down. May your reign come.

May your reign come, for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Adapted by the Center of Concern, Washington, DC

These examples are the beautifully rewritten versions of the Lord's Prayer for today. Each prayer rephrases Matthew's version and reformulates it in the light of contemporary concerns. Lastly, I offer my own translation for Korean Christians, female and male, from a postcolonial perspective toward *Salim* interpretation.

A Postcolonial Reading of the Lord's Prayer

Our God in Heaven and Earth,
You are neither Father nor Mother and you are both Mother and Father as well.
May your unfathomable name be known to the whole world because you are holy.
May God's Reign come.
May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now heaven and earth are merged, crossing over the boundary because your reign breaks through.
Give us today our daily need,
And forgive us our irresponsibility to others who need our help.
Now we share ours with the needy, then, show us your generosity
And lead us not into trial but deliver us from the evil one.
For your reign, power, and glory forever and ever. Amen.

In my reading, I delete the exclusive term 'Father' and replace it with 'God', adding both metaphors—Mother and Father. God can be characterized as either Mother or Father. At the same time, God is neither Father nor Mother, so I intend to imply that God may be explained with human imagery but cannot be limited by anything. I reformulate the verse, 'Hollowed be thy name' into a more contemporary expression for better understanding. I still emphasize the subject God, and illustrate its theological meaning. I change the term 'kingdom' into 'God's reign', doing away with the imperial image and emphasizing the theological meaning of βασιλεία. I also introduce a postcolonial illustration where two realities merge and create something new from that non-boundary space.[30]

In regard to the we-petitions section, I express the implied meanings more clearly, paraphrasing the verses. I change 'bread' to daily 'need' because bread symbolizes all we need for living. With regard to God's forgiveness, I specifically illustrate what we need to repent. I leave the last petition almost as it is and close it with a doxology in which I also avoid the terms 'Father' and 'Kingdom'. Surely, Jesus' prayer must have functioned to encourage readers to endure in turbulent times under the Roman Empire and must have given people the hope that God's βασιλεία would come soon. The Lord's

30. Stephen D. Moore, 'Postcolonialism', in A.K.M. Adam (ed.), *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 182-88.

Prayer can be retranslated for today in contemporary language without losing Jesus' core message.

Biblical translation and interpretation should change in accordance with changes in language and society. A modern postcolonial reading supports the idea that the letter kills but the spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3.6) and makes biblical interpretation more reflective of the readers' point of view. The main task of postcolonial interpretation is 'decolonizing' and 'liberating'. Postcolonial consciousness challenges readers to read the Bible as their own native book. It encourages readers to criticize imperial/colonial biblical interpretation and develop their own hermeneutics. Postcolonial feminist interpretation brings the gender issue to the fore and takes it as a starting point. Thus, I put forward a form of Korean postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation that I call *Salim* hermeneutics. Korean women usually read the Bible with reverence and with the expectation that the Bible can give them hope and answers they have been looking for in order to solve issues of importance to them. In other words, they read the Bible ultimately seeking for *Salim* itself (giving a life and hope). *Salim* interpretation starts with the reader's context and creates a dialogue between that context and the biblical text. It then produces a new interpretation, aimed at solving readers' issues, giving them life, freedom, and hope. Using *Salim* hermeneutics as a guideline for a Korean postcolonial feminist reading, I proposed a new form of the Lord's Prayer that uses inclusive language, avoids imperial terminology, and uses contemporary language to make it more accessible to modern readers. The Bible is a fixed text; however, its translation and interpretation should change and develop along with contemporary language and theological concerns in order to make God's word relevant for today. The letter kills and the spirit gives life.

Personal Reflections on Feminist Ministry as a Transforming Power

Soon Young Kim

In this essay, I would like to share my experience of feminist ministry as a transforming power in the Korean context. I begin with the story of my feminist ministry in the Korean church and the current situation of couple's ministry in Korea, focusing on Han Gang Methodist Church, where I serve as a senior pastor. In conclusion I give an example of Bible study performed at Han Gang Methodist Church from a feminist perspective.

My Background and My Struggle to Become a Pastor

My parents lived in Manchuria, China, before the end of the World War II. After the war they moved to the northern part of Korea but they found it difficult to settle down there because communism was spreading during that time and there were violent incidents. So they escaped from the communist surveillance and moved to the southern part of Korea near Incheon. But then the Korean War broke out on Sunday morning, 25 June, 1950. My family had to take refuge further south, and it was during the Korean War that I was born in a refugee camp.

I come from a religious family. My maternal great grandmother in the 1890s was the first among my family to convert to Christianity when Christianity first spread in Korea. My mother donated her property to establish a church and served as an elder. I was drawn to the ministry from an early age. After graduating from high school I attended the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul (now Methodist Theological University). When I graduated from MTS in 1974, I wanted to become a candidate for ordination, but the Korean Methodist Church (KMC) had an age limit of twenty-five for ordination and I was only twenty-three (generally male students were over twenty-five when they graduated because of military service).

After I turned twenty-five, I was still not allowed to be a candidate for the ministry because the KMC did not allow married women to be in charge of a church. My husband and I had established a new church in 1977, a year after we got married, and the church was actually founded in my name as a full-time worker, but I was nevertheless rejected as a candidate for

ordination because I was married. For sixteen years I struggled with other KMC women to change this discriminative law against women. We met the bishop and the constitution committee of the KMC to explain our objections to the law as discriminatory and the need for change. We participated in public meetings held before the Assembly of the KMC and insisted that the regulation for ordination was sexist and un-Christian. We also held prayer meetings and seminars to inform others and to publicize women's suffering as a result of the unfair policy. At last the constitution was changed in 1990 and I was ordained after completing all the necessary procedures for ordination in 1995. My husband and I became the first clergy couple at the local church level.

Feminist Ministry as a Transforming Power

It is vital to understand the Korean context in order to recognize why feminist ministry can become a transforming power. What Western feminist theologians have argued about the oppression of women holds true for the Korean church. For example, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza points out that women have been silenced in the churches and have been prohibited from doing theology and from deciding church policy for a long time.[1] Lynn Rhodes observes that women's religious experience has been ignored, trivialized, or denied,[2] and Letty Russell notes, 'The difficulties are clearly underlined in the lives of any of us who have sought to live out a feminist ecclesiology of church in the round while our efforts are ignored, questioned, or rejected'.[3] Korean church women are similarly denied their own voices and positions of authority in the church.

The patriarchy and hierarchy of contemporary Korean churches are rooted in cultural and social factors such as Confucian teachings about the subordination of women to fathers, husbands and sons, and the military culture that reinforces hierarchy. In spite of their rapid growth, Korean churches today seem to be domesticated, upholding hierarchical structures and patriarchal mentality. It is a natural assumption for Korean Christians that male clergy should be in charge of decision-making and have control over church work, an assumption that finds support in androcentric texts of the Bible.

1. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Biblical Interpretation in the Context of Church and Ministry: A Perspective on Theology for Christian Ministry', *Word World* 10 (1990), pp. 317-23 (321).

2. Lynn N. Rhodes, *Co-Creating: A Feminist Vision of Ministry* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), p. 26.

3. Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1993), p. 205.

Asian feminist theology was introduced in Korea by the Reverend Lee Sun Ai who held the first 'Asian Women's Consultation in Manila', on 21-30 November, 1985, with support from the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians (EATWOT).[4] She was also the founder of *In God's Image*, an Asian feminist journal which served as a platform to voice out diverse realities of Asian women and articulate Asian feminist theology. My feminist theology of ministry has been influenced by the Korean Association of Women Theologians, founded in 1980 by women theologians from various denominations. My association with these groups has made me view the Korean situation with a new consciousness, rooted in Asian feminist theology, which has made me critically aware of various social, political, economical, culture, and race issues in the Asian context. The work of feminist theologians exposing the patriarchal features of the Bible and the history of Christianity, and searching for the liberation of women hidden in the shadows has been the foundation for my feminist theology of ministry.[5] The most important aspect in feminist ministry for me is being able to adopt different perspectives. The ability to change one's perspective is what makes transformation possible. To offer a fairly modern example: we can look at the case of Roh Soo Buk, who was sent to Japanese military camps during WW II by the Japanese Imperial Government to become one of many 'comfort women', as they are now known—sexual slaves for Japanese soldiers. Of her experiences, she wrote,

> We had been moved as a group by the military trains whenever the unit to which we belonged transferred to different battlefields. Then, we were molested by anything from 10-60 soldiers everyday and many ladies died with severe suffering due to that sexual harassment.[6]

4. I attended this meeting. The paper I presented was published along with other presentations in 'Women and the Faith Community' in EATWOT, *Proceedings Asian Women's Consultation* (Manila; November 21-30, 1985), pp. 169-71.

5. Among other works, I would mention, in particular, Anne E. Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM Press, 1983); Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (trans. Choi Manja; Seoul: Jeunmansa, 1989) [Korean]; Alice L. Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (trans. Zang Choon Shik; Seoul: Daehangidokyoseohoe, 1998) [Korean]; Kyung Sook Lee, *Women in Old Testament* (Seoul: Daehangidokyoseohoe, 1994) [Korean]; and the articles in Virginia Fabella and Lee Park Sun Ai (eds.), *We Dare to Dream: Doing Theology as Asian Women* (Hong Kong: AWCCT & EATWOT, 1989) and Letty M. Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985). See the article by Mi-kang Yang in this volume.

6. Quoted from 'The Shameful History', *Christian Women* 1.2 (April 1988) [Korean], p. 6.

After the war, these women wished to return to their homes in Korea but could not because there was no place for them in traditional patriarchial culture, which regarded a woman who had not kept her chastity as a disgrace to the family.

If we look at Roh Soo Buk's story from a traditional standpoint, we might see her as unfortunate, an ill-fated victim. As a matter of fact, Korean Christianity kept silent about *Jungshindai*, the comfort women system, until women's organizations started to talk about it publicly in the 1980s and began to protest against Japan. Many conservative Christians felt embarrassed and avoided talking about this topic because it was related to sex. In this situation the church turned a blind eye to the sufferings and the human rights of these women. From another perspective, however, we could see this woman, and others like her, as witnesses who expose the barbaric side of imperialism, the violence of militarism, and the discrimination of classism, sexism and patriarchal ideology. Beginning with the fate of one person, feminist ministry can re-read the history of the oppressed.

We can see clearly from the history of the church that women have been discriminated against.[7] Likewise in the Korean context, many clergywomen have experienced male authority, hierarchy and clericalism instead of equality. Ruether points out: 'Clericalism is the separation of ministry from mutual interaction with community and its transformation into hierarchically ordered castes of clergy and laity'.[8] However, feminist ministry works as transforming power in today's church situation as well. We need to change the image of the traditional hierarchical church, to view it as the body of Christ, an image which is predominant in the Pauline writings but appears elsewhere in the New Testament as well.[9] Feminist ministry aims for changes in our home, church and society. Generally ministry is called healing ministry, but healing should not only be concerned with the soul and body of person but extended to flaws in traditions, institutions and ideologies.

My Feminist Ministry

My husband, Zang Choon Shik, and I have been working together for thirty-four years at the same church, Han Gang Methodist Church, which was established by us in Seoul in 1977. We share the pulpit for preaching every other Sunday, though I serve as senior pastor of the church. All administrational and pastoral work of the church is shared equally.

7. Rosemary R. Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), pp.13-16.

8. Ruether, *Women-Church*, p. 75.

9. Peter C. Hodgson, *Revision the Church: Ecclesial Freedom in the New Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 29.

Even though couple's ministry has long tradition—Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16.3), Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16.7), and Peter and his wife (1 Cor. 9.5) worked together as couples in the early Christian missionary movement—the situation of Korean churches is quite different. Couple's ministry is opposed for many reasons, usually having to do with women; for example: 'It is very difficult to work as a women pastor, so why would you want to do it?', 'Can you not be satisfied with just being the pastor's wife'?, 'You only need to fulfill the duty of a pastor's wife', 'How can you stand in the pulpit when your stomach swells due to pregnancy'?, and so on.

Among 9,144 pastors in the Korean Methodist Church, there are 8,653 men pastors and only 491 women pastors. There also have been 50 clergy couples (my husband and I were the first).[10] In 2005 the KMC passed a regulation stating that 'a married couple cannot work together at the same church'. As a result, the Korean Methodist Women's Solidarity[11] protested the injustice of this regulation for two years and eventually the regulation was changed at the 2007 Assembly of the Korean Methodist Church.

Although Korean churches have resisted couple's ministry, it is significant for many reasons. It challenges the patriarchal, hierarchical system and order of Korean churches, in which men are regarded as above women, and it helps women define their own identities. In traditional Korean churches, the wife of a pastor is expected to be silent, obedient and to provide a good example for all women. Women working as pastors can be role models who challenge the view that married women should stay at home and only do housework. Couple's ministry encourages people to view the church as an open and inclusive community. In contrast to the androcentric ministry of established churches in Korea which is typically focused on church growth, equal ministry is focused not only on the importance of church life but also

10. The figures shown here are from *Gender Equality Statistics of the Korean Methodist Church* in 2006, published by the Korea Methodist Women's Solidarity (KMWS) and Education Division of the KMC, which was based on reports made to the KMC in 2005.

11. KMWS is composed of nine women's organizations inside the KMC, which are the Korean Association of Methodist Women (KAMW), the Korean Association of Methodist Women in Ministry (KAMWM), the Korean Methodist Women's Society of Christian Service (KMWSCS), the Pastor's Wife Association in the Korean Methodist Church (PWAKMC), Methodist Theological Seminary Alumna Association (MTSAA), Methodist Women's Leadership Institute (MWLI), Methodist Youth/Young Adult Fellowship in Korea (MYAFK), the College of Theology Mokwon University Alumna Association (CTMUAA), Hyupsung University College of Theology Alumna Association (HUTAA). They work to revise the KMC constitution in favor of gender equality within the KMC and for fifty-percent participation of women members in the decision-making body and decision-making process. I currently work as a senior co-representative.

aims for equality in all aspects of family and social life. Androcentric ministry in established churches in Korea tends to be conservative in character and typically stresses success and material blessings. The Bible is seen as having supreme authority and the minister as an authoritative figure. I believe the Bible is God's word but also see it as an historical product, and so I try to understand and practice the role of pastor as a coordinator, supporter and sustainer.

Bible Study from a Feminist Perspective

In conclusion, I would like to introduce a Bible study on the story of King David from a feminist perspective which was actually used at Han Gang Church. Feminist interpretation of this story met with various responses. The church members were quite surprised with this new interpretation because they were used to only the traditional understanding that King David was a symbol of a faithful servant to God. They were shocked to realize that David had another side to him which was rather selfish and inhuman. At the same time they showed deep interest in this feminist interpretation. The purpose of this kind of Bible study was to challenge those who accepted uncritically the patriarchal perspective of the Bible as still valid for Christians today, and to show how feminist biblical interpretation can change how we understand the message of the Bible.

King David and Queen Michal

In the story of David and Michal in 1 Samuel 18–19 and 2 Samuel 3–6, David has traditionally been interpreted as a faithful king, and Michal as an unfaithful woman who was cursed and became sterile. Let us reinterpret this story from a feminist point of view.

David and Michal were married before David became king of Israel. Marriage originates from the confession of love: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' (Gen. 2.23). However nowhere does the Bible say that David loved Michal. On the other hand, it is said that Michal loved David. King Saul offered his daughter Michal to David as a wife because he wanted David, who was popular among the people, under his influence. Saul proposed a hundred Philistine foreskins as a bride price in the hope that David would be killed in battle against the Philistines, and thus he would be rid of a political threat to his throne. Nevertheless David fulfilled the mission and married Michal. David wanted to marry Michal in spite of the risky conditions, not because he loved her but to achieve his own political goals.

David's political aspirations are well attested by his other marriages; for example, to the rich widow Abigail (1 Sam. 25), and the daughter of the king of Geshur (2 Sam. 3.3). All of these marriages helped to secure his

position with the local leaders in order to achieve his goal to become king. This was like Wang Geon, the founder of ancient Goryeo (Korea), who made political marriages with local leaders' daughters in order to prevent local rebellions.

Inhuman images of David, who neither loved Michal nor was faithful to her, is also witnessed in the plots which David himself made after the death of Saul, in order to win over the people who had been loyal to Saul in the past. To gain the support of people who followed King Saul even after his death, David forcefully sent for Michal, who had in the meantime been given to another man by Saul. Her new husband, Paltiel went with her, weeping all the way at the forced separation, but he had to return home when threatened by Abner, the commander of the army. There is no indication in the biblical text that David visited Michal when he was in exile, hiding from King Saul, wandering from village to village. Michal had no choice in the matter of her marriage to Paltiel. Saul gave Michal to Paltiel only to get back at David. Michal was sacrificed because of David and because she loved David. David negotiated with Abner to take Michal back as his wife, not because he loved her, but because he wanted to gain the support of those who followed Saul. It was David's strategic tactic to strengthen his claim to the throne of all Israel.

David's inhuman treatment of Michal is also witnessed in 2 Samuel 6, where he dismisses Michal with the pretext of faith in God. This happened when David danced before the ark of God, wearing only a linen ephod. David wanted to have the ark of God in Jerusalem to make the city of David the center of politics and religion. Michal scorned David for dancing before the ark of the Lord. In my view, her disdain was aroused by his over-excited behavior, which clearly portrayed his political ambition and insensitivity. Michal did not oppose or condemn God. She did not criticize bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Rather Michal, who knew David better than others, could not accept his activity as beautiful and pleasant.

David rebukes Michal for criticizing him. The text implies that because of this Michal could never bear children. In interpreting this text, most preachers view Michal as an arrogant person who looked down on David from the window when the ark of the Lord was brought into Jerusalem. They also interpret her as unfaithful to God because she criticized David's dancing before the Lord. For them, Michal's infertility is a natural result of God's punishment. An alternative interpretation is that David intentionally did not sleep with Michal, for if she were to bear a child, it would be not only a child of David but also a descendant of Saul. David purposely wanted to cut off the royal bloodline of Saul because he wanted to create a dynasty which would be known by his own name. David cruelly used a woman who loved him then cast her away once she was of no use.

King David and Princess Tamar

The story in 2 Sam. 13.1-21 is about a father and a daughter. David's relationship with his daughter, like that with his wife Michal, reveals his insensitivity and weakness of character. Tamar was born into a royal family and blessed with status and class anyone would envy. But she was a misfortunate woman who received no support—irresponsible silence—from her father, the king.

Tamar is not the main character of the biblical story. The story of Tamar is used to explain how Absalom is eliminated in the struggle for succession to the throne of David. I have tried to reinterpret Tamar's story to show that King David was far from being a king of justice or a king of love.

Tamar was raped by David's eldest son, her stepbrother Amnon. A member of David's family, Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, advised Amnon how to violate Tamar. David and Amnon, who had been tricked by Jonadab, behave foolishly as a father and a son. As a result Amnon is killed and David loses his son and is soon confronted with Absalom's rebellion. The story begins with Amnon's sexual desire for Tamar, his half-sister. Just as David lusted for Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and summoned her to come to his palace, and had sex with her, so Amnon had Tamar visit him and then violated her. David had sexual intercourse with another man's wife, which was prohibited by Israelite law, but he used his power as king to summon Bathsheba and possibly even to rape her. Likewise, Amnon used David to have Tamar sent to him and raped her, which was prohibited by Israelite law.

When Bathsheba was called to the palace, the biblical writer does not report her resistance to or rejection of David's advances. Hence David's violation is not exposed in the text; the text shows both of them committing adultery. However, in the case of Tamar, it is recorded that Tamar spoke out courageously and wisely to criticize Amnon's behaviour. She resisted, and Amon raped her.

After having sex with Bathsheba, David sent her back to her house as if nothing had happened. Likewise Amnon drives Tamar out of his house as if nothing had happened. In the case of Bathsheba, time passes and, by means of her pregnancy, it is exposed that David had had sexual intercourse with her. In contrast, Tamar's actions, tearing her long robe that unmarried women of the time wore and crying out in the streets, expose the fact that she had been raped. Whereas David was able to conceal his appropriation of Bathsheba (except from God), Amnon's rape of Tamar could not be covered up because Tamar exposed it. David, as the king, should have punished the rapist. However David did not punish Amnon at all. It is simply written that David was very angry. It seems that to David his daughter's rape was not important. He did not do anything for his daughter who had been sexually abused. Tamar was abused by her half-brother and abandoned by her father.

In those days a virgin who was sexually violated had no alternative except to marry the man who raped her. Tamar was willing to marry Amnon, but he refused to listen to her pleas. Tamar declared that sending her away after the rape was an even greater evil than the rape itself. Perhaps David could have insisted on the marriage, but he did nothing. Thus Tamar's life was essentially over, and she remained, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house.

As mentioned above, David is revered as a faithful king by most people. Hence it is important to view the stories of King David and the women of the royal family from a feminist perspective that reveals this perfect image of King David to be false. If we accept David as a faithful king and overlook the wrongs he did, especially to women, we end up perpetuating inequality in the relationship between men and women.

If we look at David from a feminist perspective, we have to ask whether or not his behaviour justified God's choice of him as king of Israel. Both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler, who recorded the story of David, were supportive of him, though the former was more critical of David than the latter. Moreover, in the David story, stories related to women reflect the patriarchal perspective of the biblical writers. A feminist reading of the stories of David, Michal and Tamar exposes their patriarchal dimension, and enables us to read the Bible in a critical manner.

Based on my long experience as a pastor in Korea, I believe that rereading the biblical text with the help of feminist theology is playing a role as a transforming power in Korean churches and society. Hence, I hope that feminist ministry can become an alternative, new model for the church in the future.

Migrant Women and Intermarriage in Korea: Looking at Human Rights with Help from the Book of Ruth

Kuk Yom Han

Multicultural Families in Korea

Intermarriage with non-Koreans, especially of Korean men to foreign women, and the human rights of migrant women are important issues with which Korean society is currently struggling. This essay considers the problem and proposes that we might gain some insights into the problem and its solution from the book of Ruth. It argues that overcoming racial, national, class, and sexual discrimination is crucial for a harmonious society based on equality, and it finds in the book of Ruth some important lessons about how to go about achieving this goal.

The number of foreign migrants in South Korea, including short-term residents, as of December 31, 2007, finally exceeded one million. It marked 1,006,273 exactly and, among them, migrant workers accounted for 47.1%, marriage immigrants 10.4%, and foreign students 5.7%. Foreign migrants account for 2% of registered residents of South Korea and the number has increased 175.5% from 386,972 in 1997.[1] Korean society has already entered the era of a multiracial, multicultural and multiethnic society.

The number of foreign national married to Koreans is currently up more than 126%. There were 110,362 as of December 2007, a 17.7% increase from 2006. Among them, women accounted for 97,000 (88%) and males 13,000 (12%).

Current Status of International Marriages (2002–2007)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
National Marriage	306,573	304,932	310,944	316,375	332,752	345,592
Marriage of Korean men to foreign women	11,017	19,214	25,594	31,180	30,208	29,140
(%)	3.6	6.3	8.2	9.9	9.1	8.4

1. *Statistics of Foreigner Stay*, Korea Immigration Bureau, December 31, 2007. [Korean]

Globally, the number of people who left their countries for more than a year reached about 191 million as of 2005, about 3% of the world population of 6,470 million.[2] It is said that among them, 65-70% emmigrate due to economic reasons, whether subsistence or the pursuit of new jobs. This 'globalization of poverty' resulting from the 'neo-liberalism market order' of developed countries increasingly deepens poverty in underdeveloped countries, leading workers to migrate beyond national boundaries.

Particularly noticeable in the increase in migrant labor is that the number of women involved is on the increase by the day. According to reports in the *Asian Migrant Year Book*[3] and UNIFEM[4] approximately twenty million Asian women work abroad and women account for more than 70% of the migrant worker population, such as 85% in Sri Lanka, 70% in Indonesia, and 69% in the Philippines. This phenomenon is known as the 'feminization of migration'. Asian women are engaged in household labor, factory labor, or the sex industry, and sometimes the 'feminization of migration' phenomenon[5] occurs where women migrate because of marriage.

There is an aspect of 'self-decision by young women who wish to pioneer a new life, in addition to economic purposes'.[6] Many women from other Asian countries choose to marry Korean men in the expectation of enabling their families to get out of poverty and achieve economic security and realize their dreams in Korea. Currently, 85% of international marriages in Korea involve other Asian women. One reason for the increase in international marriages is that the number of men who fail to marry because of the distorted gender ratio is rapidly increasing due to the traditional preference for sons over daughters. This problem is already a serious problem. In addition, the number of single women choosing not to marry is on the increase. In the past, societies encouraged all women to take marriage for granted, yet now women prefer self-realization over customary marriages. In the case of working women, increasing numbers are reluctant to marry or marry late. Thus, the number of bachelors who have passed their prime

2. *The Basic Plan for the Foreigner in Korea*, Korea Immigration Bureau, 2008 [Korean], p. 2.

3. *Asian Migrant Year Book 2002–2003*, Asian Migrant Center, Migrant Forum in Asia, 2004.

4. UNIFEM, 'Empowering Women: Migrant Workers in Asia', A Briefing Kit, 2003.

5. Carrie Tharan, 'Feminization in Migration', in *Migration for Development and its Feminization Process*, Regional Conference on Migration in Asia, Seoul, Korea, 2004, p. 27.

6. Hyunmi Kim, 'Poverty of Women and Feminization of Migration', in *What Is the Task for Women Migrants?*, Symposium held by the Women Migrants Human Rights Center in Korea (October 31, 2003) [Korean], p. 5.

time for marriage is on the rise. Moreover, the number of Korean men who are unable to marry Korean women due to economic reasons and cultural conditions is also on the rise. These include men with traditional values, who believe that people should marry and have children and support their parents, and men divorced from Korean wives who choose remarriage with women from another country.

How Multicultural Families in Korea Are Viewed

Prejudice against international marriages in Korea originates from the myth of people unified by one bloodline. However, the historical fact is that the nation was not able to maintain so-called 'pure blood' during numerous foreign invasions of the peninsula over thousands of years. At any rate, distorted views on international marriages in the contemporary context started to take root on the Korean Peninsula when the UN forces landed in Korea during the Korean War, resulting in relationships between UN servicemen, represented mainly by U.S. forces, and Korean women. However, these marriages were negatively perceived, and, as a result, the sufferings of Korean women married to U.S. servicemen and their children were neglected, leaving them to fend for themselves.

In contrast, Korean society is approaching from a different perspective the so-called second-round of international marriages, which have been taking place between Koreans and Asians since 1990. In 1990, about 690 Japanese women entered Korea through the marriage system of the Unification Church and since 1995 ethnic Korean women living in China married Korean men in great numbers and entered Korea under the pretext of 'saving Korean men living in rural areas'. Since around 2000, the scope was expanded to include Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia and Thailand. Since 2003, international marriages showed a rapid increase to such an extent that 11.3% of all marriages in the nation, or one couple out of eight, were international marriages. As the number of international marriages increased sharply, the government no longer stood by watching idly. In 2005, it conducted a survey to investigate the current status of international marriages, and the issue of the families of international marriages has become one of the government's major pending policy tasks.

Meanwhile, the number of the first round of Korean women married to UN servicemen was not small, and there were problems with the children of mixed-blood born to them. They were neglected and forgotten. In addition, a considerable number of Korean women married foreign male workers who entered Korea after the 1988 Seoul Olympics, yet there are no particular measures to protect them. Why is it that Korean society pays so much attention only to migrant women married to Korean men and their

children? It is probably due to the value Korean society places on the patriarchal bloodline. Korea does not feel responsible for Korean women married to American servicemen, or for their children. They are cast aside as 'women of military campside town' and their children as 'mixed-blood children', not enjoying the protection of human rights and welfare.

In contrast, international marriages taking place since the 1990s are mainly between Korean men and foreign women and the Korean people perceive foreign women married to Korean men as Korean nationals and their children as second-generation Koreans. Thus, the government established a policy to protect these women as Korean nationals. But there is no special policy for families of international marriages between Korean women and foreign men who are living in Korea. After all, the patriarchal family is the very foundation of Korean society.

The problem is that female migrants married to Korean male nationals, who are the key members in international marriages, are becoming marginalized as welfare recipients who need to be supported and helped, rather than allowed to pursue their lives as equal Korean citizens who lead a life together in a society about to enter a multi-racial and multicultural era. Unless these so-called multicultural families are accepted as normal types of families in a changing society, they will remain no more than packages called 'multicultural families' and they will have no choice but to live as second-class and isolated families in Korean society.

Distorted International Marriage Practices in Korea and Human Rights Infringements

The biggest problem in international marriage in Korea is the commodification of female sexuality. Marriages of Korean men to women from the Third World are arranged by marriage agencies or brokers, not in the traditional way. Marriages of Korean men and poor women from the Third World is a form of human trafficking. The banners, or promotion, on the websites of marriage brokers commodify Asian women by promoting the obedient-wife stereotype and by using expressions such as 'pure virgin', 'naive and innocent', 'obedient to the husband', and 'strong maternal love'.

These websites commodity female sexuality and encourage racial discrimination. NGOs for migrants as well as women launched a campaign against it. They filed a suit with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea against advertisement by marriage agencies. The Human Trafficking Report of the US Department of State also advised the Korean government to rectify this abuse.

Furthermore, the process of selecting a bride has similarities to the sex trade. Although it is said that both men and women have the right to select their spouse, only men exercise this right in reality. In some countries,

international match-making by a broker is illegal, but the law is neglected. All costs are paid by the men, which easily leads the bridegroom's family members and the wider society to think that a bride is 'purchased'. It causes discrimination and prejudice. Korean husbands often believe that they should have control over their wives because they paid all the costs and treat their wives without the respect they would give to an equal. Such prejudices trap migrant women in a situation of domestic violence, verbal abuse, abandonment, forced labor, and exploitation.

Infringement of Human Rights

According to the report, 'Current Status of International Marriages', released on April 15, 2007, by the Registration Bureau of the Supreme Court of Korea, the number of international marriages accounted for 11.6% of the total number of marriages in Korea. Divorce rates for international marriages have also increased by the year, up three-fold from 1.6% from 2003 to 4.9% in 2006. In particular, the divorce rate in rural areas was higher than in urban areas, and it is thought that the fundamental reason for the higher divorce rate in rural areas is the practice of purchasing marriage partners, where the grooms pay all marriage expenses and bring brides from countries economically poorer than Korea. In addition, social and cultural differences add another element to the potential for conflict. Marriage by purchase leads to domestic violence such as spouse abuse, abandonment, and exploitation, which often finally leads to divorce. Ultimately, what is required to ensure the stability of multicultural families is a resolution of the problems caused by marriage by purchase and a change in people's perceptions toward a gender-equal multicultural society.

Divorce rates for international marriages (2002–2007)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Divorce cases	401	583	1,511	2,444	4,010	5,794
increased % by the year	–	45.4	176.3	51.7	64.1	44.5

Source: The Registration Bureau of the Supreme Court of Korea

Domestic Violence

The most serious problem in international marriage is domestic violence. According to the investigation in March 2007 by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 12% of marriage migrant women experienced domestic violence. A review of counseling provided by the Women Migrants Human Rights Center and Migrant Women's Hotline disclosed that more

than 35% of counseling was about domestic violence. Domestic violence is mostly caused by a husband's distrust and suspicion about his wife, which stems from an age gap between husbands and wives of ten to thirty years as well as from financial hardship. A report by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 2005 showed that 52.9% of intercultural families suffered from absolute poverty.

Abandonment

Abandonment makes migrant women's lives much more difficult. An agreement of divorce by both parties results in deportation of the wife, even when divorce is requested by the husband without any specific reason. Moreover, Korean law excludes sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and a husband's alcoholism or mental disease from the category of domestic violence. Korean immigration law requires migrant women to prove that the cause of divorce is on the husband's side as a condition to remain in Korea after divorce. However, it is quite difficult to prove it.

Forced Integration

There are migrant women in Korea from 126 countries, and international marriage is on the increase continuously. Nevertheless, the policies of the Korean government, as well as popular opinion, emphasize assimilation into Korean culture rather than accommodating diversity. In particular, for the large number of women who enter Korea through international marriages from former Soviet bloc countries, which have more gender-equal family structures, cultural conflict is generated when they are forced to accept Korea's patriarchal culture. Such conflicts often constitute the major cause for termination of international marriages.

Discrimination against Children of Multicultural Families

The children of international (multicultural) families are discriminated against. They do not receive enough support for growth because most of their families are poor. They are left out in the cold at schools due to their mother's origin. They are also made fun of due to their different pronunciations of Korean, which is often like their mother's. People worry about learning difficulties of children of multicultural families, and they blame problems on migrant mothers. Some children make fun of their mothers, which hurts them deeply. If children do not take pride in their mothers, they cannot take pride in themselves either.

When faced with the task of eliminating prejudices towards international marriage and protecting the human rights of migrant women who start families through international marriage, can we find any resources in the Bible? Let us consider the book of Ruth.

Protection of the Rights of Migrant Women as Seen through the Book of Ruth

The book of Ruth provides many insights into the life of migrant people. It shows why people migrate, how migrant workers live, and aspects of family lives started through international marriage. The first chapter of Ruth shows one reason why people migrate: Naomi's family moved from Bethlehem to Moab because of famine in Bethlehem. In Moab, Naomi's two sons married Moabite women; however the book of Ruth does not tell us why, whether out of love or for the purpose of making it easier to live in a foreign land.

The Book of Ruth Rejects Prejudices towards International Marriage

One finds both positive and negative attitudes to marriage with foreigners in the Bible. At one extreme, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah call for Israelite men to divorce their foreign wives and marry within the Israelite community (Ezra 10.1-5; Neh. 13.23-27). In the book of Ruth, in contrast, intermarriage is not viewed negatively, but rather supported, leading some scholars to propose that Ruth was written to counteract the decrees of Ezra and Nehemiah.

In the book of Ruth, Naomi accepted Moabite women as her daughters-in-law, and she returned to Bethlehem with one of them, Ruth. Boaz was not hesitant to marry a Moabite (as Ruth is consistently called), and this woman became the great grandmother of Kind David. In addition, the neighbors of Naomi and Boaz did not criticize Boaz's marriage to Ruth. Indeed, they blessed the union, calling upon God to make Ruth like the matriarchs Rachel and Leah, 'who together built up the house of Israel' (4.11), and mentioning as well the role played by Tamar, the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah (v. 12). When Ruth gave birth to a son, the woman affirmed Ruth's importance to Naomi, saying that 'your daughter-in-law who loves you, who has proved better to you than seven sons, has borne him' (v. 15). One would like to see foreign women who marry Korean men and settle in Korea treated like Ruth.

Laws Protecting Strangers and the Protection of Subsistence Rights of Migrant People

When Ruth came to Israel with Naomi, she went out to glean in the fields, to pick up what was left after the reapers had passed, in order to provide for herself and her mother-in-law. The field where Ruth found herself working belonged to Boaz, who was a relative on Naomi's husband's side. When Boaz asked the servant in charge of the reapers who Ruth was, he identified her in terms of her origins as a Moabite who had come back from Moab with Naomi, and not in terms of her relationship to Naomi.

Boaz allowed Ruth to gather sheaves in the field in accordance with laws protecting the weak which Israelites should follow. Laws such as Deut. 14.28-29; 24.19-22; 26.11-15 and Lev. 19.9-10 show concern for the poor, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow and provide for them to have some share in the bounty of the harvest. Migrant people, widows, and orphans, who are the weakest in the community of Israel should be protected, and their protection and God's blessing are directly related. In Lev. 25.35 we read, 'If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you'. This verse shows God's concern for the rights of migrant people. It urges Israelites to care for poor compatriots as they would for migrant people, not just to care for migrant people as they would their compatriots. That is, to take care of migrant people appears to be the ideal of protection of the weak. Boaz not only followed the custom of allowing strangers to gather sheaves for their subsistence, but also enabled Ruth to gather even more by telling his workers to pull out some stalks for her from the bundles.

Just as Ruth did menial work in the field to provide a living for Naomi and herself, so to today many migrant people work for themselves and their families in Korea. The kind of work they are engaged in is so-called 3-D (difficult, dirty and dangerous) industry. Just as Boaz showed concern for Ruth, we in Korea should be actively involved in protecting the subsistence rights of migrant people.

Comfort and Encouragement of Migrant People

Boaz not only allowed Ruth to glean, he also showed concern for her well-being. To Ruth's surprise that he would take notice of a foreigner, he replies:

> I have been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

Ruth is encouraged and 'comforted' (2.13) by his kind response to her, even though she is not one of his servants. To understand, comfort and treat migrant people well is to empower them. Do we empower and encourage migrant people? Boaz's invitation to Ruth to share in a meal is a sort of symbolic act showing that Ruth is a member of the Israelite community, not a stranger any more. Like Boaz, we also need to build a community in which we include migrant people.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Commodification (Commercialization)

A point that needs to be noticed in the story is that Boaz commanded his male workers not to harass Ruth. This act makes us realize that not only securing the subsistence of migrant people but also protecting women from sexual harassment or exploitation is in keeping with the requirements of God's community.

In Korea, migrant women are exposed to domestic violence, threats of sexual violence, and forced prostitution. Twelve percent of migrant women workers are reported to experience sexual violence and forced prostitution; 12.1% of the migrant women workers answered that they had experienced sexual violence in the workplace.[7] Among the 12.1%, 30.4% were reported to have experienced sexual violence in the form of touching, and 55.6% to have experienced sexual harassment by Korean superior officers. Fifty-five percent of sexual violence was said to take place after work hours, and 56.3% in the workplace. As indicated in this report, migrant women are exposed to sexual violence and sexual exploitation without any proper protection.

Following Boaz's example, the Korean church should be actively involved in protecting migrant women from sexual exploitation and the commercialization of sexuality.

Migrant Women Should Also Stand Up for Themselves

The radical action taken by Naomi and Ruth, having Ruth approach Boaz on the threshing floor, is what causes Boaz to assume the responsibility of the next-of-kin and to devise a plan that allows him to marry Ruth. Like Ruth and Naomi, poor and weak people need to take action with courage and wisdom to secure their rights, and not simply wait for charity or the good will of the powerful. The story of Ruth and Naomi teaches us that restoration of human rights in an unjust society in which human rights are violated begins with striving to acquire one's rights. There have been cases where migrant workers in Korea have protested against inhumane working conditions, asserting that they were not slaves, with the result that their working conditions and their overall treatment were improved.

In Korea, there are now many organizations working for migrant women, seeking to revise laws and raise people's consciousness about these women's rights. Like Ruth and Naomi, migrant women themselves should also take action. The ultimate aim of those who work for migrant women's rights is to help these women help themselves.

7. *A Survey on Migrant Women Workers* (Joint Committee with Migrant Workers, 2002), p. 21. [Korean]

Following and Revising Laws

According to the law of redemption in Lev. 25.24-28, if a person becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative should buy it in order that the property remain in the family. Boaz approached the closest relative of Naomi and gave him the opportunity to buy land offered for sale by Naomi. When the relative said he would buy the land, Boaz told him, 'On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property'. Here Boaz seems to be invoking the levirite law (Deut. 25.5-10), according to which the widow of a man who died childless married the brother of the deceased so that the firstborn might perpetuate the name of the deceased. Upon hearing this condition, the relative gave up the right of kinsman-redeemer, not wanting to endanger his own estate. Boaz then stepped in to buy the land and marry Ruth. Here the law of redemption and the levirate law which were separate from each other are combined and applied. Moreover, the condition, as Boaz states it, goes beyond the levirite law, since neither Boaz nor the other kinsman was obligated to marry Ruth because neither was the brother of Mahlon or Elimelech. This situation teaches us that protecting the poor and the weak in society takes priority over laws, and that laws can be changed to protect the poor.

Women's Solidarity

Naomi has her daughters-in-law's interests at heart when she tells them to return to their mothers' homes for their happiness and future (Ruth 1.8-9). This is how relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law should be. Orpah returned, in tears, but Ruth, in her famous oath of devotion, refused to leave her mother-in-law (Ruth 1.16-17). This beautiful relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law made it possible for Naomi to worrk actively for Ruth's happiness upon their return to Bethleham.

The solidarity between Naomi and Ruth provides a good model for Korean families started through international marriage. It has been observed that migrant women who live with their Korean husbands in Korea suffer even more from conflict with their mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law than from conflicts with their husbands. Migrant women suffer from the family structure under Korean patriarchalism. Would it be possible for women to form relationships between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law based on solidarity, like Naomi and Ruth, instead of the traditional hierarchical relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law?

Ruth was determined to go with Naomi, who was without power and hope. She gave up not only the prospect of a comfortable life but also her nation and her religion in order to be with Naomi. Ruth's words, 'your God will be my God' (1.16), have been interpreted by Korean churches to mean

that a woman should follow the religion of her husband's family. However, the fact that Ruth followed her mother-in-law, saying that Naomi's home would be her home, and Naomi's God, her God, does not mean that she complied with a patriarchal family structure, for her allegiance was to a woman who had no power in patriarchal society. Today most Korean churches involved in helping migrant workers and migrant women married to Korean men approach the problem from the perspective of converting them to Christianity rather than from the perspective of the human rights of migrant people. However, genuine brotherhood and sisterhood does not involve converting others to our religion, but embracing their religion as it is and standing by them. Attempts by the powerful to convert the weak derive from imperialistic thought and are not a desirable mission. What we need to learn from the book of Ruth is the spirit of sisterhood and solidarity. Ruth and Naomi worked for each other's wellbeing. When we have sisterhood in solidarity with migrant women, a new community, a multi-national, multi-racial society can be formed in Korea.

A society's success in protecting human rights is measured by the human rights of the most discriminated stratum of that society. Migrant women are a human rights index of our society. What should we do to protect the human rights of migrant women suffering from racism, sexism and classism? One of the most important things we can do is to accept the women as one of us, not to exclude them. Acceptance of intermarriage as shown in the book of Ruth, a spirit of sisterhood as practiced by Naomi and Ruth, concern for the weak in society as shown to Ruth by Boaz, enacting and implementing laws to protect subsistence rights and human rights, empowering and encouraging words and deeds, making migrant women members of the community by sharing food together, and, finally, helping and supporting migrant women to strive for their own rights should all be put into practice for the migrant people of our society. My vision is that migrant people, like Ruth, can play an important role in Korean history.

Women's Leadership Fragmented: Examples in the Bible and the Korean Church

Yani Yoo

'Leadership' is an important word these days. People look to the Bible for lessons on leadership. In the Bible women practice leadership as national leaders, liturgists (chanters, dancers, and mourners), spiritual contacts, prophets, wise women, etc. However, female leaders are fewer in number than male leaders. Moreover, women's leadership differs from that of men. Women most often appear with limited leadership or second-class leadership. Just as women characters are constructed to fit the plot and purpose of male-centered narratives, so is biblical women's leadership.

In this essay it will be argued that biblical women's leadership is fragmented because of the narrators' conscious or unconscious ideological attempt to debase it. Fragmentation of women's leadership was achieved through various strategies used by biblical narrators. Some of those strategies include silencing or punishing independent women leaders; describing women's leadership as a submission that willingly serves male interests in upholding patriarchy; limiting women's leadership to stereotypical female gender roles; and depicting women leaders as 'good' leaders when they speak and act against their own interests. It will be suggested that similar strategies are carried out in the twenty-first century Korean Church. These strategies will be exposed through examples from the Bible and from churchwomen's experiences.

This essay will begin by introducing definitions of leadership by Korean churchwomen along with a working definition that will be used in the discussion that follows. For women's leadership in the Korean Church, some statistics will be offered. I argue that, as long as the Church makes women leaders remain only second-class leaders, there will be no future for the Church. In conclusion, the essay will propose a leadership of partnership for churchwomen, using the example of Deborah and Barak in the book of Judges and a Korean woman's case.

Definitions of Leadership

Instead of relying on definitions of leadership taken from books on leadership, I would like to introduce those made by Korean churchwomen.

By churchwomen I mean officers at the national level of churchwomen's organizations with whom I worked closely for three years.[1] In 2006 alone there were six leadership training events in Korea, with workshops on leadership, from which the definitions below emerged.[2] Each time the number of participants was between 30 and 100. Although the participants had not studied about the topic of leadership, they knew about it from their observations of male leaders and from their own experiences of leadership.

Korean Churchwomen Define Leadership

Participants were first invited to use adjectives to describe 'bad' leadership qualities from their observations and experiences. The leadership qualities were those of ministers, lay elders, and women officers rather than leaders from the world of business or politics. I categorize their answers below, including two particular areas, shared leadership and nurturing leaders, because they reflect the peculiar Korean Church context.

Leadership Qualities	*Descriptions of Bad Qualities*
Charisma	powerless, passive, unable to speak in public, blaming inferiors for poor results but taking credit for good results, craving praise but attributing faults to others
Cooperation	insisting on her or his ideas, being competitive, insisting on always being right, doing all the work alone, not consulting with others, not cooperating after finishing a term of office
Integrity	not practicing what they say, greedy, saying one thing and doing something else, changing what they say to their convenience, dishonest, not admitting faults or mistakes, giving excuses, not punctual
Nurturing leaders	not recognizing others' leadership, not raising future leaders, comparing people
Optimism	negative, cynical, discouraging

1. I worked with churchwomen's organizations in Asia and the Pacific (mostly Methodist) as a Consultant of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church (February 2004–February 2007).

2. The same workshop was offered at leadership training events in several Asian countries. In this essay, only the ones from Korea are summarized. But Asian churchwomen share common responses except for a few things. For example, in developing countries, participants added higher education as a necessary quality. In countries where higher education is by now a given, participants did not mention it as a necessary quality.

Personality, relationship, empathy	proud, unfriendly, making personal attacks, narrow-minded, lazy, unable to control temper, using bad words, irresponsible, talkative, using others, taking sides, not listening, egotistic, not considerate of others, no understanding of others, not trusting others
Role models	emphasizing favors done for others
Self-development	not wanting change, not allowing room for criticism or evaluation, not pursuing self-development
Shared leadership	to be man-like (as a woman), insensitive to sexism, always commanding but not doing the work themselves, arbitrarily ordering people around, taking sides with the rich and the powerful but trampling the weak, authoritative, abusing power, treating women as inferior to men
Vision	having no vision, not having his or her own ideas

In general, the participants showed strong resentment toward patriarchal leadership and thus had much to say about their negative experiences. Women wanted shared and democratic leadership. They also pointed out that there was no system or intentional effort to provide young leaders.[3]

Next, participants were asked to share 'good' leadership qualities that they experienced or that they would want in leaders.

Leadership Qualities	*Descriptions of Good Qualities*
Charisma	charismatic, having a positive driving force, having good judgment, persuasive, doing and speaking wisely and powerfully, determined, confident, speaking out and courageous, logical, talented, knowledgeable
Cooperation	delegating, cooperative, creating harmony, able to work in a team
Integrity	not conforming to injustice, admitting mistakes, honest, voicing one's convictions and acting according to them, not greedy, consistent in word and action
Nurturing leaders	working with all kinds of people, recognizing others' talents, commending others, raising the next generation of leaders
Optimism	positive, creative

3. When a church does not include adult women as leaders, there is no leadership place for young adults, youth, and children. Not giving leadership positions and power to young people has been the major reason for the decrease of young people in the church, as many studies point out.

Personality, relationship, empathy	praying, serving, faithful, humble, patient, generous, considerate, healthy in body and spirit, loving, understanding, friendly, listening, inclusive, caring, lively, humorous, celebrating diversity in membership, empowering, encouraging, giving chances to others, responsible
Role models	sacrificing for others, exemplary
Self-development	constant learner, constantly self-developing
Shared leadership	democratic, fair, serving, respecting others' opinions, not limiting herself to being a woman (in the Korean patriarchal culture)
Vision	having clear purpose and focus, having commitment, results-orientated, having great vision and leading toward it

Among the qualifications above, participants emphasized most integrity and shared leadership. They voiced the hope that male ministers and elders, the decision makers of the Church, would be inclusive of women leaders, democratic, and open to different opinions and criticisms. What is valuable about these responses is that churchwomen shared their experiences and observations about church leadership, both for ministers and elders in the case of male leadership and for presidents and officers of women's local units for female leadership. Again, because the topic was church leadership, not business leadership, our participants, as church volunteers, did not emphasize technical skills or goal-oriented leadership as much as general leadership books do.

Everyone Needs Leadership

Although participants shared their leadership experiences in terms of people in leadership positions, leadership is about everyone. This is what I learned from my job, which involved strengthening women's leadership and national churchwomen's organizations in Asia: individuals become leaders of organizations and the destinies of the organizations are very much affected by their leadership. Thus, we all need to grow into effective leaders. Even children need to experience leadership. With leadership we express our feelings and opinions freely and confidently and take responsibilities for our words and actions. With good leadership qualities we can contribute much to the betterment of our home, church, and the world. While I was working with Korean churchwomen, whether officers or not, I observed that, although they were excellent workers, they clearly lacked certain leadership qualities: voicing their opinions and convictions in the presence of male leaders and being and acting like equals to male leaders. As a result, the Korean Church is a strongly patriarchal church. I will return to this point when I suggest an alternative form of leadership for Korean churchwomen later in this essay.

Biblical Women's Leadership Fragmented

In the Bible, some women characters are in leadership positions and others are not. For the purpose of this essay, considering how women's leadership is fragmented, I would like to consider all women characters as leaders. Scholars have pointed out that biblical women are male constructs and their descriptions reflect the fears, aspirations, and prejudices of the male narrators rather than women's authentic lives.[4] The ways biblical women's leadership is presented are also to be understood in this light, as revealing the biblical narrators' (conscious or unconscious) strategies to undermine women's leadership. The following examples show how women's leadership is distorted, reduced, and minimized.

1. Women's leadership is presented as a way of assisting men leaders by supporting their goals. These goals are related to the narrators' ideologies, whether patriarchal, theological, or nationalistic. This is the most popular form of women's leadership in the Bible, and it is praised, encouraged, and celebrated. Women who offer this kind of leadership are rewarded with positive evaluations by the biblical narrators so that the reader will be positively impressed by them. In these leadership roles, women are described as courageous, active, ideal, and so on. By presenting this kind of leadership the narrators teach the reader that women would be better off as secondary leaders and assistants to men leaders.

In Exodus 1–2, the reader is given a positive impression about the leadership of women characters. Women work together, risking their lives to save the Israelite children. First, the midwives, Puah and Shiphrah, save the Israelite infants, defying the Pharaoh's command to kill them (1.15-22). Then, the pharaoh's daughter, her attendants, Moses' sister and mother work together to save Moses (2.1-10), the future deliverer of the nation. The women's activities serve the narrator's ends; that is, nationalism, salvation theology, and patriarchy. But as Cheryl Exum points out, women's active leadership in the early chapters of Exodus is a kind of compensation for their absence after Exodus 5 and in the rest of Pentateuch.[5] Moreover the women in Exodus 2 are not named, and thus their significance and the value of their contribution is reduced.[6]

4. Esther Fuchs, 'The Literary Characterization of Mothers and Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible', in A.Y. Collins (ed.), *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 118; J. Cheryl Exum, 'Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1:8–2:10', in Athalya Brenner (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 75-87.

5. Exum, 'Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters', p. 85.

6. Exum, 'Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters', p. 83.

Even the famous leader Esther has to clean up after the mess Mordecai had caused. Because Mordecai did not bow to his superior, Haman, Haman decided to annihilate the Jews. In the end, Esther saved her people. She is praised because she serves men's (the narrator's, Mordecai's, and the implied readers') ends. The superwoman in Proverbs 31 does all the work alone while her husband seems to be idle. She is praised because her works contribute to her husband's good name outside the home and because she serves as an ideal wife. This couple sounds quite Asian.

Women leaders who deviate from or challenge this leadership undergo the opposite destiny: they suffer from negative assessments by the biblical narrators and are 'punished' in one way or another (for examples, see below, section 7).

2. Women's leadership is often limited to stereotypical gender roles and is closely connected to traditional women's skills, such as giving birth to, raising, and teaching children, motherhood, care-giving, cooking, making clothes, and other homemaking skills. In the first books of the Bible women appear to strive to be faithful to the role of child-bearers: Sarah and Hagar, Leah and Rachel, Hannah, and others. For the sake of this role, they are presented as being in conflict with sisters or other women. Rebekah uses her culinary and other homemaking skills (taking care of clothing, dressing Jacob, etc.) to accomplish her goal of helping Jacob get the blessing from Isaac (Gen. 27). Sarah and Abigail help their husbands through cooking (Gen. 18.6; 1 Sam. 25). The women in Exodus 1–2 use motherly leadership in saving lives.[7] Most of the leadership of the capable woman in Proverbs 31 comes from traditional women's skills: spinning, making clothes, sewing, weaving, and cooking. Jael (Judg. 4.17) with her 'womanly' kindness and caregiving throws Sisera off his guard.

Mothers among women characters are mostly praised by the biblical narrators, but their parenthood is largely restricted to reproductive and protective functions.[8] Sometimes mothers are used as patriarchal mouthpieces. King Lemuel's mother gives admonition to her son, saying that he needs to be careful where women are concerned because they can destroy kings (Prov. 31.3). Sisera's mother waits for her son to come back victorious from battle, including women among the spoils of battle (Judg. 5.30).[9] These

7. Too many 'mothers' rescuing Moses, his mother, sister, Pharaoh's daughter, can be seen as a way to weaken women's leadership and influence; see Exum, 'Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters', p. 83.

8. Fuchs, 'The Literary Characterization of Mothers', p. 134.

9. Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn point out that the combined voices of the mother and the singer Deborah are used to support male war ideologies that see rape as a weapon of terror and revenge (Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, 'Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men, and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4 and 5', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58 [1990], p. 397).

mothers offer questionable ideas about other women: Lemuel's mother presents women as destroyers and Sisera's mother as spoils of war.

3. Women's leadership is distorted so that it appears more like survival tactics. Women leaders in the Bible often use deception, manipulation, tears, and seduction. They also use other means such as beauty, sex, and food to achieve their goals. One might call this kind of leadership survival tactics. The only women after whom biblical books are named, Esther and Ruth, cannot avoid the suspicion that they use beauty and sex for their goals.[10] Not only do the biblical narrators present them positively, but also commentators and preachers have praised them. The reader is confused by the message. Are women encouraged to use beauty and sex for their goals?

But this is not always true. When they have different interests from the narrators and use the same questionable means, women leaders are negatively evaluated. Eve is blamed for seducing Adam using food (Gen. 3). In Eve's case, traditional commentators and preachers have blamed her more than the biblical narrator.[11] She is a femme fatale because she brought a hard life to all men. The woman of Timnah and Delilah betray the Israelite hero Samson to the Philistines. A Timnite cries for seven days (Judg. 14.17) and Delilah persistently nags (Judg. 16.4-17). The reader is left with negative assessments about them.

Rebekah uses deception and food (Gen. 27), and Tamar uses deception and sex (Gen. 38). These women do not suffer from negative evaluations because, after all, they serve patriarchal interests. Portraying them positively is a way for narrators to reward them and it is also an effective means to control women.[12] Esther and Judith who use food and sex to achieve their goals are praised because they served the narrators' interests. They too can be viewed as femmes fatale, but women are appraised differently depending on whether they serve the narrators' goals or not.

4. Women leaders are described as needing men's direction. They can be easily ordered around and manipulated and thus they need men's guidance. They can not perform well without men's help or initiate an action without men's encouragement. Deborah, the judge and the prophet, has the help of Barak the general (Judg. 4), whereas other judges work alone.[13] Delilah

10. In Ruth's case, there is no mention of her beauty. But the idyllic presentation of the story invites the reader to assume it.

11. Cf. Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 72-73, 139 n. 1.

12. Cf. Exum, 'Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters', p. 80.

13. Scholars note several ways that the narrator describes Deborah as a lesser able judge: there is no mention of her being raised up as a deliverer unlike others (Judg. 2.16; 3.9; 15); no mention of Deborah as delivering Israel from the hands of the enemy (cf. Judg. 2.16; 6.14; 8.22; 12.2; 13.5); Nothing about receiving Yahweh's spirit and exercising charismatic leadership; and nothing about her going into war. See Dennis T.

follows directions of the Philistine male leaders (Judg. 16). Esther follows Mordecai's instructions. She does not take the initiative to save her people in crisis, and is at first reluctant to follow Mordecai's instructions to appear before the king to plead for the people. She has to be persuaded by him (Esth. 4.12-14).

5. Women leaders are not is depicted as cooperating with other women. They operate separately, even when they work for the same goal. In winning the battle against Sisera and his forces, Deborah and Jael do not work together. A certain non-Israelite woman, Jael, kills Sisera without a clear reason (Judg. 4. 17-21), although he is the general of King Jabin, who is at peace with the clan of Heber, her husband. Deborah never visits or talks to Jael, but simply praises her action (Judg. 5.24-27). Making a strange woman, Jael, a heroine could be the narrator's strategy to weaken the judge Deborah's power. When Michal objects to King David's behavior before the ark (2 Sam. 6), 'How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids…', implies separation among women, and thus she renders herself alone and powerless.[14] In the book of Esther, Vashti, Esther, and Zeresh, the only named women characters, never appear in the same scene and never refer to one another although they are related to one another in the plot. The narrative presents them as islands in the sea of men. The rare cases when women are described as cooperative are when they serve men's interests. The women in Exodus 1–2 as mentioned above offer a good example. Ruth and Naomi's bond is beautifully described because, again, they work for patriarchal goals, continuing the male line and so being the ancestors of David.

6. Women leaders are depicted as 'good' leaders when they speak and act against their own interests.[15] Abigail is a good example (1 Sam. 25). Both clever and beautiful, she is described as speaking and acting against her own interests. David the fugitive seeks food (and also political funds) from a wealthy landowner, Nabal, who not only refuses to support David but is sarcastic about David's disloyalty to Saul: 'Who is David? … There are many servants today who are breaking away from their masters' (1 Sam. 25.10). Being able to read the political situation and having his own judgment, Nabal ('fool') is no fool. But in a crisis his wife Abigail is willing to

Olson, 'The Book of Judges', *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), p. 779; Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (Anchor Bible, 6A; Doubleday, 1975), p. 98; Daniel I. Block, 'Why Deborah's Different', *Bible Review* 17 (2001), pp. 35-40, 49-51.

14. J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), p. 36.

15. Gale A. Yee, 'Ideological Criticism: Judges 17–21 and the Dismembered Body', in Gale A. Yee (ed.), *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 146-70.

make fun of his name in order to save his life: 'Do not take seriously this ill-natured fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him' (1 Sam. 25.25). As a woman Abigail could have survived, even without doing anything, since David was planning to kill only the men of Nabal's household (1 Sam. 25.22). But Abigail persuades David not to kill her husband, which may reveal that she cares about him. The narrator describes Nabal so negatively that the reader has a hard time seeing any positive relationship between Nabal and Abigail. The reader is invited even to imagine that Abigail was delighted to follow David and become one of his wives right after her husband's sudden death: 'Your servant is a slave to wash the feet of the servants of my lord' (1 Sam. 25.41). Unlike some commentators, I do not see love or the excellence of her character as a reason for the union between Abigail and David.[16]

In my view, Abigail is used to legitimize David's kingship. She validates his battles by calling them the Lord's. David does not want to be seen as the usurper of Saul's throne and needs validation. He can use the moral (and financial) support of a local wealthy man's wife.[17] When Abigail tells David, 'The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord', she is almost making him king. She must have been an influential figure in the region for such a prophecy to be attributed to her.

7. Independent women leaders need to be controlled. Among the strategies used for controlling powerful women are silencing them, making them anonymous, minimally describing them, publicly shaming them, making them evil, making them trouble makers, making them helpless. Miriam is silenced when she challenges Moses and asks for shared leadership (Num. 12). After the first speech of challenge, she is not given a chance to speak whereas the male characters involved, Aaron and Moses, get to talk. Miriam suffers public shaming and is made a negative example: women who challenge male leadership will, like Miriam, be punished.[18]

Formulating regulations that limit women's rights is another way to control smart women. Zelophehad's courageous and independent five daughters work together and achieve their goal of obtaining the right to inherit their father's land (Num. 27). But soon, their right is limited by a new regulation:

16. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), p. 175; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr, suggests that Abigail became David's wife 'precisely because of her excellence' (*I Samuel* [Anchor Bible, 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980], p. 402).

17. Hans W. Hertzerg notes that Abigail's material support of David is assumed (*I and II Samuel* [Old Testament Library; trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1964], p. 205).

18. For an ideological reading of this narrative, see Yani Yoo, 'How the Powerful Play Their Bible Game (Numbers 12)', *CTC Bulletin* 20 (2004), pp. 21-26.

the daughters must marry within their father's tribe in order to keep their inheritance (Num. 36).

Not recording the names of women leaders is another way to minimize their importance. The wise women from Tekoa (2 Sam. 14) and Abel (2 Sam. 20) are not named. Mrs Tekoa resolved the conflict between David and his son Absalom. Mrs Abel saved her city by initiating negotiation with the violent general Joab.[19] Another example is the independent, wealthy Shunammite woman (2 Kgs 4) who supports the prophet Elisha. She expects nothing in return and needs nothing from powerful people (v. 13). She ends up being given a son, who dies and then is brought back to life by Elisha. The incident serves to establish Elisha's reputation as the man who raises the dead from death (2 Kgs 8).

Minimally describing influential women leaders is another way to make them seem less important. Huldah the prophet authorized the book of the law found in the temple and made Josiah's reformation possible (2 Kgs 22.14-20). Apart from her words and her indentification as a prophet and the wife of Shallum, keeper of the wardrobe, nothing else is reported about her.

Powerful and independent women leaders are presented as bad, evil, and problematic. Jezebel, Athaliah, Potiphar's wife and Vashti all fall into this category. However, independent women who work for male characters' or the narrator's advantage are praised and positively evaluated: Esther, Rebekah, the midwives in Exodus 1, among others.

Some may not agree that all leadership qualities attributed to biblical women are male constructs. They may reflect roles that women in biblical times might have held. What I am saying is that women leaders are most often presented in conformity to patriarchal ideology. The idea that women should assist male leaders and remain as secondary leaders continues in many situations even to this day.

Korean Churchwomen's Leadership Fragmented

Churchwomen's Leadership Realities: Statistics

Myths about women's leadership are very much alive in the twenty-first century Korean Church. This is not surprising when we consider that over ninety percent of the Church is conservative. Countless sermons and Bible studies have reinforced and reproduced the myths. The Bible that describes women leaders as second-class with lesser leadership qualities offers a strong resource for the Korean Church's rhetoric regarding women's leadership in the Church. Based on an uncritical reading of the Bible, the Church

19. Following an old Korean tradition that calls married women after their hometown, I call these wise women Mrs Tekoa and Mrs Abel.

controls women's leadership and limits the number of women leaders in decision-making bodies.

The Korean Church has grown miraculously, from less than 0.5% of the population in the early twentieth century (about twenty years after the start of the Protestant mission) to 29.2% (18.3% Protestants; about 12 million Protestant and Catholic) in 2005.[20] Without hesitation I would say that women are the ones who made that record possible. For example, many women had installment savings, which they used to support church construction.[21] What would women say about the Church's male leadership? How much have they enjoyed leadership in the Church and what kind of leadership have they exercised? The following statistics show where women leaders are found in the Church.[22]

	The Presbyterian Church of Korea[23]	The Korean Methodist Church[24]	The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea[25]	The Anglican Church of Korea[26]
Clergywomen	5% (581 women/ 12,273 men)	5.4% (491/9,173)	14.79% (380/2,189)	11
Women Elders	2.51% (399/15,441)	8.4% (776/9,173)	5.8% (177/2,873)	(not applicable)
Officers and Executive Staff at Headquarter	4.54% (1/22)	9.3% (3/32)	7.14% (1/14)	(not available)

20. The statistics are taken from the 2005 Population and Housing Census, published by the Korean Statistical Office. About 56% of the total population has a religious affiliation. Of them, Protestants make up 18.3%, Catholics 10.9%, and Buddhists 22.8% (http://www.nso.go.kr).

21. Often, women did not let their husbands know about their giving, especially when they had non-Christian husbands.

22. The statistics come from reports submitted to the 2008 Discussion on Denominational Policies sponsored by the Committee of Gender Equality of the National Council of Churches in Korea. The general secretary of the Women Ministers' Association of the Presbyterian Church of Korea recently told me that the number of ordained women of has now reached about 800, which is about 200 higher than a few years ago. The situations of other major Protestant denominations not included in the table are as follows: two other major Presbyterian Churches (14,000 churches and 3,670,000 members, the two Churches combined) do not ordain women. Korea Baptist Church (2,700 churches with 800,437 members and 3,191 ministers) does not ordain women. Their seminary has no woman professor and women seminarians make up 8.64%. Korea Evangelical Holiness Church (5,948 churches with 745,275 members) began ordaining women in 2005. They now have 37 women ministers out of a total of 3,776. Their women seminarians are about 15%. Another big church, the Assembly of God, has many denominations and statistics that are not available. They ordain women.

Delegates to General Conference	0.68%	6.4% (95/1,475)	15 women	14.28% (15/105)
Women Professors	22% (11/50)	10.41% (5/48)	12.5% (2/16)	11.11% (1/9)
Women Seminarians	20%	30%	15%	5/13 (Graduate School)

Women make up sixty to seventy percent of the Church and their attendance at all church programs is even higher, over seventy to eighty percent.[27] But the table shows that few women take up leadership positions. The number of women entering seminarys increases every year but the reality is bleak. Young women nowadays are well-educated[28] and determined but are still not given leadership positions. No wonder the Korean Church is losing young people.

Although several denominations ordain women, this does not show the whole picture. In the calling system, women are not invited to be the pastor of an established local church. Women sometimes have to start their own churches in order to meet the ordination requirement. Most women pastors serve small churches which are often not financially independent.[29] Lay women elders are not appointed as early as men are. The average age for

23. The Presbyterian Church of Korea has 7,476 churches with 2,648,852 members. The General Secretary started ordaining women in 1996 (http://www.pck.or.kr/PckInfo/Statistics.asp).

24. The Korean Methodist Church has 5,692 churches with 1,508,434 members. The Church ordained women for the first time in 1933 (http://www.kmc.or.kr/databox/prg/kmc.pdf).

25. The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea is known as the most progressive and has 1,566 churches with 337,327 members (http://www.prok.org/).

26. The Church has 100 local churches.

27. One of the theories explaining the presence of women is Thomas Luckmann's deprivation-compensation theory. Religions offer compensation (consolation, encouragement, blessing, meaning-giving) to those who feel economically, psychologically, and physically deprived. See Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1967; Korean translation of the original German by Won Gue Lee; Seoul: Gyomunsa, 1982).

28. In Korea about 83% of high school graduates go to college (*Yonhap News*, December 23, 2007). Girls' rate of entering college is lower than that of boys by about 3%. In the early 1970s the rate of high school graduates going to college was about 20% and the girls' rate was even lower.

29. In 1972, in Korean Methodism women pastors made up 10.6% of all pastors and now the figure has dropped to 5.4% (http://www.kmctimes.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=22058). In the 1970s women seminarians were about 10% of the student body and now are 30%. The odd statistics bear witness to the increasing difficulty of women's ordination and of finding churches to serve.

men elders' appointment is 52.3 and for women is 61.7 in Methodism. The situation is no different in other denominations. Women elders have to retire after serving only a few years. Women are almost non-existent as denominational representatives at Christian schools or ecumenical organizations.

The Korean Church is full of 'capable women', who just came out of Proverbs 31. Participants at our programs said churchwomen do better than men in the following areas: service, prayer, evangelization, attending worship services, giving money to the church, giving speeches, cooking, sacrifice, helping the needy. When asked what men do better than women, they sarcastically listed 'playing and eating' and laughed aloud.

According to a survey (1995) by the Committee of Gender Equality of the National Council of Churches in Korea, women's activities consisted of cooking and cleaning (51%), choir (10.1%), class meeting (9.9%), visitation (8.9%), preparation work for events (7.3%), evangelism (5.2%), and education (0.2%).[30] Only 0.3% of the respondents liked cooking and cleaning. From the statistics and survey we see that the miracle workers behind the gigantic Korean Church have not been given deserved places of leadership.

The Church's Strategies of Debasing Women's Leadership

It is not surprising that the strategies of the Korean Church to limit women's leadership are quite similar to those found in the Bible, discussed above. The women leaders at our programs describe a number of strategies the Church relies upon to keep women in subordinate roles.

1. Women's leadership is said to be for assisting men leaders. A participant said, 'The church leaders (male pastors and elders) say we women and women's groups are there to assist them. Sometimes, I feel that my effort is like hitting a rock with eggs. When men and women make the same mistake, the pastor tends to point out only the women's, while being afraid of doing the same to men. Pastors find churchwomen easy to handle and have them in slight.' Another participant shared what her pastor told his women members: 'Don't even think of becoming elders, considering the sentiments of the church.'

Churchwomen leaders' ability to fundraise is amazing. They sell goods from food (dried fish, dried sea weeds, grains, rice cake, side dishes, etc.) to clothing (clothes, scarves, shoes) and cook for church weddings. They

30. Won Gue Lee points out that the respondents belong to member churches of KNCC and their answers are somewhat progressive. In fact, in a survey, 62% of churchwomen of a conservative denomination that does not ordain women answered that there is equality between men and women in their church, whereas 46.9% was the answer given by women in other denominations (Won Gue Lee, 'Churchwomen's Life and Feminist and Social Consciousness from the Perspective of Religion and Sociology' [Korean] [January 2, 2002. http://www.shareplaza.com]).

make a lot of money, depending on the size of the church. Although women operate their own charity and mission projects, often pastors decide where women's money should go: construction of the church or retreat center, church missions abroad, church events, gifts for ministers, expenses toward ministers' travel abroad, etc. For male leaders, women's society exists to support the ministry of the church, specifically male leaders.

2. Women's leadership is often limited to stereotypical gender roles. The Church's rhetoric is to let women be in 'their proper place'. Women are moved from home kitchen to church kitchen. Even nowadays most churches, including mega-churches, feed worshippers after Sunday worship.[31] It is not hard to guess who is in the kitchen. Some churches, however, are making efforts to include men volunteers or to pay the women workers. Even the items women sell for fundraising have to do with 'women's areas', food and clothing. When men's groups invite speakers from outside to lead a seminar for the whole church, women's groups often end up cooking a meal or preparing snacks for after the seminar. I have not seen a woman's group doing an education program for the whole church. When women's societies at association levels offer education programs, most often the speakers are male. Because, these days, Korean women's status at home is higher than that in society,[32] and they do not play traditional roles at home so much anymore, women's unhappiness with the Church's assignment of traditional roles to them is much greater than in the past.

3. Women's leadership is distorted by survival tactics. Churchwomen leaders are keenly aware of the extent of sexism in the Church and frequently share their frustrations. But they would not challenge the system directly. In an androcentric world that threatens independent women with shame and punishment and rewards the obedient with praise, sometimes women simply develop survival tactics. I have witnessed and heard about numerous cases of how women leaders' words and actions did not reflect their true feelings. For example, at a program for officers of an annual conference and its districts, the local preparation committee was adamant about

31. A participant at our program said her church recently purchased a $50,000 dishwasher.

32. According to '2008 Women's Life through Statistics' from the Korean National Statistical Office (July 2008), 16% of married women make exclusive decisions over financial investment; 65.3% of married women make decisions over living expenses. Women responsible for family livelihood are 22.1%. The birthrate is 1.26 (it was 1.08 in 2005, making it the lowest in the world). Fifty percent of adult women work outside the home. But of women wageworkers, only 28.7% are fully employed and 40% of them are temporarily or daily employed, whereas 42.7% of men wageworkers are fully employed and 25.1% are temporarily or daily employed. Women in managerial positions and higher are 19.3%, the highest thus far. Congresswomen are 13.7% (http://www.nso.go.kr).

inviting the bishop to preach at the opening worship service. A national officer and I were sitting in the rear during this service. The preacher had an agenda in his sermon; he wanted to encourage women to give money toward building the annual conference building. In the middle of the sermon, he said something like this: Women are more generous in giving; how come men with *the thing* give only $5 a month as membership fee to their men's unit? The bishop used a vulgar expression in referring to the male genital that was unacceptable by public standards. He was the only man at the gathering of about one hundred women. I was surprised and felt that he had no respect for the women gathered there. The officer next to me uttered her anger toward the bishop, 'I can't believe he actually said that. He must have us in slight! Crazy bastard!' I was shocked by her words, but my surprise did not end there. After worship the officer ran to the bishop. With a loud voice and a big smile, holding his hands, she said, 'Thank you so much, Bishop! I was so moved by your sermon. Thank you, thank you!' I was appalled.

It is clear that this woman's action is not exemplary. But it shows the oppressive reality churchwomen face. She was offended by the male leader but not able to express her feelings to him. I have to admit that her choice of getting along well with him instead of becoming his target is a kind of leadership.

4. Women leaders are described as needing men's direction. Churchwomen often have to deal with male leadership that tries to control women directly. A good number of district superintendents insist that they are the ones who sign any official letter of the women's society.[33] Of course, women think the person signing should be their district president. But the reason women let district superintendents sign letters is the same reason the national officer in my example above chose not to confront the bishop: to find favor with the bishop, and not to become known as a troublemaker.

Some male leaders insist that women leaders not to join the women's society beyond the local unit. They are afraid of the 'strange education' that women might get from those women's gatherings. They also guard against officers of the women's society who try to work for women's rights in the church.

5. Cooperation among women is not encouraged. Churchwomen leaders confess that they are not good at working with other women. They even say women cannot be united among themselves. From long internalization of patriarchal teachings, women tend not to trust other women's leadership. They have a hard time electing other women as officers and elders, working with women, and thinking highly of women. The Korean saying, 'When

33. There are about 200 districts in Korean Methodism. There have been few women district superintendents, not to mention a bishop, in the Church's 120-year history.

three women gather together, a dish is broken', gives a negative impression about women's gathering together but, at the same time, reveals the fear of women's cooperation and its power.

6. The church's patriarchal attitudes are reinforced when women leaders speak and act against their own interests. Because of women's prominent leadership and sacrifice in giving, attendance, evangelism, and service, some male leaders offer women opportunities to become elders or to assume other leadership positions. But women often turn down these opportunities, saying that their husbands should become elders first. Only a few churches appoint couples as elders, and thus women often never have a chance to become an elder. Women also let their pastor appoint the representative president of women's units. They let their pastor decide who will be the guest speaker of women's dedication services. They follow the decision of the bishop who said 'no' to the next year's women's leadership program. Women do all these things although they know it is not what they want or what is best for them.

7. Independent women's leadership is controlled. Our participants said the following: 'When we women try to be independent in making decisions, male pastors say that it's Satanic and that makes it hard for us to express different opinions.' 'My suggestion was passed at a church meeting. But later without proper procedure, it got silenced and there was no follow-up.' 'I once said an opposite opinion to the pastor's at the council meeting. Later the pastor told me in private, "I was disappointed with you". He took me off the committee.' 'We women are not happy about certain decisions but try to accept them because we are afraid.' 'We can have a good meeting. But often the final decision is made by the pastor or his wife.' 'The church teaches us to embrace everything with grace. In the church we can't even criticize injustice such as financial discrepancies and the issue of the pastor's son or son-in-law inheriting the church.' 'If you express your opinions freely, you end up having a black mark made against your name by the pastor and will never become a higher-deacon (*Gwonsa*) or an elder.' One participant said, 'I had to muster all the courage I had to point out the wrongdoing of my pastor, a bishop. When I challenged him, he did not admit it. After a second time, he confessed and apologized.' However, such a case is rare.

We have observed some striking resemblances between the strategies used by biblical narrators and by the Korean Church in devaluing, limiting, and fragmenting women's leadership. One does not want to see churchwomen as victims. They have made choices during the Church's history and these choices include avoidance, silence, conformity, cooperation, getting along well with male leadership, etc. The reality of women's leadership and power in the present is the result of their choices. But churchwomen are not totally satisfied with where they are now in terms of leadership. Despite the difficulties, they are working for greater equality in the Church. The Bible and the story of a Korean church woman offer a new leadership model.

Toward Leadership of Partnership

I would like to suggest an alternative leadership model for Korean churchwomen based on the story of Deborah and Barak in the book of Judges (chs. 4–5). Despite the narrator's presentation of Deborah as less charismatic than other judges, the pair Deborah and Barak provides a good model of partnership. Deborah headhunts Barak and raises him up as an able general through the Pygmalion effect. Initially, there is some conflict when Barak responds that he will not go to war without Deborah, and she says she will go with him, but the victory will go 'into a woman's hand' (Judg. 4.9). However, Deborah changes her words later and encourages Barak, telling him that the Lord has given Sisera 'into your hand' (Judg. 4.14). Deborah and Barak cooperate by doing what each is good at (delegation and shared leadership) and they mutually support each other. Deborah shows that the superior does not have to dominate the inferior to fulfill the goal. Barak admits his weakness and asks for support from a woman leader or partner. They sing the victory song together (Judg. 5.1) and their people enjoy peace for forty years (Judg. 5.31).

A bold Korean woman offers another example. Jinhee Lee, president of an annual conference of the Women's Society, was invited to give a congratulatory speech at a gathering of the men's society held at a sizable church.[34] Jinhee decided to meet with the pastor-in-charge while visiting there, and asked him to consider appointing one of his church members, Kay Kim, as an elder. Kay was an annual conference officer of the women's society, and Jinhee thought that becoming an elder would help her work more effectively. But the pastor was so furious that he yelled at Jinhee, saying, 'How dare you ask a minister to appoint a church member an elder? Do you do this wherever you go, to all ministers?' She smiled and went on to persuade him. The pastor remained angry to the end. That night Jinhee got a call from the pastor's wife, who happened to pass by the office and hear her husband yell at the president of the annual conference. She apologized on behalf of her husband. Jinhee answered that it was all right. The pastor never apologized. Several months later, Kay became a lay elder (and eventually she became the president of the annual conference.) Jinhee has had several 'successes' stories in achieving leadership positions for herself and other women. She has developed her own know-how. First, she plays as the role of an obedient assistant to the patriarchal leadership, and, as a woman leader in her own right, offers human and financial resources abundantly. Then, she simply asks or demands leadership positions, challenges, and confronts male leaders when needed. Confronting male leadership is

34. The episode is reported here with permission from 'Jinhee'. Names are altered by request.

often missing in churchwomen's leadership and this is the way forward. If women develop strategies to work together to raise women as important leaders and if they do so, one by one, for some time, then they will have their turns sooner or later. There will be women leaders in decision-making bodies in no time.

Churchwomen have waited long enough for male leaders to offer them deserved places of leadership. Korean women, especially churchwomen, seem to be extremely afraid of asking directly. They are afraid of what others would think of them: position seekers, troublemakers, and women who raise their voices in public. In a leadership of partnership, women sometimes need to use the leadership of voicing out their convictions, choosing confrontations, and causing healthy conflicts. Dialogues and mutual support will only help both women and men leaders grow stronger. As we saw in Jinhee's case, confrontation and challenge can go with a 'womanly smile'. Women's leadership in this partnership is whole, not fragmented. With this leadership women not only choose to support male leadership for the sake of the ministry of the Church but also express their opinions freely and openly as equal partners. The Korean Church nowadays is an eager missionary of the world. We hope that the Church does not take with it its patriarchal culture, but rather a gospel of mature leadership. With women's leadership of partnership the Korean Church will have a real opportunity to become a true global church and to make positive contributions to the world.

Lessons about Healing: Korean Comfort Women and the Hemorrhaging Woman of Mark 5

Mi Kang Yang

One of the most significant Korean women's movements in our recent history is the Settlement Movement that was established to support Comfort Women, women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during the Second World War. The term 'Japanese Military Sexual Slavery' refers to Korean women who were unwillingly drafted by the Japanese military into sexual slavery during those years at war. More than 200,000 Asian women were victimized, particularly in the region where the most aggressive Japanese invasion occurred. Japanese Military Sexual Slavery is a stark example of women's rights being completely ignored in war. The victims were dragged into sexual slavery to a rape camp (or comfort station), from six months up to seven years. Due to the incessant and cyclical nature of the rapes, they were exposed to severe psychological, emotional, and physical injury and trauma.

The devastating results of the sexual slavery did not end with the victims, but also extended to the nations whose women were victimized. Since World War II, an official apology and appropriate reparations by the Japanese government has not occurred. This has only served to keep the women victims and the Korean nation continues to suffer the historical and social trauma. To make matters worse, since the Japanese conservative right concealed and overtly eliminated Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, as well as other wrongdoings committed in the colonized nations, from the history textbooks of middle and high school, the historical trauma shared among the victimized women and nations continues and worsens.

It was not until the 1990s, fifty years after the independence of Korea from Japan, that Japanese Military Sexual Slavery surfaced as a part of Korean history. Until then, just as Korean society remained silent about this issue, so did the victims. For those women educated within conservative Confucianism, which emphasized a woman's chastity and purity as more important than a woman's life, Japanese Military Sexual Slavery was not only an incident in which a woman simply lost her virginity. She also faced terrible shame, as did the Korean nation itself.

The purpose of this essay is to describe the results of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery from the perspective of the story of Jesus' healing the woman who suffered from bleeding for more than twelve years (Mark 5). The nature of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery will be described with the help of the victims' testimonies, and the extent of the psychological and emotional damage will be investigated. The social meaning of the healing of the woman in Mark 5 will be illuminated by these victims' efforts to overcome the impairment and trauma they suffered. The process of healing is a constructive societal value that strengthens not only individual victims, but also unites them with society itself.

The Nature of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery and the Victim

Poverty, Mobilization, and Incessant Rape

The system of Military Sexual Slavery was a byproduct of the Japanese colonization effort. In victimizing women by making them the objects of slavery, it displayed the characteristic patriarchal nature of the colonization system.[1] As Japan stepped up its invasion of Asia in the nineteenth century, colonized Korea became a base of operations for exploiting material as well as human resources. In such circumstances, unwed women in a family were the first to be removed far from their homes. From the family's perspective, this served to reduce the size of the family for survival and to help ensure that family's livelihood, because women were considered redundant members of the family under the patriarchal system. The testimony of Gabsun Choi exemplifies the poor economic conditions of those Korean women who became subjected to sexual slavery just for a bowl of cooked rice.

> I was 16 years old when I was taken again. My height remains much the same as then. When my mother told a military police to take me, he scanned over me from top to bottom, asking me to go with him. The military police told me that they would lavish me with cooked rice in premium quality and really nice clothes. Since my early years, always, I have lived my life by wearing patched clothes, faded and torn, belonging to my father. Through out my entire life, not once have I dressed decently, nor eaten properly. I followed him simply because he told me that if I went with him, he would buy me new shoes and feed me as much as I wanted.[2]

1. Hyunah Yang, 'The Impairment of Korean Comfort Women: From the Testimony of the Survivor', in Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan [Korean], *The Indictment by South and North Korea in the 2000 Tribunal*, Addendum (Seoul: Unpublished, 2000), presented at The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in 2000.

2. The Testimony of the Korean Committee for the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in 2000, *The Korean Military Comfort Women Dragged by Force*. IV. *The History Written from Memories* (Seoul: Pulbich, 2001) [Korean], pp. 121-23.

In the late 1930s, with the system of marshaling Korean people for its colonization war, the Japanese Empire mobilized not only a workforce but also armed forces, conscripting more than six million people. As the war continued, the Japanese armed forces, engaged in the extended war, were provided with women from Korea as well as other Asian nations to fulfill their sexual desire.[3] The Japanese military dispatched comfort women to different battlefields and forced them to serve as sexual slaves. The following is the testimony of Sim Dalhyun:

> That was when I was 12 or 13 years old. Our family engaged in farming, when Japanese people came and rampantly confiscated everything that we had. Not having anything to eat, my older sister and I went out to gather wild greens for daily food. All of sudden, a truck approached us. Two or three people came out and ran toward us. They violently snatched the basket on my head and ordered us to get on the truck. To avoid being taken on the truck, my sister and I embraced each other, but one of them kicked me. As I was crying and following behind my older sister, they seized me and dumped me on the truck.[4]

The average age of most of the victims was sixteen to seventeen. The experience of the sexual violence was horrible and shameful. The women were taken to rape camps for no reason, and rape and violence on the way to the camps was also very common. According to the testimony of the victims, they were raped daily by numerous soldiers, and sometimes by scores of men.

> For weekday there were not that many people. I had to cope with about 15 men daily. But for weekend the number was too numerous to talk about. It seems that it was more than 50. Here [in the Republic of Singapore], I was forced to travel to a place deep in a mountain once in a while. About 10 comfort women were accompanied by soldiers. A tent was built as a comfort station and was divided with plywood in order to accommodate four to five people at a time. The number of soldiers who came to the station was so many that they hastily lowered their pants to engage in sex and as they went out with their belts tightening, the next group of people came right in. We took soldiers in by having our legs opened to the sides and drawn in just like the form of frog, neither sitting nor lying down, but leaning against a bed.[5]

For Korean women educated in the ideologies of Confucianism and chastity, the physical suffering stemming from prolonged and repeated sexual

3. Jinsung Jung, 'The Research on the Mandatory Incarceration of the Military Comfort Women', *The Academy of Korean Studies* 73 (Seoul: The Academy of Korean Studies, 1998) [Korean], pp. 195-219.

4. Korea Chongshindae's Institute, *True Stories of Korean Comfort Women*, III (Seoul: HanEul, 1997) [Korean], pp. 143-68.

5. The Testimony of Bokdong Kim, Korea Chongshindae's Institute, *True Stories of Korean Comfort Women*, II (Seoul: HanEul, 1996) [Korean], pp. 84-99.

violence, together with the mental and emotional agony intensified by their belief in the importance of celibacy worked as a double-edged sword. Except for the few cases in which they succeeded in escaping from the comfort station by risking their lives in order to free themselves from the repeated sexual violence, all they could do was to choose to survive in a situation where resistance was impossible.

Silence, Testimony, and Solidarity

In July 1991, Haksoon Kim was the first comfort woman victim to make her victimization public. Her testimony brought this terrible secret to light and provided the occasion for the emergence of the Settlement Movement for the Comfort Women. This movement demanded that the Japanese government provide a full disclosure of sexual slavery perpetrated by their military. For the first time, Haksoon Kim, then 67, revealed her experience as a sixteen year old girl taken to a comfort station in a Japanese military camp in Manchuria.

> I incidentally met a woman who was a victim of the nuclear bomb dropped in Japan, when I participated in a job-producing project offered by a local government office. I told her that I was a comfort woman of Japanese military. That was because my life was devastated so much by Japan and I felt so wretched that I wanted to talk to somebody. I was called up to talk here and there because I was the first domestic witness as a comfort woman. It was so hard for me to bring up those memories again. How come I could not lead a respectable life? Whenever I see other old people, I compare my life with theirs by knowing that theirs were not like mine. Sometimes I felt that I would kill by pieces those bastards who deprived me of my virginity and made me like this. But how can I live with my wretched heart? I no longer want to dig up my memory. Neither the Korean government nor the Japanese government would show any interest in a woman like me who would die anyway![6]

Testimonies of other survivors followed. As of 2007, the number of the reported victims was 234, and 109 are still alive.[7] Protests demanding that the Japanese government provide fact-finding, an official apology, and appropriate reparations to the victims have been held every Wednesday since January 8, 1992, in Seoul.[8] This Wednesday Demonstration held in front of the Japanese embassy provides a place for the development of solidarity by the international community as well as a place for

6. The Testimony of Haksoon Kim, Korea Chongshindae's Institute, *True Stories of Korean Comfort Women*, I (Seoul: HanEul, 1993) [Korean], pp. 31-44.

7. The Ministry of Gender Equality, The Japanese Military Sexual Slavery e-History Room (http://www.hermuseum.go.kr).

8. For statistics, see the website of The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (http://womenandwar.net).

the development of a community and fellowship among the victims. Regardless of bad weather conditions, the victims, who previously avoided public appearance, now stand in front of the protest, and educate the public through their testimonies.

The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (hereafter the Women's Tribunal) was held by the victimized nations in Asia in December, 2000, in Tokyo, with the victims as the main participants. The Women's Tribunal was an effort to bring an end to the war-torn twentieth century and to inaugurate a new, peaceful millennium. History was made for victimized women by the women themselves. The purpose of the Women's Tribunal was to reexamine completely Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, an issue that had been ignored because of the statute of limitations (the crime had occurred fifty years before). The essence of the 2000 tribunal was to have the government admit that the Japanese emperor was responsible for the violations of the comfort women, and to admit the responsibility of the supreme military commander who violated these women's rights.[9]

To be in solidarity with the comfort women, actions should not end here. The movement continues to gain momentum in the world arena. As the civilian network among nations expanded, the House of Representatives in the United States passed a resolution that defined the military system of physically and sexually abusing the comfort women as a war crime.[10] The European parliament, the Netherlands, Australia and Canada participated in passing similar resolutions.

The Hemorrhaging Woman in the Gospel of Mark

Reading the Gospel of Mark, one cannot fail to notice the numerous healing stories. These are events of liberation and of experiencing new creation, especially for the *minjung*, the poor and underprivileged.[11] As John Pilch observes, while the underprivileged sick were segregated socially and physically by the purity laws of the time, the poor and sick were reintergrated into their society through Jesus' healing.[12] The purity code allowed only

9. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, *The Report of Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery* (Seoul: The Korean Conference on the Comfort Women, 2000) [Korean].

10. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan has continuously held an Asian Solidarity Conference since 1994.

11. See Wonsik Seok, 'On the Real World in the Miracle Stories in the Gospel of Mark: The Emphasis on Jesus' Healing and Exorcism', in *The Papers of the 35th Biblical Symposium* (Seoul, 2002) [Korean], p. 38.

12. John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 50.

clean people or animals to belong to the religious community, while profane and unclean people or animals were excluded. It was both a system of unifying the community and a system of exclusion that created victims in the process.[13] According to the purity laws in Leviticus 12 and 15, the body of a woman during her menstruation and for a certain period after the birth of a baby was considered unclean. Women with discharges caused by disease were also considered unclean (Lev. 15.25-30). The worst victims of the purity code were women. Pilch rightly identifies the relationship between how a woman's physical body was viewed under the purity law and how this limited her rights in her society.[14]

The story of Jesus' healing of the woman who had a disease resulting in her problem with bleeding in the Gospel challenges the purity law's correlation of a woman's body with her social rights. Jesus' touching her challenged the injustice of the purity system and demonstrated that his teaching and actions brought women, who were the underprivileged and poor, back into their society. Out of nine healing stories in the Gospel of Mark, this is the only healing story that focuses on the needs of women to be included in their society. The story of the woman who suffered from bleeding for twelve years in Mk 5.25-34 appears in the middle of the story of the healing of the daughter of Jairus, a synagogue ruler (Mk 5.21-24, 35-43). In Jesus' society, the fact that the woman could not give birth to a child because of her twelve years of hemorrhaging would have resulted in her being abandoned by her family. She would have had no way to support herself. Her circumstances and her life represent the reality of *minjung* itself (Mk. 5.26), poverty and rejection. A hemorrhaging woman, who was exposed to the vicious cycle of hemorrhage-impurity-childlessness-deprivation, is an archetype of the socially disenfranchised of Jesus' time.[15]

This woman's attempt to touch Jesus (Mk 5.27) was her last hope. If she had not reached out to Jesus, she would have had nothing left but to die as a marginalized person who was seen as having no value and who had to be avoided by her family and her village. Her private contact with Jesus, who was on his way to heal Jairus' daughter, broke the prescribed purity rules. At that time a woman was required to be dependent upon a man. For a woman to act independently was rare. The healing of Jairus' daughter was initiated by her father (Mk 5.22-23). Peter's mother-in-law started serving the

13. Jinho Kim, 'The Miraculous Hour That Overcomes Daily Falsehood: Remembering the Prostitute of a Military Campsidetown with the Theology of Minjung', in *Jesus' Vituperation* (Seoul: Samin, 2008) [Korean], pp. 96-110.

14. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, p. 51.

15. Jinho Kim, 'Out of the Barrier, Over the Barrier: The Miracle of the Hemorrhaging Woman That Triumphs the Ontological Barrier', in *Jesus' Vituperation* (Seoul: Samin, 2008), pp. 111-16.

men who were present as soon as she was healed (Mk 1.30-31). This story of a hemorrhaging woman daring to act on her own and daring to touch a man when all around her knew she was unclean went against everything for which the purity code stood. Her approach to Jesus on her own demonstrated her strength of character and her faith. Her risk led to Jesus' response of affirming her faith and sending her away healed.

Of all the healing stories of Jesus in Mark, Jesus initiates an action of touching in eight cases. Only in the case of the healing of the hemorrhaging woman, she, not Jesus, initiates the contact. Her touching Jesus was intentional.[16] Touching in this story of healing is also a symbolic action. It promotes healing, and it facilitates a new relationship between the healer and the sick through bodily contact.[17]

Jesus proclaims to this woman, 'Your faith has saved you'. For most of the healing stories in the New Testament, Jesus told the sick, to 'be clean', or to 'go and show yourself to the priest'. Only four times does he say, 'Your faith has saved you'.[18] This proclamation is given only to the sinful woman in Lk. 7.50, to a blind beggar in Mk 10.52, a leper in Lk. 17.19, and finally to this women who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. Her faith led to Jesus' gift of healing. It brought her from the margins to become a full member of society.

The Struggle to Be Healed

The testimonies of the victims of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery describe the social and historical situation that the victimized Comfort Women faced. Most of them were girls suffering from poverty, being from poor families; they were taken by force as comfort women; they were raped continuously and repeatedly at the comfort station; upon returning, they remained silent for a long period of time without revealing their victimization, until after Korea became independent of Japan. Eventually, they began to struggle to heal themselves. When they broke out of their silence and gave their testimonies about their victimization to the world, the healing of their psychological and emotional wounds began. Foreign and domestic organizations in many countries have stood in solidarity across borders to support the Comfort Women and help to bring to light all the atrocities perpetrated upon them by the Japanese military. The courage to tell the truth and the support

16. Ilsang Kang, 'Jairus' Daughter and the Hemorrhaging Woman: The Story of Healing Two Women (2)', in *Christian Thought* 542 (Seoul: The Christian Church in Korea, Feb. 2004) [Korean], p. 172.

17. John J. Pilch, 'A Window into the Biblical World: Who Touched Me?', *The Bible Today* 38 (2000), pp. 310-15.

18. Kim, 'Out of the Barrier, Over the Barrier', p. 116.

from around the world has continued the process of healing for the victims, as has the community of support the comfort women have created among themselves. The healing process will be furthered when the Japanese government admits its wrongdoings, offers an official apology, and makes reparation, pledging to prevent such actions in the future. Indeed, bringing a resolution to the matter of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery means the healing not only of the individual victims but also of the historical and social trauma of the victimized nations. The triumph of reconciliation over enmity and revenge is possible only if the process of healing is encouraged on an individual, group and national level.

The hemorrhaging woman in the Gospel of Mark, who bled for twelve years, was stigmatized as impure by the purity law. She had to renounce the possibility of becoming a mother, which determined the social status of a woman. In spite of her marginalization from society and what this had done to her, this woman broke herself out of her seemingly hopeless situation, and touched the edge of Jesus' clothes on her own. Her daring action enabled Jesus to proclaim her spiritual and physical healing, 'Your faith has saved you'.

Both the poverty-stricken Comfort Women victims who were sexually abused during World War II, and silent for so many years, and the bleeding woman in Mark's Gospel help us to understand that physical, emotional and social healing is not just something that comes down from heaven. Rather, it is accomplished by each woman's courage and strength in not being silent when injustice and destructive actions occur. It is accomplished by a belief that the support of the community of those who have suffered can make a difference, as can the support of the global community. Healing takes place as we encourage the underprivileged or wounded to overcome the difficulties they face and empower them to have hope. The wounds of the Comfort Women in Korea no longer held them in an emotional prison when they began to participate in their honest and open truth telling and so began the process of healing. The gift of Jesus' words to the hemorrhaging woman, 'your faith has saved you', provides a new horizon for the Comfort Women.

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