

# Journal of the American Society for Church Growth

---

Volume 15  
Issue 2 *Yonggi Cho and the Yoida Full Gospel Church*

Article 10

---

4-1-2004

## Complete Issue

Gary L. McIntosh  
*Biola University*, [gary.mcintosh@biola.edu](mailto:gary.mcintosh@biola.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/jascg>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Missions and World Christianity Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

McIntosh, G. L. (2004). Complete Issue. *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*, 15(2). Retrieved from <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/jascg/vol15/iss2/10>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* by an authorized editor of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange.



**Journal of**  
**The American Society**  
**for**  
**Church Growth**

**Volume 15**  
**Spring 2004**

**The Purpose** of the *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* is to communicate recent thinking and research related to American Church Growth.

The *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* is published three times during the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). ISSN: 1091-2711. It is indexed in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*, *Christian Periodical Index*, *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, the *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*, *Religion Indexes: Ten Year Subset on CD-ROM*, and the *ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM*.

**Subscription Information** (See inside back cover).

**Manuscript Submission and Publications Policy** (See inside back cover).

**The Opinions and Conclusions** published in the *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* are solely those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the American Society for Church Growth.

---

**The Journal of the American Society for Church Growth**

Editor: Dr. Gary L. McIntosh  
Founding Editor: Dr. John Vaughan 1991–1995  
Layout Design: Carolyn J. Fithian

**The American Society for Church Growth**

President: Dr. Charles Arn  
Vice President: Dr. Alan McMahan  
Second Vice President: Dr. Eric Baumgartner  
Administrator: Peter Batchelder  
Coordinator: Judy Christy

Past Presidents:

C. Peter Wagner	1986	Flavil Yeakley, Jr.	1993
George Hunter III	1987	John Vaughan	1994
Kent R. Hunter	1988	Gary L. McIntosh	1995–96
Elmer Towns	1989	R. Daniel Reeves	1997–98
Eddie Gibbs	1990	Ray W. Ellis	1999-2000
Bill Sullivan	1991	Charles VanEngen	2001-2002
Carl F. George	1992		

Journal of  
**The American Society  
for  
Church Growth**

**Contents**

<i>Introduction</i>	
Gary L. McIntosh, Editor .....	1
<i>Cho Yonggi's Charismatic Leadership and Church Growth</i>	
David S. Lim.....	3
<i>A Response to David S. Lim</i>	
Wonsuk Ma .....	29
<i>Reverend David Yonggi Cho's Leadership as Manifested in the Spirituality of the Saints of a Full Gospel Church</i>	
Myung-Soo Park.....	35
<i>A Response to Myung-Soo Park</i>	
Gary L. McIntosh.....	67
<i>Lay Equipping Leadership and Church Growth</i>	
Dr. Eddie Gibbs .....	73
<i>A Response to Eddie Gibbs</i>	
Dr. Sung-Bae Chang .....	85
<i>Mission Leadership and Church Growth</i>	
Chris Sugden.....	91
<i>A Response to Chris Sugden</i>	
Peter Beyerhaus .....	103



### **Introduction**

**Gary L. McIntosh, Editor**

Church growth leaders have studied the Yoido Full Gospel Church, located in Seoul, Korea, since the early 1970s. Its pastor, David Yonggi Cho, is considered to be one of the most innovative and creative church leaders in the world. Since the church's founding in 1958, it has grown to over 840,000 members as of August 2003.

On August 28-29, 2003, an international conference was held in Seoul, Korea to investigate the "Role of Leadership in Church Growth". Jointly sponsored by the Institute for Church Growth and Hansei University, the conference presented various leadership models for church growth. Most of the models focused on the leadership of David Yonggi Cho.

Dr. Younggi Hong of the Institute for Church Growth led the conference, and an international panel made numerous presentations and responses. Eddie Gibbs and Gary L. McIntosh, both members of the American Society for Church Growth, participated in the conference.

While the Journal of the ASCG normally focuses on church growth issues related to North America, this issue reprints some of the presentations and responses from the Youngsan International Church Growth Conference. I believe these articles will prove to be of great interest to those who are aware of this great church and pastor.

—Editor

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004





## Cho Yonggi's Charismatic Leadership and Church Growth

David S. Lim

### 1.0 Introduction

As the founding and senior pastor of the largest megachurch in the world so far, it is quite obvious that Rev. Dr. Cho Yonggi (hereafter, Cho) has been an effective leader of *church growth* (CG) in Korea and the world. How was he able to lead the Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) to achieve such phenomenal growth? I am greatly honored to have been invited to present this paper that will focus on his *personal charisma* as one of the key factors that brought about such a development in church history.

This paper seeks to answer the question: in Cho's model of CG, has his "charismatic leadership" (CL) been a significant factor? I will show that it indeed was, and describe the nature of his CL, especially in relation to how it contributed to CG. My data are collected from published literature, esp. Cho's, and includes some interviews with YFGC leaders as reported in Hong, 2000a.<sup>1</sup> The essay ends with an evaluative reflection on his CL style and CG model.

### 1.1 Definition of Church Growth

"Church Growth" (CG) may be defined as "a consciously planned effort to effect increase in membership in a local church." This was popularized by the Fuller School of World Mission (cf. McGavran, 1980; Wagner, 1984), but found one of its best models in the YFGC. But unknown to many, Cho had already established Church Growth International (CGI) as a training and publishing institute in his church campus as early as 1976 to promote and share his CG experience with the global church.

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

The emphasis of CG is “conversion growth,” not “biological growth” nor “transfer growth,” as the main means of increasing membership through an ongoing program of evangelism and discipleship in a church (cf. Wagner, 1984). Based on a 1998 survey, the membership increase through “transfer growth” at YFGC was only 52%, lower than that of the average church in Korea (60.7%).<sup>2</sup>

I consider 1964 as the starting point of Cho’s *mega-church* type of church growth based on a clear *cell system*. He can therefore be considered the first church leader to conceive of and implement such a structure, which has gained global impact, providing the inspiration and a good model for subsequent ones (cf. Comiskey, 1999). Cho started his church with five members in a small tent in 1958, which grew to 800 in 1962; 2,000 in 1964; 18,000 in 1973; 200,000 in 1981; 503,000 in 1986; 593,000 in 1990; 671,000 in 1993; 709,070 in 1997; and 720,000 in 1998-99 (Hong, 2000: 105).<sup>3</sup> In the latest statistics that I have (1998-99), YFGC had 667 assistant pastors (ordained and non-ordained), 1,159 elders, 80,759 deacons, 831 overseas missionaries, 16,993 home cell groups in 25 large districts and 13 local sanctuaries, and 230,000 regular adult church attendees (Hong, 2000a: 70).

### 1.2 Definition of Charismatic Leadership

CL may be defined as the position and process of “giftedness” whereby someone in authority is perceived to have “charisma” (extraordinary influence) over his/her followers (cf. Hong, 2000a: 66). Having such an “aura of authority and power” is both an objectively observed possession of the leader (cf. Weber, 1968: 241-250, 1112-1117) as well as a subjectively perceived attribution of the members (cf. Bryman, 1992: 22-69). The discussions as to which comes first, or which predominates may be just good for intellectual exercise.

In religious circles, CL involves “spiritual authority” through one’s “proximity to the sacred” (God and his Word).<sup>4</sup> Whereas the biblical usage of “charisma” (gift of grace) focuses on its supernatural *source*,<sup>5</sup> the common (present) usage emphasizes its human awe-inspiring *effect* on (or *ascription* by) the followers.<sup>6</sup>

From my studies, “charisma” in CL seems to be a combination of four (4) major traits, which may be further subdivided into more specific sub-traits. This “giftedness” is a “gift-mix” of supernatural *proficiency*, congenial *personality*, consistent *spirituality* and competent *ingenuity*.<sup>7</sup> One or two without the others would fail to produce CL. Some pastors may be more gifted in one trait over others, but one who has all to the maximum de-

gree would be an outstanding "charismatic leader," as Cho has proven to be. We shall now proceed to depict the exemplary CL of Cho.

### *2.0 Marks of Cho's Charismatic Leadership*

Though Cho does not directly refer to himself as one possessing "charisma," yet this essay will show that his CL was a very important factor in his ministry that resulted in phenomenal CG. It is clear that his church members perceive him to be "spiritual" and "charismatic," that he speaks God's words as God's chosen servant. In fact, according to Hong's 1998 survey, YFGC members rate Cho as more charismatic than how other Korean church members (even of other mega-churches) perceive their senior pastors!<sup>8</sup>

#### *2.1 Supernatural proficiency*

There are at least six ways by which Cho's charisma shines through his supernatural giftedness:

2.1.1 *God's call.* Foremost is his experience of special supernatural endowment. His strong sense of divine calling and mission in life is built on his supernatural experiences,<sup>9</sup> particularly his miraculous healing from a terminal disease and his dramatic conversion.<sup>10</sup> He must have used these events to not just remind himself constantly, but also to repeat them to his constituents and the public.

2.1.2 *God's ministry.* In many of his messages, he claims (and has been seen to have) direct contact with God and given his abilities by God. He proclaims that he ministers with the help of God, and calls the Holy Spirit as his Senior Partner (Cho, 1989). He always attributes the secret of his fabulous CG to God's sovereign grace and will (Hong, 2000a: 77).

2.1.3 *Divine miracles.* A very significant aspect of Cho's Pentecostal ministry is "signs and wonders," particularly healing and "speaking in tongues" (glossolalia) through the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (Cho, 1989 and 1999; Kennedy, 1990; Hong, 2000a: 69). For non-Pentecostals, one can still have CL if one discovers and uses his/her special gifts faithfully.<sup>11</sup>

Yet as a Pentecostal evangelical, Cho excelled in his "power-gifts." Worship services include prayers for healing. A certain Elder Kim testifies that he saw "signs and miracles" in Cho's early ministry (Hong, 2000a: 71). Well-publicized is the instantaneous healing (in spite of his reluctance to act on the Spirit's prompting) of an elder's son who was crippled by an incurable paralysis (Cho, 1983: 143f; 1984: 87-89). In these and other miraculous answers to prayers, he is careful to always bear witness

to the saving power of the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

With regards to CG, he also emphasizes the divine dimension: the need for prayer and fasting in bringing revival (Cho, 1984: 96-99, 108).

2.1.4 *Visualized faith*. To provide CL, one has to have giant faith -- as stated so well by William Carey: "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." Cho put such faith in concrete form by formulating the concept of "*visualization*," to enter the "Fourth Dimension" (Cho, 1979: 30-36; 1984: 18-24, 105-107).<sup>12</sup> To "visualize" is to envision an *objective* (called "dream or vision") as clear-cut as possible (Cho, 1979: 30f). Two personal examples have been repeated often: foremost is his own first experience of praying specifically for a *table* made of Philippine mahogany, a Mitsubishi *chair* with wheels and an American-made *bicycle* very early in his ministry for which he was ridiculed until the answers actually came (ibid.: 19-25; 1983: 19-25; 1997: 162-165). The other is that of a spinster who got married within a year to a man whose ten characteristics were elicited from Cho's ten questions on who she considers to be her "ideal husband" (Cho, 1979: 26-29; 1983: 29-31).

And in terms of CG, Cho believed in such "visualized" supernatural guidance. When he began to pioneer a church in 1958, he gained a "burning desire" to build the largest church in Korea (Cho, 1979: 31). In 1960, he started to ask God for 1,000 more members each year; in 1969 for 1,000 more members each month; and in 1979 up to 20,000 more per year (ibid.: 31). In 1969, he had the assurance or "substance" even before plans were made that he will be able to build a 10,000-seat church sanctuary at \$5million (ibid.: 34, 191-94).<sup>13</sup> He recalls that in spite of his hesitation to believe in 1974 that he can build a center for CG International (CGI), his request for a "fleece" of \$1million was collected in the exact full amount in just one Sunday (Cho, 1997: 98f).

Then in 1984, he also envisioned to build an additional 15-story building for \$10million, expand the Prayer Mountain for \$3million, and enlarge the existing sanctuary by building a larger church complex around it for another \$10million (Cho, 1997: 171f). In 1988, he visualized the establishment of the nationally circulated *Kuk-Min Daily* newspaper with a Christian Section, which has become the third largest circulation daily in Korea (Hong, 2000a: 82). He also got the assurance in early 1991 that his church will reach 700,000 members soon (Cho, 1979: 36). In all these, what was visualized looked almost impossible to be achieved; yet they all came to pass!

2.1.5 *Persistent Boldness*. Once Cho has visualized a dream or

vision, he then proceeds to act on it, preach it and teach it with courage and determination. To prove that he believes it, he shares it with every opportunity: "I speak about it to everyone at all possible times. By speaking thus, I am releasing power, as it says in the Bible" (followed by quoting Mark 11:23, NIV). "If that speaking is joined to the voices of the congregation, that power becomes multiplied" (Cho, 1997: 170f). On personal level, such boldness is expressed by planting "seed-faith" through giving an amount that shows one's belief that it will be done (cf. *ibid.*: 1979: 157-169). He teaches that by faith when people give through tithing, they will receive blessings from God and become prosperous (1980: 27-41).

For CG, Cho teaches that the vision must be carried everywhere, in Cho's terms, "pregnant within the pastor" as a "24-hour-day business" (Cho, 1997: 173f). He testifies, "The growth of our church does not depend on my physical presence. It depends on the capacity of my dreaming and my faith – wherever I am" (*ibid.*: 174). Such persistent boldness to do "immediate and urgent action" is well recognized in CL studies (Weber, 1968: 242; Czovek, 2002: 173-175; cf. Engstrom, 1976: 118). CL consists not of a spur-of-the moment occurrence, but of a patient persuasive process that challenges others to labor for the realization of the desired goals.

Yet what makes this CL mark more prominent in Cho's case is the *innovative* and *controversial* nature of his vision and message. People normally do not welcome new ideas and projects and tend to oppose them. So pioneering CL entails more courage to stand and fight for what one believes is "from God" or "right." Such leaders need to have the courage to bet on their ideas, take calculated risks and act accordingly. And through their example, they inspire others to follow their vision and strive for excellence and greatness. So Cho had to often overcome the fear of rejection and present his new ideas and goals, even if not many even among his close associates immediately accepted them.<sup>14</sup> Later his steps of "bold faith" were vindicated and they followed his directions in the end.

2.1.6 *Articulate oratory*. And just like others gifted with CL (cf. Shamir et al, 1994: 25; Smith, 2000), Cho's other God-given gift is his speaking ability or rhetorical skill. In order to project authority and influence others to follow the vision of CL, the ideas and messages have to be *verbally* and *publicly* articulated with understanding and clarity.<sup>15</sup> Effective communication skills attract people to pursue the leader's personal and organizational goals.

According to a survey (Myung, 1990), over 90% of YFGC

came to church mainly to hear Cho's preaching. Cho is a gifted storyteller who can tell narratives in a very dramatic and captivatingly detailed manner so that hearers feel as if they are at the scene. A certain Deaconess Yi says that Cho's sermons made her feel as if they are "God's living words;" and a certain Deaconess Chang testifies that his sermons are specifically for her (Hong, 2000a: 72).

Cho is also known to be fluent in many languages (English, Japanese, German and French), adding to the church's view that he is an extraordinarily gifted pastor (Hong, 2000a: 74).

Another researcher characterizes Cho's messages as "simple, with much use of examples, no theoretical framework, delivered with speedy pronunciation and a high level of self-confidence" (Kim Chang-kyu in Hong, 2000a: 73). Hong observes: his preaching "involves strong and exact pronunciation, tone, various accents and clear and simple sentences... He also makes the best of gestures and facial expressions to effectively communicate his sermons" (ibid.).

Hence these six gifts project Cho to be a "charismatic leader" with supernatural endowment.

### 2.2 Congenial personality

Secondly, almost instinctive and intuitive to CL is their magnetic *personality* that gains people's loyalty. They project dynamism, charm and enthusiasm so that they exercise the power of inspiration and command over members, bordering on cultic control (Engstrom, 1976: 40f).

2.2.1 *Positive self-image*. CL's alluring attraction is known to be based on their positive self-concept (Engstrom, 1976: 83-94). Cho recognizes this himself, so he clearly teaches this to others: would-be leaders must have a change of heart or attitude: "to grow out you must grow in" (Cho, 1984: 16f). They must change their self-image, getting rid of the burdens of poor appearance, poor education, poor self-discipline, poor family status, poor abilities, and poor health; instead they can turn these into steps to well being and success through "positive thinking" (Cho, 1980: 43-56; 1984: 24-30).<sup>16</sup>

2.2.2 *Intensive self-confidence*. The personality of CL exudes immense self-confidence, displaying high levels of expectation, dominance and strong conviction (cf. House, 1977). It is not enough to believe that one has been called by God to be a pastor and is carrying out God's mission for him. S/he also has to have the ability to project confidence by saying it is so and by living accordingly. Cho confidently shares that one of God's gifts for him is boldness (Cho, 1979: 42).

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

Corollary to this is Cho's passion and enthusiasm for his ministry (Hong, 2000a: 71). CL requires one to be passionate about what s/he is doing. Such leaders do not speak in monotone about their dream and mission in life. They breathe it, study it, talk about it, and teach it (Covey, 1990). Cho invested time in praying and thinking about his goals and took confident action to be sure that others will share his passions also.

### 2.3 Consistent spirituality

Then comes the third set in the religious CL "gift-mix" that has to do with a person's spiritual discipline. It is the outward measure of one's determination to have integrity of character and fitness for the long haul. Like most Korean pastors and yet exceeding them, Cho has lived a life of strict self-discipline and hard work. Cho himself clearly understands that the pastor's *personal*, especially his/her *spiritual disposition* is a key factor that affects the life and growth of his/her church. So he emphasizes this right in the first chapters of his books (cf. Cho, 1983: 1-34; 1984: 15-30; 1997: 1-12).

2.3.1 *Personal discipline*. One's faith and confidence has much to do with his/her integrity and self-mastery. Integrity is the ability to keep the promises that one makes to oneself; CL values one's self-respect more than the recognition of anyone else. Related to this is one's self-mastery, to control one's own desires and impulses. Thus, one must be able to continually check if his/her actions are aligned with his/her principles and values.

Cho believes in the importance of intimate communion with the Holy Spirit, since the latter is his "senior partner" in ministry; so he teaches this to all his leaders (Cho, 1997: 119-134; cf. 1984: 117). He claims that he has the habit of rising very early each day and spending at least one hour with God before doing anything else (ibid.: 130-134). He has taken periodic prolonged retreats, sometimes to the Prayer Mountain. He also prays and dreams (with 60% of his prayer times) in tongues (ibid.: 131). This kind of self-discipline extended also his family time, diet, exercise regimen, etc., and even to the way he learned foreign languages (ibid.: 131f).

With such a lived example, he has been able to encourage and teach his members to have similar spiritual experiences. When his members experience such themselves, it adds to their perception of his charisma and intensifies their loyalty to his ministry, thereby contributing to CG (Hong, 2000a: 71, 84f; cf. Hong, 2000).

2.3.2 *Humble honesty*. CL entails humility and honesty before one's constituents. A basic CL's spirituality is to keep promises,

fulfill expectations and make factual statements (cf. Engstrom, 1976: 39, 44f). Since no one is perfect, one must be ready to accept his/her limitations. But even with the above kind of spiritual discipline, it is still not easy to admit one's weaknesses and sins to others. Yet Cho has been able to overcome his pride, which may be rooted in his 10-year "wilderness experience" of being very sick (1964-73) by which he learned what it means to be truly broken: "it is no longer I who live, but Christ" (Gal. 2:20) (cf. Cho, 1997: 44f).

So Cho claims, "If I make a mistake, I confess that mistake before the congregation. I never cover up an error I might have made." At first, "I died inside." "But after many years of telling my people the truth, their love for me is stronger than ever. They no longer think I'm perfect, but they think of me as honest" (Cho, 1984: 36f). At one time he apologized to an elder who felt hurt for not being asked about his appointment to head the Missions Board for Europe (ibid.: 95). He is also quick to forgive (ibid.: 117-119). No wonder his charisma increases even when he commits mistakes!

2.3.3 *Loving service.* Another mark of CL's spirituality is their great dedication to serve people. They work hard to serve those whom they lead so that they can develop their talents, grow as persons and work in service themselves. In short, CL is also "servant leadership" (cf. Covey, 1990; Price, 1989; Richards & Hoeldtke, 1988; Thomas, 2002; Wright, 2000).

Cho believes that *love* is the highest motivational force in life, which can free people from stress and anxiety, and thus can keep them physically well (Cho, 1983: 147-181; cf. 1997: 140f). This he shows in his preaching: the goal in his sermons is "to introduce Jesus and help people succeed in life" (ibid.: 147-160). His intention is not to be eloquent, but to turn his pulpit into a counseling room, to meet the needs of his audience and to uplift and encourage them (ibid.: 156-160; cf. Camic, 1980). He has also used proper rituals in the dynamic worship services to provide psychological upliftment for the member's spiritual needs (Hong, 2000a: 84; cf. Carlton-Ford, 1992).

Cho also trains his associates and trainees in "authority with love," to not "exercise too much control over their members" (Cho, 1997: 93f). The leader's authority is not based on the power of his/her position or on human maneuvering. In YFGC's case, they follow Cho, "because they know I genuinely love them. If I make a mistake, I publicly confess it to them and ask them to pray for me. When a pastor can be open to his congregation like that, they will respect him and obey him. In Christianity all authority must be based on love, just as God's authority over us



is based on love" (ibid.: 94f). Hence he also teaches, "I never encourage our members to become dependent on the cell leaders, because that would be as bad as Communism or the Moonies. Anything that destroys personal independence and the individual's personality and responsibility is from the devil. God never created us to be puppets" (ibid.: 94).

His servanthood extends to his unselfishness to share the principles and practices that he found to be helpful for CG, without trying to control or strongly influence the decisions of the pastors and churches he ministers to. This is what effective CL is all about.

Further, CL supports and even establishes social services, and encourages those they lead to give back to society. After all, YFGC began as a ministry among the urban poor in 1958 (Cho, 1979: 171), and by 1986, "the educational level, occupation and living conditions of the members... show that it is the church of the middle lower classes" (Choi, 1986: 122); some "redemptive lifts" at least among its members have occurred! Meanwhile various social ministries have also been set up over the years in YFGC under Cho's CL (see 3.4 below).

*2.3.4 Simple lifestyle.* Effective CL entails living a simple lifestyle that reflects one's commitment to the cause that one is living for. Unlike many televangelists and pastors, Cho testifies that he lives a "simple yet comfortable lifestyle" (Cho, 1984: 37, 119). Although he receives much donations for personal use in the various conferences and crusades where he had been invited to speak, he has refused to "live like a king." He says, "My heart's desire is to give" to those in need, and the remainder to the church's international outreach ministry funds. He is very conscious that he should set an example to his church about giving, as well as that he should avoid being accused of ill motives in ministry (ibid.).

These four marks of spirituality lived consistently have contributed immensely to Cho's CL.

#### *2.4 Competent ingenuity*

Finally in the CL "gift-mix" are the skills involving organizational management: how to use available resources to the maximum effect for one's desired end, and in Cho's case, to affect CG.

*2.4.1 Constant goal-setting.* It is not enough to have faith and visions, but these must be translated into goals, strategies, programs and projects. It is through goal setting that CL motivates others to achieve the vision (cf. Shamir et al, 1993: 583). As goals are reached, and feelings of success prevail, one's charisma increases: "success is more important in the initial attribution of

charisma" (Puffer, 1990) and "nothing succeeds like success."

Cho emphasizes the importance of goal setting in CG (Cho, 1984: 109-111, 161f). Here one needs to find a balance of being both realistic and ambitious at the same time. Realism makes one aware of the natural rate of growth, thus not pushing growth beyond the limits of growth: natural growth comes by increments, so one can't force growth against its inherent nature. Yet to inspire, CL must set goals, which are somehow beyond people's grasp, and in spiritual CL, beyond human capacities, where God's power can be demonstrated.

On setting goals, Cho means the development of five-year plans, with budgets to achieve specific goals (1984: 36, 113-115). Then these goals and plans are consistently communicated to the people, thus giving the whole church a clear sense of direction. From among the crowd, leaders have to be recruited; hence Cho also has an eye to detect informal leaders "who naturally attract others to themselves. Sometimes people who have a knack for communicating with other people make excellent leaders" (ibid.: 50). Then he sees to it that each leader is trained (ibid.: 112f) and has a clear goal and plan; they get this at least through the annual cell leaders' convention (ibid.). He also knows how to motivate these lay leaders through recognition, praise and caring (1997: 135-141).

Hence CL requires one to be a constant strategist.<sup>17</sup> Very early in Cho's ministry, in 1964, while almost dying from an unknown disease, he discovered the Exodus 18 formula of structuring his church in a cell system, whereby he can train and use lay leaders (as non-paid assistants!) to lead multitudes (Cho, 1984: 31-35). And to keep his church financially sustainable, he organized over 2,000 businessmen into a mission fellowship (Hong, 2000a: 81).

2.4.2 *Participatory management.* CL has the confidence to delegate, to share power as much as possible. Though effective leaders may be known for being decisive, superior problem-solvers and good at inspiring people to follow their lead, they know that they must share power with their subordinates, allowing them to make their own decisions themselves by helping them to develop judgment skills rather than by making them wait for the leader's decisions. The more power s/he gives to others, the more s/he will be seen as a visionary leader who is able to focus on strategic issues.

Cho delegates most decisions to his immediate staff, which consists of the assistant pastors and elders. He remains aloof from the routines of the various internal organizations of YFGC. One of his secretaries told Hong: "Cho hardly lectures people.

He delegates most of administrative affairs to his staffs" (2000a: 82). Cho allows his "fellow-workers to make mistakes and learn from them as God does with me" (Cho, 1984: 29).

Avoiding interference in mundane details actually adds to his charisma: "the separation of administrative concerns from the personal attention of the charismatic helps to preserve his or her aura of extraordinariness" (Trice & Beyer, 1986: 144). The social distance that evolved because of the increased size of YFGC may have helped to promote his charisma among his members: "Social distance may not have been deliberately created to generate charismatic images, but the product, a sense of distance and awe, may be a result of the creation of a social charismatic image" (Hong, 2000a: 75).

In fact, he relates to only a relatively small number of leaders who "have others under them who shepherd the cell leaders, and it is the cell leaders who perform the bulk of the ministry of our church" (Cho, 1997: 65). What he has done was just to turn his church into a training center, investing in his people, the ultimate resource! Without direct knowledge of each leader, he just has to see to it that they are trained in the skills necessary to be effective cell leaders, thereby contributing to the goal of CG!

2.4.3 *Media usage.* Moreover, Cho has been able to magnify his charisma by projecting his success through various forms of mass media. Perceived success validates and increases the leader's charisma (Weber, 1968: 241-244; Friedland, 1964; Trice & Beyer, 1986),<sup>18</sup> esp. through the use of media (Wuthnow, 1994). It may not be clear whether success affects the leader's charisma or if one's charisma enhances the success. Yet in Cho's case, it is clear that each reinforced the other (Hong, 2000a: 74f).

His members get to know his biography, esp. his spiritual experiences and exploits, as well as updates of his various ministries, esp. international ones (Cho, 1984: 124-131) in newsletters and periodicals (Hong, 2000a: 75f). They know how many books he has published and translated into various languages. He has a Committee of the World Broadcasting Mission that sends his sermons by radio and television to many countries, such as U.S.A., Argentina, Indonesia, Kenya and the Philippines (ibid.: 76). All these have gained public and even international exposure through various mass media: publications (ibid.: 75f), television (in spite of its high costs, Cho, 1984: 62-67) and radio (ibid.: 67-69).

Therefore, with almost all of these four traits with fifteen sub-traits evidenced "to the max" in his life and ministry, Cho has been an excellent model of CL. Anyone who aspires to CL should try to emulate him in all these qualities.

### *3.0 Reflections on Cho's Charismatic Leadership and Church Growth*

This study proceeds to consider the implications of Cho's CL style and CG model for us to follow in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What is God's will for CL and CG in his visible church on earth in this new generation? Adding on a few more details to the above discussion, may I highlight at least five major reflections.

#### *3.1. Excellent Spirituality.*

Foremost is the *spiritual* quality of CL that Cho displayed in the CG of YFGC. Though only God can read hearts and motives, we can judge Cho's integrity from the fruit of his life (lifestyle!). Based on the pattern of his life in more than forty years of ministry, he has remained humble in spirit, as evidenced by the simplicity of his lifestyle. Pride has not gone into his head. In spite of the success and popularity gained from his CL and CG, he has remained not just humble and simple, but also teachable and servant-like, open and willing to share his experiences and insights with other colleagues.

It seems clear that Cho has used his charisma with a very *spiritual* motive: "in the Spirit" for the glory of God and not "in the flesh" for self-glory. He also used his CL in a most *spiritual* manner: in servanthood for the good of his co-pastors and church members, and not in domination and exploitation for the good of himself and his family.

We can even surmise that in the future, he will remain "broken before the Lord." In the continuous exercise of CL, there will be limits to CG as has been shown by the cessation of rapid increase in membership, perhaps except for biological and transfer growth, and even the possible decline in membership since 1996.<sup>19</sup> He will have to face the growth of nominalism in his church (as is all ready happening in many Korean churches, cf. Hong, 1999) and eventual decline in the spiritual quality of his members.<sup>20</sup> He will have to wrestle with the issues that will arise from the limits to the effectivity of his version of "positive thinking" and "prosperity gospel," as expressed in his *Fourth Dimension* teachings of "The Fivefold Gospel" and "Triple Salvation (Blessings)" (Cho, 1979 and 1983). His parishioners' ill health and eventual death will have to be explained by not only spiritual causes (their lack of faith, and sin), but also natural ones (gradual decay of aging, viral attacks, etc.), which may conflict with his present beliefs so far (cf. Cho, 1980 and 1999). There may also be a possible decline in "signs and wonders" like in other Pentecostal-charismatic churches. These apparent "set-backs" will serve as checks to possible temptations for him to

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

become proud.

Nonetheless, Cho's spiritual leadership enhanced the productivity of his church, since CL elicits greater dedication to the organization and its goals from the constituents (cf. House, 1977; and House et al, 1988: 116). The high quality of his CL has undoubtedly been a major factor in YFGC's growth. Those who aspire to follow in his footsteps must work hard to have those traits in the "gift-mix" that demand spiritual discipline and skills training, and such efforts will be amply rewarded!

### 3.2. Empowering Structure.

Yet beyond Cho's personal quality is his *institutionalization* (or *routinization*) of an organizational structure that may preserve if not outgrow the CG that he has achieved so far.<sup>21</sup> He seems to have solved the problem of possible disintegration that can arise from the inevitable need for succession (cf. Bryman, 1992:71; Conger, 1999: 168-171). In 1964, he found the best possible solution in the lay empowerment model through participatory management by institutionalizing the *cell system*.<sup>22</sup> He views that home cell groups (HCG) is "the basic part of our church. It is not another church program – it *is* the program of our church" (1984: 42).

Through the cell system, he is able to develop a steady stream of leaders for CG and for expansion. For CG, research shows that large churches can maintain high levels of commitment and conformity if they are divided into small homogenous units (Finke, 1994: 8), and Cho affirms that for CG, "the real secret is home cell groups" (1997: vi). And for mission extension, "The expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing its total membership in continuous propagation of its beliefs" (Strachan, 1968: 108).

Yet perhaps above all, the cell system of home cell groups (HCG) provides a structure in which the issue of succession becomes insignificant. Cho asserts: "...this system of home cell groups does not depend on one person. In our church, it does not depend on me. It depends on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, because He is the one who energizes the leaders... Those members don't depend on me; they depend on one another and on the Holy Spirit" (1997: 86). He also says, "Churches should not have to depend on a single strong pastor" (ibid.: 52), and "My church is not the church of Paul Yonggi Cho, although I'm the founding pastor. My church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be centered on my personality. With the cell system, the actual ministry is done on the cell level. Although the people hold me in high esteem and are loyal, they can go on without

me" (1984: 41). He has even empowered each HCG to be self-supporting: each cell has its own collection recorded and dispensed by its treasurer (1984: 49).

So it was not just the high quality of Cho's personal leadership, but also his wisdom to institutionalize the cell system in YFGC that he was able to provide for the phenomenal actualization of his CG goals and also for the continued growth of his church even after he is gone. CL can be institutionalized, so that succession does not become a major issue.

### 3.3. *Constant Renewal.*

Cho's CL has not been static, but dynamic; thus his CG was constantly being renewed through new initiatives that built on previous achievements. Research show that big organizations find it very difficult to respond to prophetic voices, esp. those that will differ from the leader (cf. Hong, 2000a: 87f). Catering to mass audiences, mega-churches will also tend to lose their prophetic voices, because their huge assets have to be protected through "compromise" with government and business interests, including those of their own influential upper class members who benefit from the status quo. Their pastors will tend to mainly focus on comforting the afflicted, and hardly on afflicting the comfortable (cf. Chung, 2001)! Moreover, in a big bureaucracy, decision-making will be based more on rational thinking and efficiency (which is not always negative) but less on affective action and spiritual guidance (cf. Poloma, 1989: 112, 127-138). Yet Cho's CL overcame these dangers, and in fact, YFGC has grown into quite an open and creative church!

Even from the start of Cho's ministry among the urban poor of Seoul, his openness to the Spirit gave him the sensitivity to give contextualized teachings to his people. His messages of "positive faith" helped his ailing and destitute members gain a good sense of identity and hope of life; they can be delivered from spiritual emptiness and material poverty (Hong, 2003: 294, 298). He testifies that his "blessings theology" was developed in the context of suffering and devastation of the Korean War (ibid.: 295). Thereby the poor are able to gain self-confidence and are equipped to labor for the Kingdom of God amidst the needs and hardships of life. They are trained to be leaders, in spite of their low socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

In 1964, he was willing to break Korean church and social tradition: he not only instituted the cell system, but also appointed women to be the cell leaders. He was the first pastor in Korea to actively train and empower women to lead in the church's HCG (Hong, 2000a: 73); in fact, almost all of his first

HCG leaders were women (Cho, 1997: 21-29). Today, women members still outnumber men by about three to two (Hong, 2000a: 70), perhaps because of the tendency of women to be more attracted to CL (Willner, 1984). But Cho has a correct and better explanation: women are better evangelists than men, and his CG is mainly due to women-to-women evangelism (1997: 60f).

Then in 1982, Cho had YFGC start the "Love in Practice" or "Sharing Movement," to provide basic necessities to indigents in the neighborhood, and later to orphanages, homes for the aged and leprosaria. In 1984, the church began to offer free heart surgeries, which later extended to Uzbekistan, Nepal, Cambodia and Ukraine. In 1988, there were three new initiatives: blood donation drive, "Love-Bread Movement" to provide aid to poor neighbors, and Elim Welfare Town (with free technical school for poor youth and free nursing home for the aged) in Gunpo City (Hong, 2003: 304f).

There were other initiatives in socio-cultural fronts in the '80s. A school was started that developed into Hansei University, and Bethesda University grew out of the Full Gospel School of Theology (Hong, 2003: 303). Cho launched "Invitation to Happiness," the first Christian television ministry in Korea, and the *Kookmin Daily News*, the first Christian daily newspaper in Korea (ibid.: 305). In 1995, YFGC set up its Environmental Preservation Division, and in 1996, YFGC began the first satellite mission on Korea's communication satellite *Moogoonghwa* (Rose of Sharon). Later, the church also launched Internet Broadcasting Department for cyber-evangelism and now Video on Demand (VOD) (ibid.: 303). Lately, in 1999, they established "Good People," the first church-based non-government organization (NGO) in Korea, mainly to support wholistic "mission to unreached Third World countries...with the love and righteousness of God" (ibid.: 308).

So, Cho's CL has seen to it that YFGC is constantly renewed. CL and CG are not static, but dynamic. Given Cho's openness to creative initiatives, there are grounds for optimism that he will continue to use his CL to keep YFGC on the path of constant church renewal in the years to come. Aspiring leaders need to do likewise.

#### 3.4. Social Impact.

A significant distinctive in Cho's CL has been the "beyond CG" impact that he has made in Korean society. Through the effective CL of Cho, YFGC has been able to not just increase in quantity of church membership, but also in quality of social

transformation. The main highlight may be in May 3, 1996, when Cho was awarded the *Moogoonghwa* medallion, the highest medal given to Korean citizens, primarily for his contributions to the free heart operation movement (Hong, 2003: 305).

When the concept of CG and phenomenon of mega-churches (not so different from centralized structures of denominations) became popular in the late '70s, many evangelical church leaders, esp. from the Two-Thirds world have been very critical of it. Most critical are those who see CG as the product of a Westernized non-wholistic approach to mission that is not concerned for the *discipling* (read: *transformation*) of societies, viewing evangelism and church development as the main (if not the only) goal of the Great Commission.

More recent Pentecostal theologians have raised this concern, too (e.g., Dempster, 1999; Petersen, 1999). Of note is: "Pentecostals must take seriously the critique that, in spite of their significant contributions in areas of social concern within their communities, there has been little conscious effort to provide a horizontal linkage from their experiments in ways of coping with life in their own context to a larger forum where they would have more direct access to the means of cultural production. If Pentecostals are content to form only their own 'substitute societies', they may forfeit the opportunity to participate in radical change or structural transformation" (ibid.: 110f).

Yet it looks like that Cho has successfully led YFGC to move in a more wholistic and transformational role in society. In many modern cities like Seoul, the main wholistic issue is the growing gap between the rich and the poor. It seems that from YFGC's "sharing movement" and its various social ministries from the early '80s onwards, Cho's CL has led to a CG that has been able to equip the rich to serve the poor and to empower the poor to serve others. Through media, esp. the *Kookmin Daily News*, the nation (not just the church) has been mobilized to help thousands of boy or girl-led households, donate blood, and volunteer in medical service corps; in 1992, 1,300 civic groups joined in a national "Kind Neighbor, Bright Society" movement to develop kindness as a way of life (Hong, 2003: 305f), and in 2001, a "donation culture" was promoted through feature stories in the newspaper (ibid.: 307).

Through the two universities, YFGC can develop young people in various professions to provide Christian leadership in society. In 1998, a model "ecological garden" was set up on the banks of Han River in Yoido, which formed "ecological schools" to teach on environmental issues. Since 1999, the church-based NGO "Good People" has sent food, fertilizers and medicine to



North Korea; rebuilt schools in India; funded AIDS prevention program in Kenya, sent emergency relief to Kosovo, Turkey, Afghanistan, etc.; aided flood victims in Korea; and many other social work with national and global reach (Hong, 2003: 308-310).

Cho has shown that effective CL involves bold and wholistic moves, which can outgrow CG goals and can impact society. All that is needed is for CL to expand its horizons, equip its members to develop their gifts and empower them to make their dreams come true. Bold faith combined with good managerial skills (esp. in delegation) will richly reward the leader.

### 3.5. *Multiplication Potential.*

Given the above distinctives of Cho's CL style, we can look forward to greater impact of his ministry. He has shown that there is almost nothing impossible that a spiritual and effective CL can do for CG, church renewal, social transformation and even global impact. As Cho has emphasized, the most critical gift for leadership is "dreams and visions" that are set into goals, which are constantly upgraded as they are achieved! May I show an example of what a possible "vision" that church leaders can consider in our time.

Recent mission practitioners are offering the further "higher goal beyond CG" of *church multiplication* through "church planting movements" (CPM; e.g., Garrison, 1999; Lim, 2003) or "house church networks" (HCN; e.g., Banks, 1989; Simson, 2001; cf. Ringma, 1994; Padilla, 1999; Montgomery, 2001). They view the centralized mega-churches (and their latest forms, like "cell churches" and "Groups of 12 (G-12)" (cf. Neighbor, 1990; Comiskey, 1999) to be unable to use the full potential of the *whole* church to evangelize and transform the *whole* world, particularly the 10/40 Window.

Theologically, CG perpetuates the "Babylonian captivity" of the church in Christendom structures inherited from centuries of theological emphasis on the "priesthood of a few (read: the clergy)" rather than the Reformation breakthrough into a servant-church structure based on the biblical teaching of the "priesthood of all believers." CG thinking continues to require hierarchical power centers (best exemplified in the papal system of the Roman Catholic Church) that are opposite to the egalitarian partnership structures of house-churches (or "Basic Christian Communities," BCC) and facilitative functions of servant-leadership in the New Testament (cf. Kung, 1965; Dunn, 1985; Lim, 1987 & 2003; Simson, 2001).<sup>23</sup> Unless these mega-forms of CG truly *decentralize* to let each cell function fully as autonomous

(self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating) churches, with their own leaders, budgets and programs,<sup>24</sup> God's church will continue to deprive almost 90% (the unequipped laity) of the church from exercising their priesthood, prophethood and rulership in Christ.

Strategically, the centralized and hierarchical structure of mega-church type of CG has been disadvantageous to the full growth of the church and its mission. Cho's empowerment model seems to be not empowering enough! In his ideals, each HCG "has limited size, usually not more than 15 families," which is good, but he continues, "It has a definite goal set by my associate ministers and myself. It has a definite plan, given to each cell in written form. It has definite leadership, trained in our school" (1984: 42; cf. 1997: 113f), which reveals a dependency that hinders their self-developing potential for Kingdom expansion and church multiplication. There is a big difference between training leaders and training followers (Hiebert, 1989; cf. Getz, 1984).

The main limitation of mega-church type of CG is its hindrance to effective world missions, on at least two counts: (a) it models mere *addition* growth for mega-cities, instead of more church *multiplication* for national saturation evangelization; and (b) it absorbs a disproportionate amount of resources (time, money and energy) for church development, and discourages increased spending for wholistic cross-cultural missions; if they do try, their short-term and resident missionaries have been ineffective to plant contextualized and transformational churches. The mega-church model of CG has grown mainly in secularized and urbanized societies, which allow religious freedom. But it seems to have been ineffective in planting indigenous churches and CPMs neither in the 10/40 Window nor even in the saturation evangelization of their own nations.

Actually Cho has begun to do a type of "church multiplication" in more recent years. Though he pioneered only three churches in his first 26 years (1984: 10), by 1989 he had already 75 churches and mission work in different parts of the world, like Japan,<sup>25</sup> Australia, U.S.A., Latin America and Europe (1997: 47, 79), and a recent report say that he has about 250 churches in Korea and about 650 churches in the world, including some in "closed countries." If any HCG leader wants to become a licensed minister, Cho pays for her/his Bible School tuition, on condition that s/he serves at least three years in YFGC. If later they want to start their own church, Cho helps them financially for the first six months (ibid.: 79f). He does not provide them anything to give to nationals by teaching them to "depend on

God as their total resource;" the nationals are not to depend on foreign funding,<sup>26</sup> so Cho's missionaries are told not to give the impression that they are bringing riches to them (ibid.: 175f). And he believes that this kind of church planting can be done anywhere (ibid.: 174-176)! Hopefully this can be implemented more frequently and more vigorously.

Moreover, Cho also shares the CPM/HCN view that the church meets any time and anywhere: it "meets everyday in factories, schools, offices, homes, restaurants and club buildings..." If the Communists take over and kill the pastors, they cannot destroy the 18,000 cells (1984: 41). He sees that such a system is not just persecution-proof, but also poverty/depression-proof (1997: 84-86)! Yet in his ministry, in spite of his apparent desire to emphasize the decentralized form of the church, with no need for the presence and ministry of pastors, the focus still flows back to his mega-structure and his personal CL! Such is the main danger of CL and huge structures: they tend to create high dependency of staff and members on the leaders and especially the top leader (cf. Conger, 1989; Yukl, 1999)!

Yet given his ecclesiology and openness to the Spirit, Cho may be able to lead his church (and the church worldwide) to a multiplication mode! And the global impact will be very great. The evangelistic and transformational impact of one church of 200,000 members (in CG programs) will almost surely be less than that of 500 churches of 400 each (in traditional *church-planting* programs), and much less than that of 10,000 churches of 20 each (in *church multiplication* movements)! Cho saw this in China (1997: 84), and his CL can help make it replicated all over the world!

#### 4.0 Conclusion

As shown in this study, Cho has served his generation excellently well with this God-endowed CL gifts. His "gift-mix" of the four traits with fifteen sub-traits were of superior quality, making him a charismatic leader *par excellence*. Yet he remained humble and simple, a model of mature spirituality and servant-leadership. He has faithfully used his effective CL not just for the growth of YFGC, but also for the development of many churches worldwide. And the resultant CG of his CL has been of constant internal renewal that has social transformative impact in Korea and the world!

This study has also shown that most importantly, Cho has used his CL to move his mega-church to empower almost 10% of his laity to be HCG leaders and church leaders through the cell system. Perhaps he can use his CL to lead YFGC to its logical or

theological end (empowerment of 100% for NT priesthood) and to its practical or strategic end (mobilization of 100% for CPM missions). May his next goal be “church multiplication,” not just “cell multiplication.” May he train, commission and send most (if not all) of his leaders to plant many more multiplying churches,<sup>27</sup> in Korea and in the non-Christian world!

Or perhaps it is the best that Cho could do in the hierarchical cultural milieu of Korea (his cultural heritage) and the centralized hierarchical system of Christian denominations (his ecclesiastical heritage) in his generation. The challenge for the next generation of those who aspire to church leadership and CG in the post-modern era should be: are we going to continue to develop more hierarchical and centralized mega-churches or make a “paradigm shift” to more egalitarian and decentralized servant-churches (or HCN) for CPMs in the new millennium? May God use Cho’s exemplary CL to inspire us to obey the Great Commission, to bear explosive witness among the nations, so that “the end will come” (cf. Mt. 24:14)! Maranatha!

#### Writer

Lim, David E.: President of China Missions International Philippines

#### REFERENCES

- Banks, Robert. 1980. *Paul’s Idea of Community*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ & Julia Banks. 1989. *The Church Comes Home*. Sutherland: Albatross Books.
- Bensman, J., and M. Givant. 1975. “Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept,” *Social Research* 42: 570-614.
- Bryman, Alan. 1992. *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Camic, Charles. 1980. “Charisma: Its Varieties, Preconditions, and Consequences,” *Sociological Inquiry* 50: 5-23.
- Carlton-Ford, S. L. 1992. “Charisma, Ritual, Collective Effervescence, and Self-esteem,” *Sociological Quarterly* 33.3: 365-387.
- Cho, David (Paul) Yonggi. 1979. *The Fourth Dimension, Vol. I*. Seoul: Seoul Logos Co., Inc.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1980. *Solving Life’s Problems*. Seoul: Seoul Logos Co., Inc.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1983. *The Fourth Dimension, Vol. II*. South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. *Successful Home Cell Groups*. Seoul: Seoul Logos

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

- Co., Inc.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. *How Can I Be Healed*. Seoul: Seoul Logos Co., Inc.
- Cho, Paul Yonggi. 1984. *More Than Numbers*. Waco: Word.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1989. *The Holy Spirit, My Senior Partner*. Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House.
- Choi, Syn-duk. 1986. "A Comparative Study of Two New Religious Movements in the Republic of Korea: The Unification Church and the Full Gospel Central Church," ed. James Beckford. *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. Pp. 113-145.
- Chung, Chai Sik. 2001. "Beyond Indigenization: Toward a Christian Transcendence in Korea," *Mission Studies* 18-1, 35: 61-77.
- Comiskey, Joel. 1999. *Groups of 12*. Houston: Touch Publications.
- Conger, Jay A. 1989. *The Charismatic Leader: Behind the Mystique of Exceptional Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. "Charismatic and Transformational Leadership in Organization: An Insider's Perspective on These Developing Streams of Research," *Leadership Quarterly* 10.2: 145-179.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and R. N. Kanungo, eds. 1988. *Charismatic Leadership: The Elusive Factor in Organizational Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Covey, Stephen R. 1990. *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Czovek, Tamas. 2002. "Three Charismatic Leaders: Part One: Saul," *Transformation* 19.3 (July 2002): 169-182; and "Part Two: David," 182-198.
- Dempster, Murray. 1999. "A Theology of the Kingdom -- A Pentecostal Contribution," ed. V. Samuel and C. Sugden, *Mission as Transformation*. Carlisle: Paternoster. Pp. 45-75.
- Dunn, J. D. G. 1975. *Jesus and the Spirit*. London: S.C.M.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1985. "Ministry and the Ministry: The Charismatic Renewal's Challenge to Traditional Ecclesiology," ed. C. M. Robeck, Jr. *Charismatic Experiences in History*. Peabody: Hendrickson. Pp. 81-101.
- Elliston, Edgar J. 1993. *Home Grown Leaders*. Pasadena: William Carey Library.
- Engstrom, Ted W. 1976. *The Making of a Christian Leader*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Finke, Roger. 1994. "The Quiet Transformation: Changes in Size and Leadership of Southern Baptist Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 36.1: 3-22.
- Friedland, W. H. 1964. "For a Sociological Concept of Charisma," *Social Forces* 43: 18-26.
- Fung, R. Y. K. 1984. "Ministry, Community and Spiritual Gifts,"

- Evangelical Quarterly* 56: 3-20.
- Garrison, David. 1999. *Church Planting Movements*. International Mission Board of Southern Baptist Convention.
- Getz, Gene. 1984. *Serving One Another*. Victor.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. 1977. *Servant Leadership*. New York: Paulist.
- Hiebert, Paul G. 1989. "Training Leaders, Training Followers," *Theology, News and Notes* (June 1989): 23-24.
- Holmberg, Bengt. 1978. *Paul and Power*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Hong, Young-gi. 1999. "Nominalism in Korean Protestantism," *Transformation* 16.4: 135-141.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. "The Backgrounds and Characteristics of Charismatic Mega-churches in Korea," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3.1: 99-118.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000a. "The Charisma of Cho Yonggi and Its Routinization in the Yoido Full Gospel Church of Korea," *Journal of Asian Mission* 2.1: 65-90.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "The Influence of the Reverend David Yonggi Cho's Church Growth on Korean Society," *Charis and Charisma*. Carlisle: Paternoster. (Korean) Seoul: Institute for Church Growth; pp. 291-318.
- House, Robert J. 1977. "A 1976 Theory of Charismatic Leadership," eds. J. G. Hunt and L. L.
- Larson. *Leadership: The Cutting Edge*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. Pp. 189-207.
- \_\_\_\_\_, James Woycke, and Eugene M. Fodor. 1988. "Charismatic and Non-charismatic Leaders: Differences in Behavior and Effectiveness," eds. J. A. Conger and R. N.
- Kanungo. *Charismatic Leadership: The Elusive Factor in Organizational Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 98-121.
- Kennedy, Neil L. *Dream Your Way to Success: The Story of Dr. Yonggi Cho and Korea*. South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing.
- Koenig, J. 1978. *Charismata: God's Gifts for God's People*. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Kung, Hans. 1965. "The Charismatic Structure of the Church," *Concilium IV: The Church and Ecumenism*. New York: Paulist.
- Lim, David S. 1987. "The Servant Nature of the Church in the Pauline Corpus." Ph.D. Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "The Only Way to Disciple Whole Nations: Church Multiplication through Tentmakers." Monograph, Quezon City: China Ministries International-Philippines.
- Maxwell, John. 1998. *Developing the Leader Within You*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998a. *Developing the Leaders Around You*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- McGavran, Donald A. 1980. *Understanding Church Growth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Montgomery, Jim. 2001. *I'm Gonna Let It Shine!* Pasadena: William Carey Library.
- Myung, Sung-hoon. 1990. "Spiritual Dimension of Church Growth: The Ministry Philosophy of Yoido Full Gospel Church." Ph.D. Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary.
- Neighbor, Ralph, Jr. 1990. *Where Do We Go from Here?* Houston: Touch Publications.
- Padilla, C. Rene. 1999. "The Future of Christianity in Latin America: Missiological Perspectives and Challenges," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (July, 1999): 105-112.
- Peters, Tom, and N. Austin. 1989. *A Passion for Excellence*. London: Warner Books.
- Petersen, Douglas. 1999. "Pentecostals: Who are They?" ed. V. Samuel and C. Sugden, *Mission as Transformation*. Carlisle: Paternoster. Pp. 76-111.
- Poloma, Margaret M. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Price, Nelson. 1989. *Servants, Not Celebrities*. Nashville: Broadman.
- Puffer, S. M. 1990. "Attributions of Charismatic Leadership: The Impact of Decision Style, Outcome and Observer Characteristics," *Leadership Quarterly* 1: 177-192.
- Rambo, L. R. 1982. "Charisma and Conversion," *Pastoral Psychology* 31.2: 96-108.
- Richards, Lawrence, & C. Hoeldtke. 1988. *Church Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Ringma, Charles. 1994. *Catch the Wind*. Manila: OMF Literature, & Sutherland: Albatross.
- Schein, Edgar H. 1992. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shamir, B., R. J. House and M. B. Arthur. 1993. "The Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership: A Self-concept Based Theory," *Organizational Science* 4:1-17.
- Shamir, B., M. B. Arthur, and R. J. House. 1994. "The Rhetoric of Charismatic Leadership: A Theoretical Extension, a Case Study and Implications for Research," *Leadership Quarterly* 5.1: 25-42.
- Simson, Wolfgang. 2001. *Houses That Change the World*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Smith, Craig. 2000. *The Quest for Charisma: Christianity and Persuasion*. Praeger Publishers.

- Spencer, M. E. 1973. "What is Charisma?" *British Journal of Sociology* 24.3: 341-354.
- Storr, Anthony. 1996. *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
- Strachan, Kenneth. 1968. *The Inescapable Calling*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Thomas, Viv. 2002. *Future Leader*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Trice, H. M., and J. M. Beyer. 1986. "Charisma and Its Routinization in Two Social Movement Organizations," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 8: 113-164.
- Von Campenhausen, Hans F. 1969. *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*. London: A. & C. Black.
- Wagner, C. Peter. 1984. *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church, Rev. Ed.* Glendale: Regal.
- Weber, Max. 1968. *Economy and Society*, 3 vols. New York: Bedminster.
- Willner, A. R. 1984. *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wright, Peter L. 1996. *Managerial Leadership*. London: Routledge.
- Wright, Walter C. 2000. *Relational Leadership*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 1994. *Producing the Sacred: An Essay on Public Religion*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Yoido Full Gospel Church. 1989. *The 30-Year History of Yoido Full Gospel Church*. Seoul: YFGC.
- Yukl, Gary A. 1999. "An Evaluation of Conceptual Weaknesses in Transformational and Charismatic Leadership Theories," *Leadership Quarterly* 10.2: 285-305.

## NOTES

1. Hong Younggi, Ph.D., is a scholarly participant-observer, being an ordained minister of YFGC who grew up in this church.
2. Hong, 2000a: 86, n. 81. The rates of "conversion growth" and "biological growth" are not given.
3. YFGC also branched off two mega-churches: Eunhye wa Chilli Church in 1981, and Full Gospel Incheon Church in 1983.
4. Holmberg, 1978 shows the New Testament considers the sacred as Christ and the Holy Spirit.
5. Hence, Roman Catholics use "charism," Protestants use "unction," while Pentecostal-charismatics use "anointing." For careful studies on the biblical use of "charisma(ta)," see Von Campenhausen, 1969; Dunn, 1975: 205-297; Holmberg, 1978; Koenig, 1978; Banks, 1980: 93-112; Fung, 1984; Dunn, 1985; Lim, 1987: 137-161.
6. It would be interesting to study the similarities and differences



between the "charismatic effects" of religious figures and the sensational or fanatical "idolization" of teenage pop personalities (like singers, actors, and sports and media stars) and politicians.

7. I am ranking them from the "most inborn" to the "most learnable" traits.

8. Hong, 2000a: 72 notes that he compared the charismatic perception, religiosity and CG, with a sample size of 110 from YFGC, 640 from other mega-churches, 265 from large churches and 245 from small and medium-sized churches.

9. On the significance of spiritual experiences in the emergence of CL among religious leaders, cf. Weber, 1968: 1112, 1117; Trice & Beyer, 1986: 41; Rambo, 1992: 100; and Storr, 1996. In the OT cases of Saul and David, cf. Czovek, 2002:179f; 196f.

10. On Cho's dramatic healing and conversion story, see Cho, 1979: 9-12, 1983: xii-xvii; and YFGC, 1989: 289f.

11. Examples are the "gifts" of biblical scholarship (A. Deissman, F. F. Bruce), theological writing (M. Luther, John Calvin), evangelistic preaching (D. L. Moody, Billy Graham), expository preaching (John Stott, J. I. Packer), hymn composition (Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby), charity work (Florence Nightingale, Mother Teresa), mission mobilization (John Mott, George Verwer), etc.

12. He contrasts this from that of Buddhism and criticizes the influence of Zen Buddhism in the West (Cho, 1983: 75-84).

13. At that time, the Board of elders and 600 deacons objected because the church had only \$2,000 in hand; but with his faith and his church's commitment, they moved to the new sanctuary in Yoido in 1973 (*ibid.*: 191-194).

14. One of his boldest decisions was to resign and move to Yoido in 1969 (Cho, 1983: xviii).

15. Historian on American presidents, Doris Kearns Goodwin notes communication as the most powerful tool of political leadership: "Without the ability to communicate, leaders can possess all the other attributes and still fail to have an impact."

16. He acknowledges that it is similar to Robert Schuller's teaching (Cho, 1997: 159f).

17. Using David's case, Czovek notes, "Charismatic deliverers, if they are to prevail are to be strategists – taking advantage of every opportunity" (2002: 186).

18. Willner, 1984: 13f avers that though mass media may promote charisma more broadly than in the past, they cannot generate charisma.

19. Cho claims 700,000 members by 1996 (1979, 3rd ed.: preface).

20. Weber notes, "If proof and success eludes the leader for long, if he appears deserted by his god or his magical or heroic powers, above all, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, it is likely that his charismatic authority will disappear" (1968: 242).

21. Charismatic leaders and their followers will desire to transform their movements into more permanent institutions. Routinization refers to the process by which the dynamism of CL is translated into the stability of traditional or bureaucratic organization. This is necessary if the charisma of the leader is to be preserved, be expanded and stand a better chance of survival. See Weber, 1968: 241-250, 1112-1117 on how the process of structural development takes place.

22. For a full narrative of this important discovery, read Cho, 1997: 13-29.

23. Thus there was no need for celebrative worship and governing centers among the people of God in each village or city, except three times a year in the temple in the OT. Yet there were no local shrines nor temples in OT times, just as there were no local church structures in NT times. In every city, the "local church" consisted of a fellowship of interdependent leaders (usually called "elders") of house-churches, with no central governing body. Our Lord Jesus, Peter, Paul and Apollos were charismatic leaders, but each of them did not build a centralized nor hierarchical structure.

24. On servant-leadership and servant-structures, cf. Greenleaf, 1977; Schein, 1992; Elliston, 1993; and Lim, 1987.

25. Cho chose an ordinary lady minister to plant the YFGC in Japan with a goal of 1,000 members in five years, and she did it! (1997: 76).

26. Cho himself never asked for financial help from foreign missionaries or churches, even when he was ministering among the poor (1979: 179).

27. Most CPMs nowadays believe that it takes a maximum of three years to disciple a believer to become a disciple-maker (servant-leader of a house-church). The discipler just has to be a few steps ahead of his disciple(s), thus 2 Tim. 2:2 (cf. Jn. 14:12-14; Ac. 20:17-35) can be done in just a few months if not a few weeks!

## A Response to David S. Lim

Wonsuk Ma

### 1. Introduction

Dr. David S. Lim, a prominent New Testament scholar who is deeply involved in mission work in China, is exceptionally qualified to take a deep look at Cho's life, leadership, and his ministry. His recent involvement in the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, has encouraged him significantly to apply his theological insights to diverse mission settings, particularly in Asia. He is a well-informed evangelical scholar with an open mind toward other Christian traditions including Catholicism and Pentecostalism.

In this paper, his goal is very clear: to prove that Cho's charismatic leadership is the key to the unprecedented church growth achieved not only in his Yoido Full Gospel Church but throughout the wider church growth movement.

The main body consists of two major parts: the analysis of Cho's charismatic leadership, and its implications to church growth. The analysis follows four sub-categories that Lim brilliantly chooses (but without any reference, thus, making readers wonder if the categories are his own creation.) These categories are quite informative: supernatural *proficiency*, congenial *personality*, consistent *spirituality* and competent *ingenuity*. Although questions may be raised as to the legitimacy of the categorization, this set has served Lim's argument well.

For each of the major sections, some comments may be in order.

### 2. Charismatic Leadership Traits

In this lengthy section, Lim successfully argues that Cho's leadership style exhibits charismatic leadership. His analysis is

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

not based on a leadership theory, but the categories he has created to examine Cho's leadership. In a more strict sense, Lim seems to argue that Cho's leadership can be labeled as "spiritual charismatic leadership." In fact, Lim's discussion has left a strong impression that each of the four categories of charismatic leadership can be developed into a full-length article in evaluating any charismatic leader including Cho.

In addition, Lim highlights unique achievements of Cho's charismatic leadership, as he proceeds in his discussion according to various categories. One of them is a careful combination of Cho's authoritative charismatic leadership and servant leadership. Lim exemplifies Cho's humility by his frequent confessions of his shortcomings. This indeed is an impressive aspect of his charismatic leadership, especially in an Asian setting where the acknowledgment of one's shortcoming is perceived as a weakness, something that a leader cannot afford to have in the eyes of his or her followers. Evidence of his vulnerability and transparency is also found in his willingness to take risk and responsibility throughout various developmental stages of the Yoido Full Gospel Church.

The second unique characteristic, thus, achievement, of Cho's charismatic leadership, as Lim rightly points out, is the empowering aspect of Cho's ministry and life. This aspect of his leadership has been best seen in his creative cell system. This almost anti-cultural move in a male dominant society has almost revolutionized several areas, and its socio-theological impact should be further studied. For instance, the clergy dominant concept of ministry was squarely challenged, and this is in accordance with the grass-roots nature of Pentecostal theology. As a consequence, the cell system has produced significant "empowerment" affecting many areas including the spiritual, cultural, societal and familial. (Lim's theological interest as observed in the past decade includes concepts such as "empowerment" and "servant," thus; he applies his theological categories in a ministerial setting.) Also Cho's empowering leadership has been historically exhibited through his mentoring role to a host of junior mega-church leaders. It is fair to surmise Cho's empowering charismatic leadership in two specific areas: delegation and mentoring. Personally speaking, these two topics should be carefully studied to present theological reasoning and practical applications for future spiritual leaders.

Third, Lim observes as a unique achievement of Cho's charismatic leadership something that every successful leader and organization struggles with: overcoming the institutionalizing bureaucracy. This is an area where many charismatic leaders

have failed. Thus, a charismatic leader must have an organizational and administrative ability. According to Lim, Cho's charismatic leadership has overcome this historic pitfall. Cho has been able to lead the Yoido Full Gospel Church and other ministries to grow into "open and creative" operations. In fact, although less acknowledged, this is perhaps one crucial area where Cho's charismatic leadership shines best. Lim attributes this success to Cho's constant creative initiatives and innovative approaches including the utilization of new technologies that have become available. This again is what the Pentecostal movement has developed as its trademark in its one hundred-year history.

Lim makes several important observations. First, his view is quite convincing that Cho is not just a practitioner of church growth, but also a substantial theorist. For the latter role, unlike theoretical leaders such as McGavran and Wagner, Cho has actually grown the largest church in the world and produced substantial material and programs to propagate the church growth idea. Second, Lim makes a passing reference to the role of prayer and fasting in Cho's church growth strategies. In my opinion, based on Cho's emphasis on this, the topic seems to be critical enough to be treated separately. Third, Lim highlights the contribution of Cho's "positive" message. Although there is no doubt that this is a hallmark of Cho's message, the concept is better expressed as "proactivity" as well conveyed in Korean. What Cho has confronted through his ministry is the traditional passive image of God and the Christian gospel. The emphasis on "good God" and belief in God's blessing are practical expressions of this theological conviction. Cho's proactive message should not be identified with the "positive belief" prevalent in North America several decades ago for theological and contextual reasons. This almost parallels with the allegation of Cho's message of blessing as "prosperity gospel."

There are several minor points that require further refinement or clarification. For instance, Cho's persistent boldness and visualization of faith appear to be more expressions of Cho's "step of faith" rather than a "given" by God as Lim categorizes. Also Cho's spiritual giftedness includes other charismata such as the word of knowledge through which he "sees" certain diseases healed, and this is publicly pronounced. Nonetheless, Lim is remarkably well informed, especially considering that only a fraction of Cho's books have been translated into English. His analysis is commendable, even though his categorization seems to require further refinement.

Now, having expounded upon various aspects of Cho's

charismatic leadership, a fundamental question remains unanswered: Is charismatic leadership the ideal type among other leadership styles? Does not charismatic leadership have its own weaknesses or so-called "dark side"? We all know too well that any misuse or abuse of charismatic leadership opportunity can result in a devastating situation. In an indirect way, Lim implies potential dangers of charismatic leadership. Nonetheless, it would have been more helpful to make a reference to other leadership styles, so that Lim does not have to create an impression that charismatic leadership is "the" leadership style that God uses. This broader context can place the successful charismatic leadership of Cho in perspective.

### *3. Implications of the Charismatic Leadership to Church Growth*

In this section, Lim further elaborates on the contribution of Cho's charismatic leadership to church growth. Among his fine discussions, Lim shines bright in his theological discussion. (Yes, he is a trained theologian!) He draws his point from the multiplication potential of Cho's charismatic leadership. He definitely sees that Cho's empowering leadership has far greater potential than what has been realized. While appreciating Cho's remarkable achievement in church growth, he proposes church multiplication as an alternative to, and development of, the church growth model. This insight may have come from his theological conviction of the church as God's servant.

It is obvious that Lim is not uncritical of Cho's church growth model. In spite of many significant areas where Cho has exercised the empowering aspect of his charismatic leadership, Lim feels that "Cho's empowerment model seems to be not empowering enough!" What he sees is the potential role of the next generations of Cho who are to develop theological reflections of Cho's legacy. This can be compared with John Wesley's movement, which took Wesley's sermons, testimonies, diaries, and songs and established a fine theological and ecclesial system for succeeding generations. As Lim aptly says it, "Cho has served his generation excellently well with this God-endowed charismatic leadership gifts." This is not only a compliment for Cho, but also a challenge to his followers.

### *4. As Concluding*

The overall impression is rather astonishing to note how well he is informed of the subject matter. Some times, he sounds like an observer-participant of Cho's ministry. Also his careful research based on the good combination of Lim's observation and substantiating references has enhanced the strength of the

paper. His evaluations of Cho and his ministry are objective, particularly coming from the careful observation of a non-western theologian and mission strategist. Since he is not a Pentecostal, he has no inherent obligation to throw a positive light on Cho.

Lim undertakes a courageous task, in spite of few references available on Cho. His bibliography reveals this deficiency, and the translation of Cho's important works appears to be an immediate and urgent task. If Lim is able to produce this fine reflection to bless the church at large, how much more impact would Cho and his ministry have, should there be sufficient number of Cho's titles available in English?

I personally join Lim's prayer for Cho and his ministry: "May God use Cho's exemplary charismatic leadership to inspire us to obey the Great Commission, to bear explosive witness among the nations, so that 'the end will come' (cf. Mt. 24:14)! Maranatha!" And I also offer my prayer that the coming generation will see an increased impact of Cho's life and ministry through continuing efforts of reflections. Only then, will Cho's ministry be truly the world's largest and best.

Writer

Ma, Wonsuk: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines.





**Reverend David Yonggi Cho's Leadership as Manifested in the Spirituality of the Saints of a Full Gospel church**

**Myung-Soo Park**

*1. A New Dimension in the Study of Pentecostal Movement: Testimonial Study)*

The most widely used word in religion during the later half of the 20th century will be spirituality. This is an evidence of human effort to find an escape route from the limitation and constraint of material civilization. As if to reflect this situation, many research on spirituality have been carried out recently. Especially, the religious sociology field of the United States is booming with research on this theme.

This research has the purpose of organizing and analyzing the spirituality of Korean Pentecostal movement. Up to now, many research on Korean Pentecostal movement have been published. However, many such researches have limited themselves on the analysis of Reverend David Yonggi Cho's life and sermons. Of course, no one can deny its importance. Aside from Reverend Cho, it is difficult, if not possible, to explain Korean Pentecostal movement. Nevertheless, there is something that we should treat it lightly in understanding Korean Pentecostal movement. That is the spiritual experience of ordinary Pentecostal believers.

Until this point, we have studied a religion centered on several religious leaders. Along this line, it is important to understand how ordinary believers accepted such leaders' messages. In other words, a study on consumers' viewpoint, which receives such messages, is definitely needed along with existing research on the suppliers, who provide their messages. As consumers' choice is the most important in a general market, the response of ordinary believers is the most important in a relig-

ious market.

I think Reverend Cho understands the market characteristics of a religion more than any other religious leaders in Korea. He says that a church growth-type leader should be able to identify the needs of other people and fill their needs accordingly<sup>1</sup>. In other words, he/she should make an utmost effort to satisfy the religious needs of the believers. What is important to Reverend Cho is not a systematic practice of a religious creed or doctrine but the effort to make poor, sick, failed believers regain the hope and courage. For this, he is speaking of the divine healing, positive thinking and the power of faith.

If so, how have this Reverend Cho's messages been received by ordinary believers? Has his message given people the hope and courage as he intended? In order to answer this question, we have to examine the testimonies of ordinary believers, who listened to and were led by Reverend Cho.

Testimonies take a special importance in the Pentecostal movement<sup>2</sup>. In early Pentecostal worship, a testimony was treated as a very important spotlight. The importance of a testimony in Pentecostal movement is related to the characteristics of the Pentecost. Firstly, the Pentecostal movement emphasizes the religious experience. Neither conservatism, which emphasizes the absolute sovereignty of the words of God, nor progressivism, which understands a religion as an ethics, does not treat a testimony equitably. Both conservatism and progressivism devalue a testimony as a private religious experience. However, the Pentecostal movement regards that a true nature of a religion is its experience and can be explained by a testimony. Secondly, a testimony is a narrative. The Pentecostal movement is a mass movement. The mass illustrates itself through a narrative rather than logic. A narrative can represent the vivid illustration of human life that logic cannot portray. A testimony is such a religious narrative about himself/herself. Through a narrative, the Pentecostal movement developed. The theology of the Pentecostal movement is rather less developed, but its testimony has developed remarkably.

Until now, a testimony has not been used fully as an important resource for a Christian religious study. That is because of the misconception that a testimony is more of a private matter than a formal resource for theology. This is the issue raised by both conservatism and progressivism. However, evangelical theology recognizes this issue and understands the testimony in a new perspective. In evangelism, a testimony does not replace the revelation in the Bible but confirms it. In other words, a spiritual experience does not transcend the sovereignty of the Bible,

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

but it reflects the content of the Bible in today's life in its meaning. On this point, John Wesley understood such religious experience as an important source in Christian theology<sup>3</sup>.

Recently, some theologians began to take such religious experience as an important research topic. Among these is a study of Christianity for the mass public that was started actively by Nathan Hatch in the early 19th century. Dr. Hatch of Notre Dame University opened a new chapter in the study of the history of the 19th century churches by analyzing religious experiences of ordinary believers in his book of "The Democratization of American Christianity. Afterwards, many scholars of church history accepted the religious testimonies and biographies of mass public as important sources of their study to open a new horizon in the study of church history<sup>4</sup>. Especially, this research method has contributed greatly in understanding the early history of American Methodist churches<sup>5</sup>. Also, it largely influenced the study of the Pentecostal movement recently. Professor Grant Wacker of Duke University analyzed numerous religious experiences of Pentecostal believers and made a great contribution in understanding the early Pentecostal movement<sup>6</sup>.

When we study the faith of the Pentecost, it is important to study its leaders. According to the assertion of Marx Weber, a famous German sociologist, all great religions were made and propagated by charismatic leaders. And their movements were systematized and indoctrinated. Weber asserted that a religious movement couldn't continue without going through this process. In this regard, it is meaningful to study Reverend David Yonggi Cho, the founder of the world's largest church.

However, the mentality and spirit of such charismatic leaders are better shown through the religious experiences of their congregational members than through their system or creed/doctrine. On this point, the individual religious experience provides a very important resource in understanding the religious movement. The appropriateness of this approach can be explained based on William James' [Variety of Religious Experience]. He claims that a true nature of all religions can be found in its religious experience, and any creed/doctrine or system is secondary. Thus, whether a religion can grow or not depends on whether its religious experience is dynamic and working or not.

We can find many testimonies through publications of the Pentecost. An exemplar magazine of the Pentecost is [Shinanggye]. [Shinanggye] is a monthly magazine to spread the Pentecostal faith through literary mission. Reverend David Yonggi Cho established a society of literary evangelism in December

1966 and published the first issue of [Shinanggye] in February 1967. It continued to develop afterwards, and it has established itself as a familiar public magazine for Korean churches. Through this magazine, the faith of Full Gospel has spread throughout Korean churches and has the most publication volume among all Christian magazines currently. Through this magazine, stories of overcoming the poverty and miraculous healing have been widely disseminated throughout Korea<sup>7</sup>.

The author would analyze the Pentecostal spirituality based on the testimonies printed in [Shinanggye] after the later half of 1970's and examine the leadership of Reverend David Yonggi Cho through this analysis. The testimonies printed in [Shinanggye] use the real name and detailed addresses of the confessors. Although the majority of the testimonies were from the saints of Yoido Full Gospel Church, some testimonies were from other churches. The testimonies include a variety of class from socially well-recognized people to ordinary people. The author will now characterize the Pentecostal spirituality as illustrated in [Shinanggye] and evaluate the findings in a larger context Yoido Full Gospel Church is world's largest church. It would be so interesting to study what the ordinary congregation members of the church think and how they live in faith. And, furthermore, through this study, the spiritual leadership of Reverend David Yonggi Cho will be revealed.

*2. The starting point of Reverend Cho's ministry: The last hope for solving problems of life*

What kind of people will register in a Full Gospel church? How does Reverend Cho lead non-believers to Christian faith? This point is the important starting point in understanding Reverend Cho's ministry. The motive for registering in the church as shown in the testimonies of [Shinanggye] is to seek a faith in order to overcome obstacles in life. This point is very different from the traditional view that a life of faith is regarded as a part of social life and a means to maintain their social status. In Europe or the United States, as Christianity became the social mainstream, people began their life of faith with the motive to join the mainstream society. According to Dr. Herberg, an American religious sociologist, going to a mainstream church in America meant that they now joining the mainstream society<sup>8</sup>. However, saints of a Full Gospel church join with a strong motive to overcome a life's problem. To Reverend Cho, Christian faith is not a means for a fellowship but a God's answer to a problem in life.

This motive is also distinguished from those of who think

the life of a faith as a means of social reform. Korean Christianity was the forerunner of introducing the Western culture from the beginning. In the early days, Koreans intended to receive Western culture through Christianity. In the early 20th century, when Korea was undergoing a cultural and political upheaval, they sought an escape from the oppression by corrupted officials. During the Japanese colonization, the church was also the front line post for independence movement. Additionally, during this period of time, church was the place to teach Korean language to many illiterate people. After the liberalization, church was also the place to distribute relief supplies after the wars. However, members of a Full Gospel church had a very strong motive to register in the church to solve problems of life with the help of God through meeting the absolute sovereignty rather than this superficial relief. Reverend Cho has always emphasized the powerful God.

A brother(?) of Song, Seon-Won suffered from an unidentified mental illness. He took the medicine and sought relief from a shamanist woman with no use. The doctors told him he needed a brain surgery. The cost was too high to afford, and the success of the operation was not guaranteed. At this time, a district pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church spread the message of the power of the gospel. The mother came to the church as the last resort. "Now let's leave our last hope in the hands of God" A work of God began to manifest in this family. And the brother was healed<sup>9</sup>. We can find many people, who came to a Full Gospel church as the last resort at the last minute "to leave our last hope to God" in the testimonies of [Shinanggye].

A traditional church does not offer any clear solution to people, who are at the end of the rope. Their answer is to take whatever consequences as a fate. In other words, they offer consolation through giving up. However, this kind of answer is very passive at the least. People want more positive and active answer. Thus, people, who were attending a traditional church, left their long-time place of faith and came to a Full Gospel church.

Lee, Myung-Ja was born in a non-believers' home, but she attended Sunday school from the early ages. However, she gave up on living with the faith as she grew up and began to suffer from all kinds of disease. Disease in the lung, stomach, heart, brain... too numerous to mention... She spent 10 years of her life suffering from these diseases. Then, Lee, Myung-Ja started to listen to the sermon of Reverend Cho through a broadcasting program and came to Yoido Full Gospel Church. Not by somebody's suggestion, she came by herself after listening to the program. As soon as she attended the worship service at Yoido Full

Gospel Church, she gained peace and bowed to the Cross. And then she had a firm conviction that her diseases would be healed, if Reverend Cho places his hands on her suffering body parts for a divine healing. Soon after, Reverend Cho allowed her wishes and she was set free from diseases.<sup>10</sup> We can see how Lee, Myung-Ja, who used to have a traditional faith, thought that she found an answer to her problem through Reverend David Yonggi Cho's sermon. I believe this was the main reason for many believers to leave their church and come to a Full Gospel church.

Another reason to attend a Full Gospel church is boredom from routine life of faith. Kim, Young-Hee is a Christian from her early ages and a medical doctor, who are licensed in the United States. To Kim, Young-Hee, the lively faith of Reverend Cho and Pentecostal believers was a challenge. Their lives were full of vitality, but her life was not. "I am the same Christian, yet why is it that I can not live fully like them?" This thought made her to attend their congregation and receive the baptism by the Holy Spirit. This experience changed her life of faith fundamentally<sup>11</sup>. Many people, who have not felt the dynamic faith in a traditional church, have transferred to a Full Gospel church for their life of faith.

In fact, the faith of Full Gospel is a challenge to the superficial Christianity. To superficial Christians, a faith is just a formality and a system. However, this kind of faith lacks the dynamic. Suddenly, they begin to be skeptic about the religion that they believe in. They desire to clarify what they believe in more. At this moment, the faith of Full Gospel let them know of a detailed, realistic spiritual experience and challenges them to have such a faith.

Among the motives to come to a Full Gospel church, there are some mystic factors. A dream is one of the factors that influence the religious life of Koreans. Many Koreans believe that a dream contains a spiritual meaning. Christians are not exceptions. Many Christians think that God reveals His will to us through our dream. Lee, Soo-Jeong, who translated the Bible for the first time in Korean, heard a voice, "My blessing is found fully in the Bible" in her dream. And the first elder of Yeondong church. Ko, Chan-Ick, became a Christian after hearing the voice of "who are you?" in his dream. This common-class spirituality is often found in the motives to come to a Full Gospel church.

While a TV-drama-series entertainer, Moon, Sook, was being despaired upon the death of a revered person, she was evangelized. However, she ignored soon after. Then, suddenly, she heard a hymn in her dream. At first, she did not know if that

was a hymn. From that point, she began to attend the early morning worship service at a local church, and a week later, she came to Yoido Full Gospel Church. "From the moment of hearing the first sermon, she "burst into tears endlessly with a heart-felt excitement." Then one day, she was to receive a hands-on healing from the pastor, and the pastor said "Ah! This is the face." Afterwards, the pastor explained that she had the face that appeared on the pastor's prayer for the sick. Moon, Sook regarded this encounter as the evidence that God loves her<sup>12</sup>. Here, we can see that the ultimate cause for Moon, Sook to attend the Full Gospel church was her dream.

When we analyze the motive for the saints to register at a Full Gospel church, we can see that many of them sought some answer to their life problems. They begin the life of faith in order to solve an impending problem such as a sickness or a business failure. Of course, there are cases of pursuing a life of a deeper faith or problems of death. However, the majority of the cases are to deal with an impending problem in life. The sermon of Reverend Cho is always detailed and vivid. He desires to provide a detailed, specific answer to these people, who are suffering from these problems. This point of view is a pattern of religion definitely different from conservative religion, which regards the life of faith as a sort of social activity, and progressive religion, which treats it as a social reform movement. The spirituality of a Full Gospel church can only be understood better with the premise of a desperate reality.

### *3. Reverend David Yonggi Cho as a spiritual trainer: "Cry out"*

To Reverend Cho, a spiritual life is not the purpose by itself. Reverend Cho teaches in his sermon the necessity of a spiritual warfare in order to solve human problems. The saints of a Full Gospel church continues to make a diligent, spiritual effort in order to solve their problems. Reverend Cho also teaches that the problems of life are not limited to things that can be seen only. That is, at the bottom of all problems, there lies a spiritual problem. One must have a spiritual warfare in order to solve this spiritual problem.

This spiritual warfare often requires all-night prayer, fasting prayer, and hands-on prayer. Chung, Si-Sook of Chicago Full Gospel Church testifies the following. "I have desperately relied on God's answer, praying all night. Receiving hands-on prayer. After a week, while praying, The Holy Spirit was moved, granting me a fire baptism and the gift of speaking in tongues. Halleluiah!"<sup>13</sup> This process forms the spirit of the Pentecostal faith.

One of the biggest characteristics of Full Gospel Church

prayer is “crying out prayer”. This prayer starts out with calling the Lord 3 times, “Oh, Lord, Lord, Lord.” The Biblical basis for this practice is found in the verse “Call to me and I will answer you...” (Jeremiah 33:3) Believing in this verse, the saints of Full Gospel Church cry out to the Lord in unison. This prayer is not to tell the Lord but to hang on to God. As Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God, it means to request so much as to wrestle with God. In fact, the churches in Korea have practiced a “crying out” prayer since the Great Revival Movement of 1907<sup>14</sup>. However, the “crying out” prayer is perceived as a style of Full Gospel Church presently.

Here, we have to understand that the spiritual training of the Pentecost is distinguished from the spiritual training of the Monastery. The monastic spiritual movement of the Catholic Church is achieved by the self-actualization through a silent meditation. This requires a long training. However, praying and crying out to the Lord with a specific wish while desperately hanging on to God manifest the spiritual training of the Pentecost. If the former emphasizes the inner self-reflection, the latter brings out the desperate inner wish by crying out to the Lord. If the former has been regarded as a spiritual practice of the elite, the latter can be perceived as a spirituality of the masses.

In spiritual experience of those saints of Full Gospel Church, a prayer laying a hand on the saints by the ministers takes a special position. The experience of the Holy Spirit often is revealed through the laying of hands of the gifted ministers. The husband of Chung, Ji-Sook of Chicago attends the church regularly, but his faith was not rooted firmly. Reverend Choi, Ja-Shil (The mother in law of Reverend David Yonggi Cho) was leading a revival congregation at Chicago, and Chung, Ji-Sook invited Reverend Choi to have her husband receive a special hand-on prayer by Reverend Choi. Then, her husband received the fullness of the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues<sup>15</sup>.

These phenomena are revealed especially in Yoido Full Gospel Church. To them, Reverend David Yonggi Cho is regarded as a special minister with special gifts of the Holy Spirit, and receiving a hand-on prayer by him is regarded as a special privilege. A majority of the saints of Full Gospel Church has this belief. Lee, Myung-Ja was growing in a Christian faith, but she gave up on living the life of faith. She became very ill and began to seek the faith again in a Full Gospel Church. One month after she attended Yoido Full Gospel Church, she desired to receive a special hand-on prayer by Reverend David Yonggi Cho. She had this faithful thought, “I wish to have a spiritual counseling and a hand-on prayer from Reverend David Yonggi Cho”, and with



this clear goal, a firm faith that a special prayer by Reverend David Yonggi Cho would solve her problem began to bud in her heart<sup>16</sup>. She received a hand-on prayer on September 24th, and the demon, which brought the sickness in her for 10 years, was driven out.

Since the early churches, a traditional faith that the Holy Spirit can be spread by a hand-on prayer has been conveyed. However, the Catholic churches of the Middle Ages did not believe in the transmission of the gift of the Holy Spirit by a special hand-on prayer so much as by sacred ceremonies. The reformed churches drove out the evil spirits by the proclamation of the words of God since the Reformation. However, the spirituality of the Pentecost emphasized the transmission of gifts of the Holy Spirit more on a hand-on prayer than on some Christian ceremonies. Since the charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit is handed down by gifted individuals, the Pentecostal spirituality often determines the Pentecostal spirituality. While the Sacrament of the Catholic churches brought a formality of the Christian faith, the charismatic Pentecostal structure makes it vulnerable to fall in a religious fanaticism to be obsessed by the leader without a cause.

The Full Gospel Church stresses the importance of all night prayer as all other Korean churches. It is known for sure when the all night prayer started in a Korean church. However, there were all night prayer meetings often at revival movements in the early 1990's. A majority of revival meetings were held in the evenings, and after the worship service, a cry-out prayer continued. When the saints were moved and filled with the Holy Spirit, this meeting continued into an all night prayer. As a matter of principle, an all night prayer was a special occasion. However, the Korean churches held an all night prayer regularly at Friday nights after the liberation from Japan. That is, a Friday all night prayer took its place as a part of Korean Christian faith. Full Gospel churches stress the Friday all night prayer very strongly. Many saints of Full Gospel church experience a grace of the Holy Spirit during the all night prayer.

One other special kind of prayer of Full Gospel church is a fasting prayer. The fasting prayer was emphasized by Reverend Choi, Ja-Shil especially and put into practice widely. Reverend Choi, Ja-Shil established a fasting prayer hall at a mountain in O-San-Ri, and she trained the saints for the Christian life and healed their illness through a fasting prayer. The saints of Full Gospel church go to the O-San-Ri prayer hall when they are faced with difficult problems. There, they fast, cry out in prayer, and receive a hand-on prayer from pastors. Then, they

experience a wonderful grace of God. Reverend Choi believed and preached that most of the sickness is caused by over-eating. Thus, a fasting practice can deal with the cause of the sickness. Nevertheless, they also experience speaking in tongues in many cases along with the divine healing<sup>17</sup>.

In the center of the spiritual life of the saints of Full Gospel church is the prayer. Full Gospel churches believed in crying-out prayer, all night prayer, a hand-on prayer, etc. to solve the problems of the saints. This characteristics is distinguished clearly when compared with the practice of the Catholic Church or other traditional reformed churches. In the center of the spiritual life of the Catholic churches is the Sacrament, and the words of God takes the center of the spiritual life of the traditional Reformed churches. On the contrary, the essence of the Pentecostal faith is the prayer. If the Sacrament and the Words of God are regarded as an indirect approach in the relationship with God, the prayer is a more direct approach. A prayer is a conversation with God. The saints of Full Gospel church converses and receives His answer through the prayer.

In addition, the prayer is a kind of spiritual warfare to the saints of Full Gospel church. The power of Satan in the air is harassing people with sin and diseases; however, the saints fight the scheme of Satan through prayer and fasting. When, Kim, In-Seong received the Christian faith, his father was hitting his daughter severely. People said, because the god of Jesus came into this family, the ancestral gods of this family was infuriated and afflicted so many hardships. Kim, In-Seong confronted the demons of drunkenness and debauchery with prayer in tongues, fasting prayer, and all night prayer to drive them out. However, the situation did not improve. On the contrary, the hardships of the family worsened. Kim, In-Seong thought, "this is the last stand of the demons." To the saints of Full Gospel church, a prayer is neither a kind of meditation nor a cultivation of the character. It is a desperate warfare with the demons. If one does not understand this desperate viewpoint and situation, he/she cannot fully understand the spirituality of the saints of Full Gospel church.<sup>18</sup>

The reason that Christians can win in this spiritual warfare is because the God of Christianity created the heavens and the earth while the other gods are demi-gods. Kim, Bok-Hee, who believed in a shamanism and strongly denied the Christian faith, finally gave up on the life of shaman, because Christians gathered around her neighborhood to pray. She said afterwards "because it was a confrontation between a demi-god and the almighty God, the demi-god could do nothing but to be defeated

in the state of groggy without even having a real fight Soon after Kim, Bok-Hee collected all dress clothes and equipments that she used for her practice of shamanism and burnt them all. This burnt stuffs amounted to five carloads. Then, she destroyed the temple for her god of shamanism in her backyards.<sup>19</sup>

The most important thing to remember in the spiritual warfare is not just the faith on the almighty God as the master of the heavens and the earth but also the faith on Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In fact, the Bible says God gave all the sovereign authority to Jesus. And Jesus promised us to give back His authority as His disciples. Thus, the important thing in the spiritual warfare of the saints is the power in the name of Jesus Christ. When Reverend David Yonggi Cho prays for the divine healing, he teaches us to say "you, filthy Satan, I command you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be driven out from the saint."

The power of the name of Jesus is the strongest weapon in the spiritual warfare. Kim, Do-Hyung, who is a dentist and an elder of Yoido Full Gospel church, says that he can see the power of bad spirits is harassing the patient under an operation. Then, he commands, "filthy demons, come out in the name of the Lord, Jesus."<sup>20</sup> Then, in many cases, the patient regains the faith, and the operation is finished successfully.

The saints of Full Gospel church understand the life of faith as a sort of spiritual warfare. Traditional belief of Koreans is that the ancestral gods of many generations would be infuriated if they leave them and convert into worshipping other god. Thus, having a Christian faith was risky. The saints of Full Gospel church are trained to prepare for this process of converting a non-believer. They are told to tell the new converts, "there will be attack from Satan, do not be afraid of the attack, but stand strong and confront it. Never give up and be defeated."

Reverend David Yonggi Cho makes the saints spiritual warriors. To him, a prayer is not a means of self-cultivation but the most powerful weapon in the spiritual warfare. He defeats the power of bad spirits and receives the help of the Holy Spirit. Reverend David Yonggi Cho makes the saints of Yoido Full Gospel Church go through a variety of rigorous prayer training. It is because this is a process of spiritual warfare for solving the problems of life.

#### *4. The Turning Point in Spiritual Life of Full Gospel: The Baptism by the Holy Spirit*

The essence of the Pentecostal spirituality is the baptism by the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal movement does not regard the Christian faith as a simple transcendental faith. They regard the

Christian faith as something that they can touch, feel and experience. The Pentecostal movement emphasizes this experiential faith. Reverend Cho lets the saints of Full Gospel church know that there are the second grace of God, called the baptism by the Holy Spirit, and requests them to pray for it. In other words, there is a clear objective for the saints of Full Gospel church that cannot be found in other saints. That is the baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Most saints of Full Gospel church strives their utmost for reaching this goal. This is the very point that distinguishes a Full Gospel church from other traditional church. Being a saint of Full Gospel church is the end itself but only the beginning to reach this goal. Reverend Cho continuously preaches the saints about the Holy Spirit, and the pastors of each parish lead them in this direction. Additionally, they teach them that, if they were not armed spiritually through the baptism by the Holy Spirit, they would go through hardships. All these elements make the saints of Full Gospel church aggressive and strong.

For the saints of Full Gospel church to receive the baptism by the Holy Spirit signifies reaching the goal of Full Gospel church. This spiritual experience comes to them as an inexplicable warm feeling. Eom, Eui-Ja, the director of a marriage company, describes the feeling as "a light that has not been seen in this world shines and gives the feeling of being uplifted in the air." In most cases, the baptism by the Holy Spirit is manifested with this realistic and specific spiritual experience. Kim, Jin-Hwa, says that "a hot fire of the Holy Spirit touched me" while in her desperate prayer. This experience has been reported as the most common experience of the baptism by the Holy Spirit<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the baptism by the Holy Spirit is often explained as a "fire" baptism.

Often, the baptism by the Holy Spirit is manifested as a light. A famous Korean musician, Jeong, Myung-So, was attending a revival congregation in the United States. The preacher at the revival meeting prophesied that a person in this congregation would receive a great grace of God. After the congregation was over, he tried to fall asleep. Around 2 A.M., "a white light and a red light began to shine on me strongly. The brightness was something that I could not handle..." and he arose quickly<sup>22</sup>.

The Holy Spirit is experienced not only as a warmth but a great joy that cannot be described. Jeong, Myung-So, who gave the above testimony, continues, "An indescribable joy sprang up. It was a kind of drunk feeling." This joy was soon expressed in hymn. After experiencing the grace of the Holy Spirit, hymns began to come out of his mouth continuously. By himself, he

started singing Hymn, "Jesus is All the World to Me" over and over. "In many cases, after receiving the grace of God, a favorite hymn is found, and the hymn is sung repeatedly."

In the Pentecostal movement, the baptism by the Holy Spirit is accompanied by speaking in tongues. If the warm, hearty, indescribable joy is the inner evidence, speaking in tongues is more objective evidence. The musician, Jeong, Myung-So, after experiencing the grace of the Holy Spirit testifies, "A strange voice comes out of my mouth." While awakened from sleep, "a strange words come out of my mouth, and I am talking with God through such words."<sup>23</sup> Chun, Byung-Hyuk was on his way to home from an all night prayer on the 20th day of attending the church. Then, he experienced "a feeling of my heart swollen with joy and floating in the air. Out of so much joy and thanks, I prayed to God. Then, I started speaking in tongues and cried uncontrollably."<sup>24</sup> "Speaking in tongues is a specific evidence of the Pentecostal saints, having received the baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues has a special meaning to the Pentecostal saints. In fact, the experience of the Holy Spirit is not unique only to the Pentecostal movement. In the earlier Holiness movement, such experiences have been reported. In the testimony of Reverend Bresee, the founder of the Church of Nazareth reported that the Holy Spirit comes down as a fire<sup>25</sup>. Reverend Lee, Myung-Jik, called the Godfather of Korean Holiness Churches, experienced the same phenomenon<sup>26</sup>. However, the biggest distinction between the Holiness movement and the Pentecostal movement is that the former does not emphasize speaking in tongues while the latter stresses it. The Pentecostal saints are not satisfied with inner joy alone. They needed a more clear outside evidence beyond such testimonies. This is the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. To them, speaking in tongues further verifies the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

In the past, evidence was not needed in a religious life. In the world that believes in the absolute sovereignty and believes the supernatural, a religious life was only natural. However, the modern society is not so. People no longer accept the traditional worldview. On the contrary, the atheism and agnosticism are widely accepted. In this situation, the thing that clearly the validity of the Christian faith is the evidence that verifies the existence of the spiritual world. The Pentecostal movement asserts that speaking in tongues is the first evidence of the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Through this evidence of speaking in tongues, people accept the existence of the spiritual world. Ironically, speaking in tongues was never treated so valuable in the history of

Christianity. This is because in this world of mistrust the evidence that God is living with us is needed<sup>27</sup>.

The Pentecosts believe that speaking in tongues is not only the clear evidence of the living God but also the specific evidence that God loves them. A notorious punk, Jeon, Young-Seok, managed to commit all the sins in the world. Nevertheless, he was led by his Christian wife to Yoido Full Gospel Church and attended all church meetings with zeal. "The Lord gave me the baptism by the Holy Spirit as the sign of His love for me."<sup>28</sup> "Jeon, Young-Seok was shunned by the society. However, with the baptism by the Holy Spirit, he began to have a firm conviction that he is a child of the absolute sovereignty. This conviction served as the turning point in his life.

Speaking in tongues is an evidence of the baptism by the Holy Spirit; however, it has been also the subject of mockery. Reverend Choi, Ja-Shil of Yoido Full Gospel Church was criticized by fellow students of theology to stop speaking in tongues. Out of disappointment, she stopped praying in tongues for a while. However, her heart was saddened. She thought that being ashamed of a spiritual gift is to be ashamed of God. From that point on, she began to pray in tongues courageously and loudly again. Then, her heart was refreshed and the sadness in her heart disappeared<sup>29</sup>.

*5. Reverend David Yonggi Cho, the Guide for New Life: The life of Being Filled with the Holy Spirit*

Reverend David Yonggi Cho teaches the saints to live the life of being filled with the Holy Spirit after receiving the baptism by the Holy Spirit. If the baptism by the Holy Spirit is a one-time deal that the saints experience after regeneration, the fullness of the Holy Spirit keeps the state of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. People, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, change their hearts, act in a changed way, and have a firm conviction in their acts. The Pentecostal spirituality is to keep this life of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

First of all, the experience of the baptism by the Holy Spirit is manifested by an absolute repent for sins. This is a typical characteristic of the modern revival movement. The spirituality movement of Full Gospel church is handed down this tradition. Here, an interesting point is that many people repent wholeheartedly despite the fact that the sermons of Full Gospel church are not so strict preaching of the law of God, In many cases, they do not receive the Holy Spirit after repenting, but the work of repentance is revealed when they receive the Holy Spirit.

Won, Chang-Yeon was advised to go to a theological school

by Reverend David Yonggi Cho and was agonizing over this issue. He prayed earnestly over this problem. Even not 30 seconds after the prayer, he felt that his heart and body were warming suddenly, and the joy and hope filled him. He started to shed tears and discharges from the nose. He felt as if the world turned upside down. At this point, all his sins were revealed in front of him vividly. He could see his stealing of peaches in the backyard gardens of his neighbor even. He then started to repent on it one by one. He was cursing the life in general, but now that he was filled with the Holy Spirit<sup>30</sup>, all he could think of was thankfulness. Won, Chang-Yeon repented of all his sins only after receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a profound difference in the Puritan spirituality and the Pentecostal spirituality. The Puritan spirituality starts from a strict preaching of the law of God. To the Puritans, the laws make one realize his/her sins, but the gospel makes him/her realize the forgiveness of God. The Puritans believed in this metaphor of the law being the needle and the gospel being the thread<sup>31</sup>. They believed that, as the thread cannot be used anywhere without the needle, the gospel was ineffective without the law. However, the Pentecostal spirituality forces us to experience the grace of God first and to repent for our sins by the grace. It is not through our effort to repent, but it is the forceful inner work of the Holy Spirit for us to repent.

This forceful work of the Holy Spirit was revealed to Kim, Il. Kim, Il started to attend Full Gospel church at the advice of his friends while suffering from a dreadful disease. Kim, Il did not know anything about the Christianity or the concept of sins that he had committed. Then, he received the grace of God on the first day of going to the church. "The day of receiving the grace, the day that the Lord showed his love for me was my attendance at Full Gospel Central Church. After hearing the pastor's sermon and the communion service, a strange thing happened to me. Tears were pouring, and the place of pain was wrapped in a strange warmth. I felt that Jesus was pardoning my sins. Since this day, I could taste the peace and joy of my mind that I have never felt before."<sup>32</sup>

In many cases, the experience of grace by the saints of Full Gospel church is similar to the first grand recognizance movement as described by Reverend Jonathan Edwards. A child of the Puritan, Reverend Jonathan Edwards, believed that the grace of the Holy Spirit could only be received in the process of long time repentance. However, the phenomenon manifested at North Hampton, the place of his ministry, differed greatly from his previous conception. A person without any special encounter in

the church experienced the grace on his first attendance at the church. Thus, he called this phenomenon as the surprising work of God. Through this realization, Reverend Edwards realized that the conversion is not the condition for the experience of the Holy Spirit but the result<sup>33</sup>. The experience of grace is not due to the consequence of human efforts but the gift of God. Furthermore, he understood that it is not obtained by a long time preparation but by a momentary experience.

The most important change in this experience of grace is a change in heart. The testimony of Kim, Il continues, "What is so amazing is that I used to dislike people but was changed to love them<sup>34</sup>. I also began to feel a compassion for people doing evil things. I wanted to share the love that I was feeling to debt collectors, and all our conversation with them ended in a joy and thanks." The heart of rock changed to the heart of fertile soil.

There are cases of receiving the grace suddenly. On the other hand, it is experienced through a long process of repentance. Gil, Woon-Dok started the life of faith from his early ages, but it was superficial only. He thought of Jesus at his desperate moments. He came out forward, crying out "Oh, my Lord, take this sinner." He atoned for his sin through fasting and repented completely. As the result, he had a strong conviction that he became a child of God<sup>35</sup>.

Here what we see is the variety of the experience of the Holy Spirit. In some cases, there is repentance after experiencing the grace of the Holy Spirit. And yet, in some cases, there is the experience of grace of the Holy Spirit after the repentance. The former is more common among the saints of Full Gospel church. However, the latter is also common. Here what I would like to mention is the variety of the Holy Spirit, and one cannot categorize it all in one case. The Holy Spirit is like the wind, and He transcends the limit of a human.

The saints of Full Gospel church, who experienced the grace of the Holy Spirit, live a life much different from previous life pattern. The inner experience of grace is related to an outside change in the life pattern. With so many cases in the point, the experience of grace by the saints of Full Gospel church was criticized for not being connected to their lives. However, according to the testimonies as manifested in [Shinanggye], the experience of the Holy Spirit by the saints of Full Gospel church has influenced their lives greatly, and this was manifested in a specific change in the deeds of the saints.

Jeon, Young-Seok was a former gangster. However, since he received the grace, his hearts were changing as well as his behavior. "My life was transforming day by day. Liquors, tobaccos,

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004



bad temper, doubts, negative thinking, etc. began to leave its place in my life—the former gangster, Jeon, Young-Seok, was crucified on the Cross as well, and the changed Jeon, Young-Seok resurrected and emerged out of the tomb that confined the gangster—People, who used to know me, began to pay attention to me—Then, I definitely testified, “there was no one in this world to save and change me, but Jesus changed me completely<sup>36</sup>.”

Kim, Yong-Soon had a bad habit of stealing from his early ages. He grew up in a poor family, and he used to steal the stuffs at his workplace and used to resell them to buy things that he needed. He used to go to a church often, but he never entered deep enough the realm of grace. His superficial life of faith and stealing habit continued side by side. Then, one day on his sleep, the voice of Philippians 2:13, “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” was heard. After this encounter, his life of faith began to change, and his soul was made pure and faithful. He could be set free from his stealing habit after all. Kim, Yong-Soon makes the following testimony. “What I am most grateful is that my greed for other's belongings disappeared completely since after believing in Jesus. To me, this change is the biggest miracle among all miracles<sup>37</sup>.”

The most specific change in the life of Korean Christians is that they quit smoking and drinking after becoming Christians. Full Gospel church continues with this tradition of Korean churches. The father of Kim, In-Seong exhibited a very bad temper while being drunk. He would beat and harass his family members, who were converted Christians. He would target Kim, In-Seong, who lived the life of faith diligently. Kim, In-Seong embarked on all night prayer, fasting prayer, and prayer in tongues eagerly. Then, one day, her father lost his job and was led to a church by his daughter. However, he could not give up on his drinking habit. While he was praying in fasting at O-San-Ri fasting prayer hall, he could quit drinking and smoking all in five days. Having lived the life of bad temper while intoxicated, he began to show a new change<sup>38</sup>.

When a Christian begins the life of faith, the biggest obstacle is to keep Sunday as the holy day (in reformed church, it means the Sabbath day.) When one decides to live the life of faith after receiving so much grace, the obstacle of keeping Sunday holy tests their faith. This is a task that a Christian has to overcome. If one does not overcome this stumbling block, he/she falters in faith. Jeong, Eun-Young seemed to have all kinds of emergency happening on Sundays. An urgent business crept up, and her company seemed to reserve her a work to be done on Sundays.

Her life of faith began to disintegrate. Soon after she became quite sick. At this time, a voice said to her, "You have not kept Sundays holy and have become a friend with the fallen world, and do you still want my blessing?" Immediately, she repented for her sin and vowed anew at O-San-Ri fasting prayer hall. She then made all effort to keep Sundays holy<sup>39</sup>. Keeping the Lord's day holy is a clear guideline for the saints, who have received the grace and are living under the grace.

Many saints testify that unreasonable fears began to disappear after receiving the grace. Traditionally, Korean women have obeyed their husband and mother-in-law. Nevertheless, many wives, who experienced the grace of the Holy Spirit, are persecuted at home. The mother-in-law oppresses the daughter-in-law saying that a hardship is happening in their home because of her faith. The husband threatens to divorce his wife, who does not listen to him anymore. Nevertheless, the saints, who experienced the grace of the Holy Spirit, do not yield to these persecutions. The case of Kim, Hee-Jeong is in the point. She testifies, "A power or a force to pull and push sprang up in me."<sup>40</sup> "With this force, they declare their faith and overcome their persecution. One of the characteristics of the Pentecostal faith is their power manifested through their faith. This is not only the power for the mission of spreading the gospel but also the power to overcome the obstacles in life.

*6. Reverend David Yonggi Cho, the Problem Solver: the new meaning for divine healing, blessing and Christian life*

As it has been pointed out above, the characteristics of the Pentecostal spirituality are the spirituality of problem solving. Common problems of life? Probably, they are sickness and poverty. These two problems are more of basic human issues. Nevertheless, when people solve these problems somewhat, they face another problem. They begin to ponder the meaning of life. The fivefold gospel and threefold blessing, that Reverend David Yonggi Cho preaches, suggest a specific answer to these intrinsic problems in life.

Hardly anybody questions that one characteristics of Full Gospel church is the divine healing. The most important aspect of the ministry of Reverend David Yonggi Cho is the work of this divine healing. In making Yoido Full Gospel Church as it is today, divine healing contributed the most importantly. Most of the testimonies printed in [Shinanggye] are the records of divine healing experience. To the saints of Full Gospel church, sickness is not just a physical matter. They believe that the body belongs to the world of a deeper dimension. Thus, they regard that heal-

ing of sickness is possible by the help from the fundamental world.

Many saints of Full Gospel church reckon that sickness is brought about by the punishment from God for their disobedience. They presume that God punishes them with a sickness if they are not living the life of faith as it is supposed to be. In many cases, after coming to a church for a while, they begin to wander about again, and soon after they neglect keeping the Lord's day holy and giving the tithe. Thus, they believe that it is the healing process to realize their mistake and to return to God.

Kim, Jae-Yeol was a fervent saint of Full Gospel church. However, his husband did not have a faith and suffered from a sickness. Moreover, he could not stand his wife's life of faith. She started a fasting prayer to avoid the persecution. Several days later, during the early morning prayer, all her sins from the early ages have been shown to her like a movie clip. Seeing that she realized all the roots of problems were with her. She desperately repented. After the fasting prayer, she returned home to find that her husband was healed<sup>41</sup>. It shows that the repentance of the wife is very much related to the healing of the husband.

In another cases, the saints of Full Gospel church believe that the sickness provides the opportunity to show that God lives. If a family member is suffering from a sickness, this is interpreted as the result of a persecution of the faithful life or disobedience to God's will. They believe that they can prove God's living during the healing process. Thus, the saints of Full Gospel church are not afraid of sicknesses, but instead they try to make this occasion the opportunity to prove that Christianity is for real. In fact, many non-believers in the family accept that God lives during this healing process and convert to Christianity.

The wish of Jang, Seung-Hee was to have a life of faith with the husband. The husband severely harassed Jang, Seung-Hee for her faith. Then, her husband got bed-ridden. She says, "God gave us an opportunity. My husband got jaundice, and all his body turned dark yellow." She thought that it was the opportunity to show her husband that God lives through a miraculous healing. Then, she led her husband to a church. The husband first objected, but he attended Yoido Full Gospel Church. Soon after he had a hand-on prayer by Reverend David Yonggi Cho, and his disease was cured<sup>42</sup>.

The saints of Full Gospel church claims that they experience a divine healing amidst Reverend Cho's healing prayer. Especially, Reverend David Yonggi Cho lists several specific diseases during the healing prayer after his sermon, and then he proclaims a divine healing in the name of Jesus. Many saints are

healed at this time. Kim, Myung-Hwan had his right eye so weak that he could not see progressively. During an evening worship service of Yoido Full Gospel Church, Reverend David Yonggi Cho proclaimed, "the person with weakening right eye, stand up at this time. You are healed tonight." Immediately, he stood up and thanked the Lord. He was healed. Several months later, he decided to have an eye examination to see if this improved vision was for real or just a temporary illusion. Nevertheless, his eyesight was already restored, and a very small letters were seen clearly<sup>43</sup>.

The divine healing of the saints of Full Gospel church is related to a fasting prayer in many cases. Many people suffer from a sickness, and then as the last resort, they come to the fasting prayer hall to fast and pray for the divine healing. Some people seek such means for healing, because they cannot find any other solution but to rely on the absolute sovereignty. Some other people come to the fasting prayer hall to show their resolution to rely on God absolutely without any dependence on modern medical treatments. Whatever the circumstances are, the fasting prayer period is an endless tug-of-war between God and the self.

Again, in most cases, many people experience a divine healing through this spiritual warfare. Kim, Kwan-Ock suffered from bronchitis asthma for a long time. He went up O-San-Ri fasting prayer hall, following the suggestion of her friends. She felt ashamed of her dire situation for a while, but she started fasting and praying continuously. After a week, she felt a twitching in her stomach and ran to the rest room. As soon as she sat on the stool, a fistful lump of feces was excreted, and she spotted a lump of worms (probably parasites) in the bloody stool. After this incident, she was cured of the asthma but all other miscellaneous diseases<sup>44</sup>.

When we look at the divine healing experience of the saints of Full Gospel church, most people relate it to the experience of the Holy Spirit. The work of divine healing is revealed when a person experiences the fiery Holy Spirit, atones for his/her sins, and has now a firm conviction of becoming a child of God. Some people criticize that the divine healing of Full Gospel church is only a cure for a disease and does not relate to a change in life habits. Nevertheless, when we read the testimonies of the saints of Full Gospel church, we can see that these criticisms are only superficial. The work of divine healing as manifested in Full Gospel church does not end in the cure for the disease itself. It is a spiritual experience that is manifested along with the firm conviction that they became children of God.

Kim, Nak-Hyung, a dentist and an elder of Full Gospel

church, testifies his divine healing experience. He had to take a leave of absence at his junior year in a dental school due to tuberculosis. At this time, he was led into a tent church meeting of Seo-dae-moon Full Gospel Church. There, he witnesses a miracle of divine healing. And he prayed that the same miracle happens to him. "Without a single doubt, I implored God to heal me just like the person in front me. Then, the heaven opened and came into my body to operate on me. In a split second, my tuberculosis was completely cured—the fire of the Holy Spirit came into me like a flood." Along with this healing experience, he continued to experience the grace of God, forgiveness, peace, joy, etc.<sup>45</sup>. In the testimony of Kim, Nak-Hyung, we can see that the grace of divine healing does not end in curing of the disease itself.

Although it is not a typical practice of the saints of Full Gospel church nor endorsed by Full Gospel church, some quit on medical treatments including taking medicines as a token of faith on the power of God and pray until they are healed. Choi, Kyung-Sook is a deaconess. But She was suffering from bad heart, kidney, and liver troubles. She could not live without taking medicines. Then, one day, a pastor of Full Gospel church suggested her to quit taking medicines and be cured by power of the Lord. With faith, she reduced the amount of medicines taken, and finally she quit taking medicines at all. Above all, she was cured by her faith. Then, one day, she became troubled and felt the pain of the past. She took the medicines that had not expired yet. Then, let alone being cured, a terrible pain engulfed her. She testifies, "I threw out all the medicines and started praying earnestly with a complete repentance." She thought God was punishing her for her disbelief. She was cured afterwards<sup>46</sup>. However, these cases are not common phenomena among the works of divine healing but a special case.

The saints of Full Gospel church yearn after material blessing as well as the blessing of divine healing. Reverend David Yonggi Cho always stresses the blessings of soul, all things, and health. Especially, the material blessing is in the center of his ministry. Traditional churches shun from material blessing; however, Reverend Cho takes it very positively. He believes that good God will give good things to His children.

A faith that is closely related to this blessed faith is the faith of tithe. Reverend Cho teaches that tithe is like sowing a seed of blessing. It is so called the law of sowing. Just like a seed has to be sowed to reap the fruit, tithe has been offered to get the material blessing. Korean Christians believe that blessing is passed through tithe. Ahn, Jeong-Soon heard Reverend Cho's sermon that tithe is the stock seed for blessing, and she determined to

offer the tithe faithfully. As the result, she and her family received abundant material blessing<sup>47</sup>.

The saints of Full Gospel church believe that the tithe keeps the home in blessing. Park, Seong-Hye is well off economically. However, she did not offer a wholesome tithe. She thought grudgingly the tithe was a waste. However, as much as she did not give the tithe offering, her family suffered from disease, accident, and miscellaneous incidents. Afterwards she decided to offer a wholesome tithe. After that, hardships were kept out of her family, and their blessings added day by day. Thus, she believes the tithe is the forbidden fruit of modern society. As someone, who eats the forbidden fruit, is kicked out of the Garden of Eden, someone, who does not offer a wholesome tithe, gets further drifted from the blessed garden<sup>48</sup>.

The saints of Full Gospel church also believe that keeping Sundays holy and sabbatical brings a material blessing. Especially, there are cases of those, who are in the trading business and can make more money on Sundays than other weekdays. So, they are tempted to open the business on Sundays as well. Yoo, Ki-Jong is the case in point. He worked on Sunday, for there was more income on this particular day for him. Soon after his life of faith became only superficial and it seemed that he was making more money in the beginning. However, his business was bankrupt soon. Afterwards, he repented that he did not keep Sundays holy and sabbatical and opened a new business called "Six days Bookstore". It was so named to mean that the business is open for six days except Sundays. His business prospered more and more, and he experienced a great blessing. He reasoned that this was the blessing of keeping Sundays holy and sabbatical<sup>49</sup>.

Diligence is as important as the tithe and keeping Sundays holy. Harvey Cox already published his analysis that the sermon of Reverend David Yonggi Cho, which emphasizes on the diligence, has contributed greatly in making Koreans reach the middle class<sup>50</sup>. If Korean *Minjoong* theology emphasized liberation from poverty through the reformation of social structure, the Pentecostal movement made the poor reach the middle class by living diligently. On this point, it can be said that the Pentecostal movement contributed to the modernization of Korean society.

Hwang, Sook's business hit the bottom and was on the verge of bankruptcy. Then, she listened to the sermon of Reverend David Yonggi Cho. Reverend Cho preached always, "If you want blessing, sow the seeds of faith." She then decided to give the offerings generously according to his sermon. Reverend David Yonggi Cho speaks of the principle of sowing and grow-

ing. That is, one has to work hard. Hwang, Sook then made all her efforts in her business and in her life of faith and endeavored to teach what she learned to others. She could succeed again in her business. She traveled around the world and came to the conclusion that Korea is the best country to live for her<sup>51</sup>. Numerous testimonies printed in [Shinanggye] are the stories of people, who have fallen into despair and regain the courage to start over, making into the middle class. In this regard, the evaluation of Harvey Cox seems to be justified and appropriate.

As much as a material blessing is important, the blessing of home is also important. A home is a fundamental, basic unit of society. If the home is not peaceful, one cannot speak of blessing. Kim, So-Ja was severely beaten by her husband because of her Christian faith. She planned 10 days to pray at O-San-Ri fasting prayer hall. On the seventh day, her husband appeared in her dream. However, the news of what she was hearing was that her husband became more violent. Then, on the ninth day, her husband came to the prayer hall with their daughter and promised to live in the Christian faith together. Afterwards, her husband became a very faithful saint of a church<sup>52</sup>.

Here, we can see the spirituality of Full Gospel church. This is a spiritual warfare. Traditionally, Korean churches have told the wives to obey their husbands and convert their husbands with faith and patience. That is, the wives were to change the hearts of their husbands with faith. However, in the majority of cases, this advice ends in a failure. However, Full Gospel church understands this kind of confrontation as a spiritual warfare. They advise to confront the issue courageously with faith. Here, the confrontation is not of physical but of prayer. It is to earnestly request a deliverance from the world of darkness by changing the heart.

The Pentecostal faith restores the meaning of life. People become despondent over disease, business failure, etc. When they experience the grace of the Holy Spirit, they ponder what is the purpose of life and how to live a life of fulfillment. The Pentecostal believers, the experience of grace are not a simple mysterious experience, but they accept it as the sign that the absolute sovereignty recognized them. Especially, many Pentecostal believers understand speaking in tongues as the specific sign of being a child of God. The conviction for the one, who was abandoned by the world, to become a child of God makes him/her live a new changed life for the fulfillment.

In many cases, the spiritual experience changes not only the vertical relationship with God but also the horizontal relationship with other people in a different dimension. Those, who re-

ceived the grace, get a grateful feeling for the people, who led to the Christian faith. When one is faced with disease and failure, the relatives and friends avoid him/her. At this time, Full Gospel church uses its strong organizational structure to spread the gospel and pray together. Kim, Young-Sik expresses his gratefulness for this love during the times of difficulty, "when I think of those, who showed so much concern and love more than my blood brothers and parents, I can not help but shedding tears of thankfulness."<sup>53</sup> "When a Full Gospel church finds people in distress, they spread the gospel and go to the fasting prayer hall together. This practice impresses those people in distress greatly and changes their hearts. And they believe that they now became a new member of this community.

Full Gospel churches have grown with the urbanization of Korea. Koreans traditionally have lived in the farming and fishing communities. As modernization progressed, large cities have been formed. Seoul Metropolitan area is the exemplar case. People, who came to Seoul by himself/herself, had to go through a period of loneliness, socially. This feeling of loneliness becomes more severe as they become desperate due to diseases and failures. During this period of transition, Full Gospel church gave them a sense of belonging. A church was an oasis in the desert for them.

Many religious sociologists claim that the most important function of a religion in modern society is the meaning of personal life and the sense of social belonging<sup>54</sup>. The realization that I became a child of God through the experience of grace offers a new meaning for life to many wandering people of modern society. At the same time, the church offers them a deep sense of belonging to a community for many such lonely people. This is an experience that they cannot find anywhere in the world outside the church.

*7. Analysis: The Characteristics of Spiritual Leadership of Reverend David Yonggi Cho*

From the above, we have examined the leadership of Reverend David Yonggi Cho through the analysis of the spirituality of the saints of Full Gospel church as revealed in the testimonies of [Shinaggye]. These testimonies show us the typical spiritual life of Pentecostal believers. Most of the saints of Full Gospel church start out their spiritual life amidst desperate environment. This can be sometimes sickness, or business failure, or a discord in the family. These people, who registered with Full Gospel church as their church, strive to solve their life problems with all they have. The most typical endeavor here is prayer, all night

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004



prayer, fasting prayer, prayer in tongues, etc. These prayers are often cried out (to some people, this may sound like shouting), and this practice is believed to be due to the spiritual warfare against bad spirits encountered during the prayer.

During this process, the most important characteristics of the Pentecostal movement, the baptism by the Holy Spirit, comes down on them. This is accompanied by a fiery hot feeling and speaking in tongues. Through these experiences, they began to have a firm conviction that they are now recognized by God. This religious experience is then continued in their everyday life. Most saints, who experienced the Holy Spirit, changes their hearts from stubbornness to gentleness and make important resolutions to cut the tie with previous evil life habits. That is, they quit drinking and smoking, keep Sundays holy and sabbatical, offer a wholesome tithe, and work diligently.

The experience of Holy Spirit solves the problems of the saints specifically. To most saints, the largest problem is sickness, and they experience divine healing at the same time as receiving the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Along with divine healing, blessing is important in Full Gospel faith. Reverend David Yonggi Cho always speaks of the principle of sowing and reaping, and he stresses that offering wholesome tithes, keeping Sundays holy and sabbatical, and living a diligent life are to sow the seeds of blessing. Many saints of Full Gospel church testify that they received blessing through this sowing. Through these process and experience, the saints of Full Gospel church are convicted of the faith that they are children of God, and they are deeply involved in the faith community called Full Gospel church.

Among the testimonies of the saints of Full Gospel church, we can see that the gospels of regeneration and the Advent among the fivefold gospels of Reverend David Yonggi Cho are not mentioned as often. Both gospel of salvation that makes the saints agonize over sins and the grace of forgiveness and the gospel of the Advent that desperately longs for the second Coming of Jesus are not seen easily. I conjecture that the gospel of salvation is weakened by the strong desire for the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the hope for the Advent is not so compatible with the pragmatic gospel of blessing of Full Gospel church.

We would like to point out several important characteristics of the spirituality manifested in the Pentecostal movement and the ministry of Reverend David Yonggi Cho. Firstly, the spirituality of Full Gospel church is the spirituality of primitive religion. Many religious scholars understood already the appearance

of the Pentecostal movement as the resurrection of primitive religion. Harvey Cox, a religious scholar of Harvard University, has said that speaking in tongues is a primitive language and that a miracle is a primitive holiness. As a matter of fact, a primitive religion has been regarded slightly as superstitious in the existing society. However, the primitive religion is captivating the minds of the common people. The primitive religion deals with the problems of sickness and disaster more specifically than more advanced religion. Reverend David Yonggi Cho deals with the primitive problems of people that existing advanced religion neglected to focus on.

Some religious scholars classify a religion as formal and informal types<sup>55</sup>. A formal type religion is seen clearly in existing advanced religion. This religious practice emphasizes ethical and social responsibility as well as theological theories. However, the human religious desires are not satisfied with this formal type of religion. Thus, even people, who belong to a formal type religion, seek some informal type elements. The informal religion is passed down to us as a folk religion. Angelical religion, dream interpretation, astrology, miraculous healing, etc. are the examples. Currently, the formal religions are losing its foothold while the informal religions are prospering in the United States. Reverend David Yonggi Cho can be understood in that he accepted the informal elements of a religion and made the Christian faith more approachable for the masses.

Secondly, the spirituality of Full Gospel church is the spirituality for the masses. The spiritual life of Full Gospel church is different from traditional monastic spiritual life. The Monastery reaches the self-actualization or enlightened sanctification through a long-time silenced meditation. However, the spirituality of Full Gospel church is a crying-out prayer, often seemingly "shouting prayer". The public masses would rather cry out to pour out something that they keep inside them than think about and train themselves through a meditation Reverend Cho has developed the spirituality for the masses through fasting prayer, all night prayer, and prayer in tongues. The revival movement of Korean churches has employed such method of displaying their spirituality for the masses, and Full Gospel church is the exemplar case.

Mullen (??), a leader of the Catholic Holy Spirit movement and a theologian, so evaluates that the masses spirituality of New Testament was changed into the elite spirituality of the Monastery in the Middle Ages, and this eventually led into the systematization of the Catholic Church. In contrast, he goes on to say that the Pentecostal movement changed this elite spiritual

movement back into spirituality movement for the masses and that this is the appropriate spirituality type for the current society of the masses. Mullen (??) adds that one way that Catholic churches can adapt to the future society is the restoration of the spirituality for the masses through a movement such as the Pentecostal movement<sup>56</sup>. Reverend David Yonggi Cho is an excellent religious leader for the masses in modern society.

Thirdly, the spirituality of Full Gospel church is a private spirituality that focuses on the problem solving of individuals. As we can see in the testimonies, most saints of Full Gospel church come to church with private, individual problems. Their faith is matured during the process of their individual problem solving. People whoever have numerous problems such as sickness, poverty, disaster, family, etc. Reverend David Yonggi Cho takes these problems seriously and deals with them directly. Recently, Full Gospel churches have begun to make a voice for the society, but they have traditionally a strong orientation toward individuals.

Religious sociologists identified that one characteristics of modern religion is privatization. A religion does no longer serve its function in public matters and is now limited to a private matters. This characteristic is profoundly found in the United States, where the religion and politics are clearly divided. Now, a religion is evaluated not in the context of finding the meaning of self-existence in a public function but in the context of how they satisfy the needs of religious consumers, the saints of the church<sup>57</sup>. In this perspective, the fact that Full Gospel churches have focused on the problems of individuals is an indication of their good understanding of the function of a religion in the modern society.

Fourthly, the saints of Full Gospel church gets a meaning for the life and a sense of belonging to a community through the experience of the Holy Spirit. Many people, who were regarded as "losers" of life, gets a firm conviction that they became children of God after receiving the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Getting recognized by the absolute sovereignty gives them a very important meaning in their lives. The saints of Full Gospel church cares for their members by the organizational zones. This is a spiritual assistance to pray and share the pain and suffering together rather than assisting them with materials. Through this process, there appears a strong fellowship among the saints. This sense of belonging serves as an oasis for those lonely people left out during the urbanization.

Wade Clark Roof, a religious sociologist of UC, Santa Barbara, asserts that the most important function of a religion in

modern society is to provide a personal meaning for their existence and a sense of social belonging<sup>58</sup>. A religion is all about; one, being a community to provide a meaning for the existence and the other, providing a sense of social belonging to instigate a fellowship. Robert Wuthnow, a religious sociologist of Princeton University, states that the most important function of a religion in modern society is being a support group. In modern society, where everything is specialized and done in a division of labor, people feel like lost children without a sense of belonging. At this time, a religion supports them and instigates a sense of belonging<sup>59</sup>. Full Gospel church is serving this function greatly to their congregation members.

Fifthly, Reverend David Yonggi Cho takes on the supernatural spirituality that emphasizes the transcendental works of God. Many saints of Full Gospel church are people, who have lost all their resources and worldly hopes and came to this church as the last resort for their survival to give their last hope on God. They earnestly desire a miracle of God. In this regard, a miracle is in the essence of Pentecostal spirituality. This miracle is the evidence to testify the living of God, and the saints no longer have doubt about it again.

John Locke, a British experiential philosopher of the 18th century, said that, in order for the Christianity to remain alive in a modern society, an evidence of a miracle has to be manifested to prove their religion (God) is alive. According to Locke, during the ages of close relationship between politics and religion, the nation supported the religion for their survival; however, in this modern society, when such support from the national governments has ended officially, the support from the saints are absolutely needed. For that cause, a miracle is needed to prove that their religion is alive. In fact, the most revived churches of modern society are those churches, where the supernatural miracles of God have been manifested. The transcendental spirituality of Reverend David Yonggi Cho is also something that the modern society needs the most.

Finally, in analyzing the Pentecostal spirituality, some misunderstandings on the Pentecostal movement are pointed out here. That is, as we have seen the analysis of testimonies, the experience of speaking in tongues or divine healing of Full Gospel church is not just a charismatic experience but a holistic experience, that changes the mind/heart and life of those saints. Most of the testimonies that have been examined testify the change in their hearts and life along with the charismatic experience.

However, this point has been failed to notice during the

past. I believe that the reason is because the Pentecostal activists emphasized the aspect of charismatic experience among all their religious experiences. As a matter of fact, a charismatic experience is an outside, objective phenomenon of the Holy Spirit experience. Before this outside phenomenon, we can see the inner peace and joy overflowing among the testifiers. The Pentecostal theology should stress this point more strongly in the future.

Historically, the Pentecostal movement originated (came out of) the Holiness movement of the 19th century. The Pentecostal movement has the same belief as the Holiness movement in that the work of the Holy Spirit results in a change in the heart. And, they claim that the outside, objective evidence is speaking in tongues. Thus, if the Pentecostal movement is to remain fully in its historical origin, it has not to forget to emphasize the change in the heart as much as the outside, objective charismatic experience. In the testimonies of the saints of Full Gospel churches, there are invariably evidences of changes in their heart. Nevertheless, it seems that the Pentecostal theology is not reflecting these important theological meaningful points fully.

Writer

Park, Myung-Soo: Director, Historical Research Institute of the Evangelical Holiness Church, Seoul Theological University, Seoul, Korea.

#### NOTES

1. Institute for Church Growth, *Charis & Charisma*, (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 2003), p. 66.

2. Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostalism and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3. Testimony

3. Rex D. Matthews, "‘Religion and Reason Joined’: A Study in the Theology of John Wesley," (ThD diss. Harvard University Press, 1986) and Donald Molson, (Joo, Young-Se, translated) [Four sides of Wesleyan theology: Bible, Tradition, Experience, Reasoning] (Anyang, Kyung: Society of Korean Evangelical literature Publication., 2000).

4. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

5. Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, eds., *Methodism and Shaping of American Culture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001).

6. Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostalism and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

7. [40 year History of Yoido Full Gospel Church] (Seoul: Shinang-gye, 1998), 124.

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

8. William Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in *American Religious Sociology* (Carden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960).
9. Song, Seon-Won, "On this glorious, joyful day," [Shinanggye] (October, 1975)
10. Lee, Myung-Ja, "The Lord who recreated my life," [Shinanggye] (January, 1976)
11. English translation unavailable.
12. Moon, Soak, "Blessed life," [Shinanggye] (October, 1975)
13. Chung, Si-Sook, "Come, come, come to me," [Shinanggye] (December, 1975), p. 90.
14. Park, Myung-Soo, "Holiness movement and the great revival of early Korean churches: [Korean Christianity and its History] volume 14 (Historical Research Institute of Korean Christianity; 2001), p. 57.
15. Chung, Ji-Sook, "Come, Come, Come to Me," (2) [Shinanggye] (January, 1976), p.83.
16. Lee, Myung-Ja, "The Lord who recreated my life," [Shinanggye] (January, 1976), p.86.
17. Choi, Ja-Shil, [The Power of a Fasting Prayer] (Seoul: Seoul Book Center, 1977)
18. Kim, In-Seong, 'Let it be as you believe: [Shinanggye] (March, 1976), pp.88-89.
19. Lim, Bok-Hee. "Burning the last cloth of shamanism," [Shinanggye] (February, 1978), p.100.
20. Kijm, Nak-Hyung, "Faithfulness with all the heart, life, and will," [Shinanggye] (July, 1976), p.62.
21. Kim, Jin-Hwa, "God who cured my sterility," [Shinanggye] (December, 1975), p.83.
22. Jeong, Myung-So, "God, you are the living God," [Shinanggye] (August, 1976), p.32.
23. Jeong, Myun-So, "God, you are the living God," [Shinanggye] (August, 1976), p.32
24. Chun, Byun-Hyuk, "Powerful God: [Shinanggye] (February, 1976), p.93.
25. E. A Girvin, Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916),82-83.
26. Lee, Myung-Jik, "A story of grace," [Hwal-cheon] (September, October, 1924).
27. This part was learned from Dr. Yoon, Gu-Dong of Bethany University in the United States in the Pentecostal Scholars' conference meet held in March 2003. According to Dr. Yoon, a characteristic of the modern society is evidence, and the Pentecostal movement is modern in that it emphasizes such evidence.
28. Jeon, Young-Seok, "the Joy of working for others," [Shinanggye] (December, 1976), p.91.
29. Choi, Ja-Shil, [I was the Halleluiah lady] (Seoul: Seoul Book

Center, 1978), p.193-140.

30. Won, Chang-Yeon, "the grace of making one, who was bound to die, live again," [Shinanggye] (October, 1976), p.82.

31. John von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in the Puritan Thought* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 60.

32. Kim, Il, "Amazing love," [Shinanggye] (October, 1976), p.86.

33. Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1900), 64-65.

34. Kim, Il, "Surprising love," [Shinanggye] (October, 1976), p.86.

35. Gil, Woon-Dok, "the miracle impregnated by the seed of faith," [Shinanggye] (February, 1997), p.107-108.

36. Jeon, Young-Seok, "the joy of working for others," [Shinanggye] (December, 1976), p.91-92.

37. Kim, Yang-Soon., "A sinner of stealing habit is transformed," [Shinanggye] (January, 1978), p.96.

38. Kim, In-Seong, "Let it be as you believe." [Shinanggye] (March, 1976), p.88-89.

39. Jeong, Eun-Young, "Change your footstep with faith," [Shinanggye] (March, 1978), p.101-102.

40. Kim, Hee-Jeong, "a faith budding by a recorded tape," [Shinanggye] (March, 1971), p.84-85.

41. Kim, Jae-Yeol, "Answer to a Prayer," [Shinanggye] (October, 1976), p.88.

42. Jang, Seung-Hee, "Adding more faith on a faith," [Shinanggye] (May, 1976), p.90-91.

43. Kim, Young-Hwan, "the best ophthalmologist," [Shinanggye] (April, 1976), p.95.

44. Kim, Kwan-Ock, "Healing by a fasting prayer," [Shinanggye] (November, 1975), p.87-89.

45. Kim, Nak-Hyung, "loyalty with all the heart, life and will," [Shinanggye] (July, 1976), p.60-61.

46. Choi, Kyung-Sook, "Wearing the clothes of grace," [Shinanggye] (April, 1976), p.100.

47. Ahn, Jeong-Soon., "Condition for a marriage that required a conversion" [Shinanggye] (January, 1977), p.106.

48. Park, Seong-Hye, "Tithe is the second forbidden fruit," [Shinanggye] (June, 1978), p.91.

49. Yoo, Ki-Jong, "Blessing from keeping Sundays holy and sabbatical," [Shinanggye] (April, 1978), p.104-107.

50. Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 234-237.

51. Hwang, Sook, "Sow the seeds of faith," [Shinanggye] (December, 1976), p.88-89.

52. Kim, So-Ja, "Upon the answering of God," [Shinanggye] (March, 1976), p.86-87.

53. English translation unavailable.

54. Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Making of American Religion* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77.

55. Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), ch. 4. Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, 37-38.

56. H. Mullen, [Reform of Christian Faith: Charisma, Gift, Reform], (Seoul: St. Paul Publishing Co., 1980).

57. Peter Berger, [Religion and Society], Lee, Yang-Gu, translated in Korean (Seoul: Chong-Ro Books, 1981).

58. Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Making of American Religion* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77.

59. Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (Princeton, NJ: Free Press, 1994)



## A Response to Myung-Soo Park

Gary L. McIntosh

### *Introduction*

It is an honor to attend the Young San International Church Growth Conference, and to present a brief response to Professor Myung-Soo Park's excellent paper. The Korean Pentecostal movement, especially as represented by Reverend David Yonggi Cho and the Yoido Full Gospel Church, has been a subject of interest to researchers in the Church Growth Movement within the USA for over thirty years. Dr. Park is to be commended for providing a new look at this phenomenal movement, leader, and church. His analysis of the numerous testimonials found in *Shinanggye* magazine provides many insights into the dynamic growth of this historic church and leads to a broader understanding of the Pentecostal movement in Korea.

Allow me to respond in two parts. First, I will comment on the direct connection between Dr. Park's findings and traditional Church Growth principles. Second, I will note some concerns and questions that may be of help in focusing future research on this important issue of spiritual leadership and church growth.

### *Church Growth Connections*

As developed by Donald McGavran, Church Growth Theory involves a strong commitment to getting the facts through scientific research. Not content to trust in anecdotal evidence alone, Church Growth focuses on rigorous research. While the current study looks at personal testimonies, it seeks to eliminate the individual nature of each testimony by analyzing the common themes that arise from numerous testimonies. By studying all of the testimonies found in *Shinanggye*, biases found in individual testimonies are limited. The analysis of testimonials presented

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

by Professor Park indicates a direct link between Reverend David Yonggi Cho's approach to ministry and Church Growth Theory and Thought. This linkage is observed in the following examples.

*Trust God for growth.* Church Growth Theory recognizes that biblical growth comes not by human might or by power, but by God's Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). Even though we have a responsibility to plant and water, it is God who causes the growth of His churches (1 Corinthians 3:6). Dr. Park's research demonstrates a strong correlation between trust in God through prayer and the growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church. The practice of spiritual warfare through crying-out prayer, all-night prayer, fasting prayer, and hands-on prayer all illustrate that this church trusts in God for church growth.

*Focus on receptive peoples.* Church Growth Theory recognizes that biblical growth comes from reaching out to people who are receptive to the gospel. As pointed out by Professor Park, the Pentecostal movement is a mass movement that has reached out to those who are seeking answers to the problems of life. The testimonies found in *Shinanggye* point out that the Yoido Full Gospel Church has focused on people that "seek a faith to overcome obstacles to life." Such people are open to the Good News of the gospel and are responsive to the message preached.

*Meet felt needs.* An outgrowth of focusing on receptive people is the Church Growth principle of addressing the felt needs of the masses. Those who register at a Full Gospel church "begin the life of faith in order to solve an impending problem, such as a sickness or a business failure." According to Dr. Park's study, Reverend Cho's sermons are always "detailed and vivid. He desires to provide a detailed, specific answer to these people who are suffering from these problems." Dr. Cho seeks to meet people where they are and take them to where they need to be.

*Cultural relevance.* The cultural and political upheavals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the liberation from the Japanese colonization, and the economic hardships following World War II created a cultural mindset that was ripe for Dr. Cho's emphasis on the blessings of "soul, all things [material blessings], and health." While this theological approach is not accepted by all, it was an effective, culturally relevant way for Yoido Full Gospel Church to speak to the masses in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and doubtless drew many to faith in Christ.

*Redemption and lift.* A result of church growth is often a rise in the social standing of the masses. Professor Park points out that the emphasis of Dr. Cho on diligence "has contributed greatly in making Koreans reach the middle class." He notes

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

“the Pentecostal movement made the poor reach the middle class by living diligently.”

*Passionate spirituality.* Church Growth research has found that churches grow when the members are passionate about their faith. Testimonies from the saints of the Full Gospel church illustrate that “they regard the Christian faith as something that they can touch, feel, and experience.” It is an experiential faith that understands life a spiritual warfare. This approach to the Christian life creates a passionate spiritual life that inspires unbelievers and draws them to church.

*Strong leadership.* One of the key principles of Church Growth Thought is the importance of leadership. This principle is evident in the ministry of Dr. Cho, as Professor Park notes: “Reverend Cho is regarded as a special minister with special gifts of the Holy Spirit...”

#### *Concerns and Questions*

Other direct ties between Church Growth Theory and Dr. Park’s study could be noted. The brief notations above point out just a few of the connections between Church Growth Thought and the implications discovered from the analysis of the testimonies as described by Professor Park. However, a few missing concepts raise concerns that might be appropriate to address in future research.

*Salvation from Sin.* Few comments in the testimonies mention salvation from sin. Since Jesus is “the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2), it is strange that few, if any, of the testimonies gave witness to salvation from sin. The stress that the testimonies placed on personal problems (healing, etc.) is appreciated, but the lack of emphasis on forgiveness of sin is worrisome. As Professor Parks mentions, “at the bottom of all problems there lies a spiritual problem.” That spiritual problem is separation from God due to sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Yet, little testimony is given of reconciliation to God and forgiveness of sins. Are people coming to Christ for forgiveness of their sins, or are they simply coming to have their immediate needs met? Are people truly being redeemed (Titus 3:5) through the preaching of the gospel?

*Place of Jesus Christ.* The only mention of Jesus Christ is as the power behind prayer. “The power of the name of Jesus is the strongest weapon in spiritual warfare,” writes Professor Park. While the Father and the Holy Spirit are given great emphasis in the testimonies of saints, it appears that very little place is given for Jesus Christ. The lack of testimony about Jesus is troublesome since it is Jesus who is the centerpiece of the gospel

through His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-11). Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the Christian faith. The Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ (John 16:14) and to empower believers to witness concerning Christ (Acts 1:8). Why then do the testimonies give little place to Jesus and His work in salvation?

*Accountability to Scripture.* The Bible testifies that “all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness: so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16). It also states “the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Given the central nature of the Word of God in the spiritual growth of the believer, it is disconcerting that little testimony was highlighted concerning Bible reading and teaching. Is the importance of Bible reading and teaching being neglected in the discipling of the saints?

*Lasting transformation.* The testimonies give evidence of transformed lives. As noted by Dr. Park, people attest to experiencing a changed lifestyle, for example many stopped smoking, drinking, beating their wives, and started honoring Sunday and tithing. Yet, these testimonies appear to reflect only the immediate experience of each believer. Unfortunately, the changed lives witnessed at the moment of the salvation experience sometimes do not have lasting affect. What evidence is there that the testimonies described in *Shinanggye* are long lasting?

*Changing Motives.* As described by Professor Park, the main motive for registering at the church was to find answers to life’s problems. The testimonial evidence shows that saints came to church because of business failures, health problems, boredom from life’s routines, some mystic factors, and generally to improve their lot in life. While these motives were evident in people who came to Christ and the church during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the motive changing as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The masses of people coming out of World War II were uneducated, poor, and unhealthy. They naturally were drawn to a faith that promised health, wealth, and power. However, today’s generation is much more affluent, educated, and powerful. Are their motives for coming to Christ and the church different that those whose testimonies have been analyzed in this study? Perhaps a follow-up study and comparison of testimonies from last century with those in the first part of this century would prove helpful.

*Summary*

Dr. Park has done the Church Growth Movement a great service in analyzing the testimonies of converts to Christ in the Pentecostal movement, especially Yoido Full Gospel Church, over the last half of the 20th century. His analysis and insights provide a very interesting view into the health and function of this great movement and church. The testimonies give clear evidence that the Pentecost movement and Yoido Full Gospel Church have used Church Growth principles over the last half century. However, this responder has concerns that the testimonies may show a lack of (1) commitment to the teaching of and accountability to the Bible, (2) a lack of emphasis on Jesus Christ as the savior from sin, (3) a lack of lasting transformation in the lives of saints, and (4) a lack of understanding the changing nature of the motives of unbelievers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Writer

McIntosh, Gary L.: Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership, Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California.



## Lay Equipping Leadership and Church Growth

Dr. Eddie Gibbs

*I must begin this paper with a word of apology, in that my research has not been as thorough as I would have liked. In using the Yoido Full Gospel Church as a case study I have had to rely on David Yonggi Cho's books written more than a decade ago, supplemented by consulting more recent articles and information from the church's excellent web-page, and conversation with a few of our many Korean students at Fuller Seminary.*

*One cannot address the topic of Lay Equipping Leadership and Church Growth without reference to the cell group structure that is so integral to the growth of this remarkable church. In order to do justice to the topic I would need to have spent several months interviewing lay leaders, sharing in their training program, and visiting cell groups. As it is I have only visited three cell groups, and that was during my visit to Yoido in 1985 celebrating the tenth year of the present sanctuary, when we occupied the enlarged building for the first time.*

*I beg your forgiveness for the inaccuracies that inevitably result from my remoteness from the situation. My limitations also add importance to Professor Sung Bae Jang's response, which I look forward to hearing. Perhaps my small contribution will be to place the lessons to be learned from Yoido Full Gospel Church in a broader perspective, especially in relation to global cultural trends that are impacting both the West and South Asia.*

There are many theoreticians who have written on the strategic significance of equipping lay leaders to stimulate and sustain the growth of the church. The unique contribution of Cho Yonggi is that he has demonstrated its significance on a grand scale and over several decades. Furthermore, his theories and strategies have been applied far beyond the Yoido church in the churches it has planted and through the leadership conferences that have been held on a regular basis for the past twenty years

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

or more. The sheer scale of accomplishments in the area of lay leadership training and deployment means that the Yoiddo church provides a significant case study.

*Caring for New Believers*

As we begin to examine the key components of this case study I think it is important to begin by reminding ourselves that the training of lay leaders to develop cell groups did not arise as a strategy to stimulate growth in a stagnant church. Rather, it was developed out of necessity in response to rapid growth. Pastor Cho was beginning to feel the crushing burden of caring for increasing numbers of people and of the acute pastoral problems that many new believers brought (Cho, 1981:17-19). The demands were accentuated by the acute poverty and suffering brought about by the Japanese occupation during WWII followed by the Korean War. It is reported that the challenge of incorporation reached 10,000 people a month at one stage in the life of YFGC.

The closest historical precedent is the ministry of John Wesley who faced the challenge of incorporating "awakened sinners" who responded to his field preaching. Although Charles Wesley was the better preacher, it was John Wesley who had the gift of organization, creating class meetings in which the "awakened sinners" were nurtured, and in which they came to a fuller understanding of the gospel and of the need for the new birth in order to become authentic followers of Christ (Hunter, 1992:81-83).

*Solving the Leadership Bottleneck*

Many churches that have attempted to emulate Cho Yonggi's model have faltered at two points. In the first place they could not provide groups quickly enough to absorb new members. Second, they did not provide adequate training. Pastor Cho's classical Pentecostal theology enabled him to sustain a growth dynamic in that he believed that the primary qualification for leadership was not theological education, but the empowering of the Holy Spirit, and especially his stress on "fellowship of the Spirit" that results in people having an "overflowing blessing" to share with others (Cho 1981:15; Anderson 12). Third, they attempted to import the Korean cell group model into the western context rather than tease out the principles. They assumed that groups were the way to go to stimulate numerical growth to jump start churches after decades of non-growth.

Given the conditions of suffering and deprivation in the years following the Korean war, the gospel message of forgiveness, healing, blessing and empowerment was extremely liberat-



ing (Cho 18-25:1979; xi-xix: 1985). Conversion to Christ restored human dignity as converts came to realize that they are made in the image of God, and as members of the body of Christ each person has both a location and a function (Anderson 10-12). In baptism they are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, they are incorporated into the body of Christ and commissioned to participate in the ongoing mission of their Ascended Lord Jesus Christ. Spirit baptism bestows this new identity, provides the possibility of character formation into the likeness of Christ, and bestows the necessary gifts for Christian service.

The creation of hundreds, and eventually thousands of groups, needed an army of leaders. Once again urgent necessity provided the stimulus for a creative response. As an initial response to the need to provide cell group leaders, Pastor Cho initially looked to his church elders, but soon came to realize that there were not sufficient elders, most were too busy in their secular employment, and may not be equipped by the Spirit as cell group leaders (Cho 1984:42). He had to find another solution. Mission leaders are innovative risk-takers, and Pastor Cho was prepared to follow, what he believed to be the Spirit's leading, in appointing women for the task (Cho 1981:25-29). Rather than remaining captive to the Korean cultural model of male leadership, he re-examined the Scriptures to see if there were biblical precedents that he had overlooked due to his cultural bias. The fact that in the traditional Korean family the woman usually worked in the home, caring for the family, while the husband served as the wage earner, they were available in large numbers for this task.

One consequence of turning to this solution to the leadership challenge was that predominantly female leaders meant that a greater proportion of women became cell group members than men. They also met at a time when the women were available, which was when their menfolk were at work. The need to incorporate more men into cell groups has led to the developing more groups for men that meet at times convenient to the men, and that they tend not to be neighborhood based, but rather consist of affinity groups of men in similar secular jobs.

*Context in Which New Leaders Emerge and Develop*

In many ways the cell groups provides an ideal environment in which each person can discover their particular gifts and in which new leaders can emerge naturally. Surrounded by a small group of friends each person begins to make his or her contribution to the group. Spiritual gifts are not principally identified through self-administered questionnaires, but in the context of

relationships responding to the challenges and opportunities of daily life. The group provides motivation; recognition and positive reinforcement, provided the group leaders are trained to understand the church as a gift-bearing, gift-evoking, gift-developing and gift-disciplining community of believers. On the other hand, when cell group leaders become domineering and members are suspicious or critical of one another then gift-based, every-member ministry does become stifled.

The training of leaders is not confined to the learning of the bible and doctrine, but includes the issues of spiritual warfare and healing prayer, which are crucial areas in a culture so permeated by issues of spiritual power. The ministry of Yoido has faced much criticism from theologians who have been primarily influenced by western modernity in their theological formation. As Professor Allan Anderson, of the University of Birmingham has written in defense of Pastor Cho, he has developed his theology and practice from insights drawn from the bible and not from shamanism. In missiological terms the gospel, the church and mission must find distinctive expression in various cultural contexts. It must engage culture; indeed it cannot avoid doing so. The crucial issue is whether the missional engagement consists of *naïve*-contextualization, in which the church simply subsumes its message according to the criteria of the dominant culture, or whether its approach is one of *critical*-contextualization, (Hwa Young 13,14x; Anderson p.8).

#### *Quality Control*

As the number of groups continued to expand at a great rate, how was quality control maintained? At the outset, potential cell group leaders had to be carefully screened in terms of their spiritual maturity and gifts and the call of God for this ministry. Second, the leaders were provided with a lesson for the group meeting that is published in the church's weekly newspaper *Full Gospel News*, of which a million copies are available following the Sunday services (Synan p. 4). This ensures a uniform teaching content for each week's meetings. Third, leaders are trained by the apprenticeship method of learning by observation and contributing under supervision. Fourth, as educational opportunities increased and standards rose, so the leaders needed to be more adequately trained to relate to an increasingly sophisticated urban population. Empowering the incompetent will bring disastrous consequences!

The YFDC web site has a full page dedicated to education, and lists four channels for the education of laypersons (I notice it does say "laymen," but I assume this includes both male and

female!). There is a Bible School for Laymen providing a five-month course applying the lessons of seven selected books of the Bible to the life of faith. Students can they move to the next level of Bible College for Laymen, with a curriculum providing a topical study of all 66 books of the Bible. In 1982 The Bible Graduate School for Laymen was established, providing a deeper level of study. Then there are In-depth Bible study courses. To provide further resource the cell group leaders, *The Home Cell Study Guide Volume 1 and 2* were published by Pastor Cho. The English language translation of volume one appeared in 1990 and volume two in 2000. (Yoido web-site <http://english.fgtv.com/yoido/edu>).

The tightly structured system of YFGC works because of the Senior Pastor's clear vision and outstanding leadership ability of being able to communicate clearly and in a way that inspires. It also functions well in a society that is very homogeneous and has a traditional acceptance of hierarchical authority. However, it is much more difficult to apply in cultures that are diverse and individualistic, in which "one size does not fit all," and one style does not suite all. Once a diversity of approaches is deemed necessary, quality control becomes more complicated to develop and difficult to enforce.

#### *Support and Supervision*

The YFGC operates on the Jethro model, named after Moses' father-in-law, who advised Moses that he would wear himself out trying to meet all the demands of the Israelites. He counseled him to officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens (Exodus 18:13-23); advise which Moses promptly accepted. Here at YFGC the cells are organized into 19 regional sanctuaries, 24 mid-Districts, and 208 sub-districts. There are a total of 171 ordained pastors (of whom only one is a woman). In addition there are 356 non-ordained pastors, of whom 278 are women. Such large numbers indicate the high level of support and supervision for the cell-group ministry.

Although the church maintains a large number of social service programs, it is not so strongly focused on centralized programs that the cell groups are relegated to a level of lesser importance. YFGC is truly a church *of* small groups rather than a church *with* small groups. In other words, it is a large church consisting of thousands of cells that are central to its life and growth. Cho himself states, "A cell group is the basic part of our church. It is not another church program—it is the program of our church" (Cho, 1984:42) Churches that have failed to establish this priority have encountered difficulty in sustaining cells and of

providing adequate leadership, because both leaders and members become exhausted by the demands placed upon them to attend cell groups in addition to supporting other ministries.

*Evangelistic Significance*

It is often said that a church grows big by growing small, i.e. through its cell groups. However, we must always be cautious in attributing growth to a single cause. Vinson Synan quotes Lee Young Hoon, one of the leading associate pastors, who identifies cell groups as one of the six causes of the wonderful growth of the church (Synan 4). It is not the sole factor. Church growth, in almost every case, arises out of a number of factors, and the relation between them is complex. In addition to the institutional factors, the contextual factors must also be taken into account. Furthermore, we must never overlook the sovereign and unpredictable operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is safer to speak in terms of *correlation* rather than *causation* in relating the various characteristics of a church to its growth pattern. Research to date upholds the claim that growing churches are more likely than non-growing churches to have cell groups. On the other hand there are many churches with cell groups that are not growing.

Although the cell group system may originally have been introduced in order to care for the many people attending the church and to ensure that the growth dynamic was sustained, there is a further factor that must not be overlooked. The many newcomers were brought by relatives, neighbors, and friends in order to receive ministry of healing and restoration. The early wave of cell groups at Yoido were largely composed of first generation believers who were recent adult converts from non-Christian backgrounds. I would be interested to know to what extent that is the case today.

As neighborhood cell-groups were established, they provided accessible multiple-outlets for ministry. The first contact with the church for increasing numbers of newcomers was with the cell-group, where they heard the gospel, received ministry and were then brought by members of their group to the Sunday services at Yoido Full Gospel Church. I personally observed on one of my visits to the church, members encouraging the people they had brought to stand at the appropriate moment when the pastor concluded his sermon with an invitation to surrender their life to Christ.

There is a great deal of evidence that most of the church growth taking place in the West is due to church attendees moving from one church to another. One church grows at the ex-

pense of other churches, rather than through the conversion of people from the world. From its beginning YFGC has been committed to growth through evangelization, and that this is best achieved by the training of laypersons in evangelism. By making cell groups as the launch pads to this mission in the world, the church has tied evangelization to disciple-making. It takes a community to communicate the gospel effectively, rather than on relying on individuals operating in isolation.

When cell groups are introduced to stagnant church they are more likely to turn into holding-pens for the already committed. They are groups to which church members are referred after they have become part of the congregation. As we have seen at Yoido, they are often the first point of contact after which cell members bring their new people to the worship service where they make a public act of commitment to Christ and are then welcomed into the larger body through baptism.

When there is a passion for evangelism to be the heartbeat of the cell groups, then the ministry of the laity is no longer marginalized. Whereas most churches give the greatest recognition to those ministries that contribute to the internal programs of the church, the church that ministers primarily through its cell groups recognizes that lay people are not on the periphery of the church but are at its frontier. At the conclusion of every worship service the congregation is not *dismissed* to go its own ways, but rather is *dispersed* in the service of Christ. They represent the church in dispersion. Furthermore, instead of exhorting the congregation to undertake evangelism and scolding them for their failure to do so, the cell groups provide a support structure through which they are able to operate.

Finally, we must not overlook the distinctives of the cultural context in which the cell group strategy was developed here in South Korea. Christians in this country have faced brutal suppression in the living memory of present church members. They are acutely aware of their vulnerability with the border with North Korea just 28 miles away. They have learned the lessons of history, that for the church to survive persecution it must decentralize, and ensure an army of lay leaders are in place and equipped to take over the leadership of the church if their pastors should ever be removed (Cho 1984:40f).

#### *Current Challenges*

##### *1. Avoiding the peril accompanying success*

In some ways success can prove to be perilous for the future of any institution. In a situation of rapid, and discontinuous cul-

tural change it is dangerous to argue that if something isn't broke don't try and fix it! Throughout the developing world significant changes take place as society moves from agrarian, to industrial, and then to high-tech and the information age. If these transitions have presented challenges to the West they are even greater in the East. For these transitions have come to much more rapidly to a country like Korea. So much so that all three stages co-exist, with all the resulting anxiety producing tensions. Long accepted ideas are being questioned and customs challenged. I would like to conclude this paper by raising a few issues that I believe the churches, especially those in urban contexts, must face if they are to maintain their effectiveness in the ministries of evangelism, discipleship and leadership training.

### *2. Responding to a situation of non-growth*

The churches in Korea are facing a new situation in that the phenomenal numerical growth for which this country is world famous petered out around 1994. However, during the past decade many new churches have been established in the urban areas and many more pastors have been trained in the seminaries. The consequence, as reported to me by Korean students is that there is a competitive environment, with churches growing at the expense of other churches. The recent cultural changes that we will consider under our next heading have stimulated a great deal of movement between churches, with Christians looking for a different expression of the gospel or even abandoning the faith. Once again the churches face the challenge of prioritizing evangelization rather than resorting to proselytization. They need to be far more intentional in reaching out to the non-Christian majority of the population in less aggressive and legalistic ways to authentically minister the grace of Christ.

### *3. Adjusting to the knowledge revolution*

When I began teaching a course on the church's response to popular culture at Fuller about four years ago I assumed it was a Western issue. But an increasing number of Korean students attending the course assured me that the issue I was raising was as relevant in their context. One of my students wrote a brilliant Th.M. thesis on postmodernity in the Korean Context with an extensive bibliography of books and articles in Korean that represented original thinking (Lee, 1998).

The knowledge revolution that has come about through the worldwide web has meant that information is no longer privileged. We used to say that it was the people "in the know" that held the power. The industrial age also represented a culture of

hierarchy and control, which both reinforced the position of the privileged as well as creating a new meritocracy. The information age is now challenging the culture of hierarchy and control, to one of networking and empowerment. This has profound repercussion for the emergence of leadership at the present time and into the foreseeable future. The under 35 generations that have grown up in the new environment are walking away from institutions characterized by top-down management. It is too soon to say whether this is a trend that will be limited to a couple of generations, or whether it represents a long-term culture shift. This presents a particular challenge to societies that has traditionally given respect and defers to age, which, the older I get the more I enjoy!

In terms of developing lay leaders this means that they will not simply be the extension of the pastor's vision and seeking to reproduce his or her style of leadership, but will be eager to contribute their own vision and to develop their own leadership style. This is likely to be far more relational and corporate.

*4. Equipping lay leaders to relate their Christian faith to the pressures and temptations of daily life*

A further factor that we must take into consideration is the changes in the economies of the developing nations. In a high-tech world, in which significant new ideas create whole new industries, and old technologies lose their hold, people are no longer regard the company for which they work as a life-commitment. During their lifetime they may undergo three or four transitions from one employment to another. This creates additional anxiety regarding job security and satisfaction to the point where people are working more hours than ever before and are nervous about taking a vacation in case their job is no longer there when they return! Whereas some younger people are becoming millionaires, there are many more who Dual-income families, means that there is not such a pool of women leaders as in former years.

The prosperity teaching that brought hope to an impoverished and disempowered people becomes a snare to those who are seeking a theological justification for the insatiable materialistic expectations. In both east and west we witness the sad spectacle of the corrupting influence of greed and the lust for power, and the questionable dealings that offer a way of escape when the economy suddenly turns sour. We need to include in our training programs for Christian leaders a strong emphasis on character formation, integrity issues and the need to live out the values of the gospel of the Kingdom with all of its radical de-

mands and comprehensive coverage reaching to every aspect of life and level of society. In addition we need to have support and accountability structures in place in recognition of our human frailty.

*5. Adjusting to the increasing demands of urban living*

We must also take into account the phenomenal growth of Seoul during the past twenty-five years. It is now ringed by satellite cities from which many thousands of people commute each day. Consequently, traffic has become increasingly congested and the journey time extended. With many people working long days and having to face the tiring daily commute the time that people can devote to the nurture of their own spiritual lives and to commit to the demands of cell group ministry has become an increasing burden.

Perhaps our church programs need to be pruned and made less demanding in terms of time and multiple commitments. I am not suggesting this as a compromising accommodation to society, but in order to ensure that our lay leaders have the time and energy to be good parents, to contribute to their neighborhood opportunities and needs, and to have time to engage in evangelism and Christian service outside of the church. Many devout Korean Christians I meet are weary and complain of their tiredness. They shoulder a burden of shame if they feel that they cannot meet the demands placed upon them and cannot keep up with the rigorous regimens of their fellow believers. Are we in danger of losing the joy of our salvation? Jesus came to bring us abundant life, not to subject us to a frantic life!

*6. Affirming and empowering younger leaders*

In the 1980s Pastor Cho took the bold step of appointing women as cell group leaders, perhaps the bold step today is to appoint couples to share the leadership responsibilities, and to appoint younger leaders in order to bring their insights and concerns for Christians of all ages to give their response. The challenge facing many churches in the West is to take steps to encourage, equip and empower younger leaders. In most of the traditional denominations less than ten percent of their leadership is under the age of thirty-five.

It has been a privilege to lead this first plenary session, and I pray that my comments, which are offered tentatively, will serve to stimulate further discussion. I look forward to the response of Dr. Sung Bae Chang and to the sessions that follow during the days of this conference, so that I might return home with a better understanding with fresh insights.



Writer

Gibbs, Eddie: Donald A. McGavran Professor of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Allan, "David Yonggi Cho's Pentecostal Theology as Contextual Theology in Korea. Unpublished paper presented at Hansei University, Seoul, September, 2002.
- Cho, Paul Yonggi with Harold Hostetler, *Successful Home Cell Groups*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981.
- Cho, Paul Yonggi with R. Whitney Manzano, *The Fourth Dimension, Vol. II*. Plainfield, NJ: 1983.
- Cho, Paul Yonggi, *More Than Numbers*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984.
- Hunter III, George G., *How To Reach Secular People*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992.
- Lee, Sook Hee, *The Emerging Postmodern Worldview in the Korean Younger Generation*. Unpublished ThM thesis, Fuller Seminary, 1998.
- Synan, Vinson, "The Yoido Full Gospel Church." *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*.
- Yung, Hwa, "Missiological Implications of Dr. David Yonggi Cho's Theology," Unpublished, undated paper.
- Yoido Web-site <http://english.fgtv.com/yoido/edu>.



## A Response to Eddie Gibbs

Dr. Sung-Bae Chang

I would like to appreciate Dr. Eddie Gibbs' opening presentation. For me, it was comprehensively a well designed one. In spite of limitations on data, I believe that he raised important issues on lay equipping leadership in relation to the church growth.

The task of my presentation is to respond to Dr. Gibbs' presentation. I want to start off my presentation by pointing important issues of his article.

Dr. Gibbs splits his presentation into seven parts.

1. Caring for New Believers: the reason for requesting lay leadership in the Yoido Full Gospel Church

2. Solving the Leadership Bottleneck: the background of establishing lay, especially lay women leadership

3. Context in which New Leaders Emerge and Develop: cell groups

Dr. Gibbs says, "In many ways the cell groups provides an ideal environment in which each person can discover their particular gifts and in which new leaders can emerge naturally."

4. Quality Control: the way to control the quality of lay leaders

1) By screening spiritual maturity, gifts, and call of God for this ministry

2) By distributing weekly newspapers which ensures a uniform teaching

3) By providing well designed education programs for laypersons

4) and other various ways

5) Pastor Cho's clear vision and outstanding leadership in culture of hierarchical structure

5. Support and Supervision: the Jethro model

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

Here, Dr. Gibbs points that the YFGC is “truly a church of small groups rather than a church with small groups.”

6. Evangelistic Significance: cell groups and lay leaders as points of contact as well as frontiers in evangelism

Although cell groups and lay leadership were not the only cause of the church growth of YFGC, those factors did play an important role. I believe that Dr. Gibbs’ expression, “correlation of many factors rather than causation” is rightly said.

From 1 to 6, Dr. Gibbs focuses his concern on lay leadership in the context of cell group. I positively agree that this point is very important in dealing with lay leadership and church growth. I believe that the church should recognize the many gifts of the lay people in their ministries. The discovery of the role of lay people enables the church leaders to have a new understanding of the church. The church is a community called to worship, to Christian nurture, and to witness God’s work. The reason that the church is called out of the world is to be sent into the world again. From that understanding comes a new concept of ministry. First, discovering the centrality of lay people makes it possible to change the ministry from a *safeguard ministry* to a *training ministry*. Second, it enables the organic relationship of the Church’s ministry because every Christian in the Church works as a branch of the body of Christ. Third, it gives a new possibility to a change from pastor-centered structure to lay people-centered structure. Fourth, the change makes it possible to have lay leaders develop their latent forces in shared ministries by laity and clergy. Finally, it gives hope for continual growth.

7. Current Challenges: six issues has been raised

1) *Avoiding the peril accompanying success*

Korean society is rapidly entering into the post-capitalistic society, which has brought abrupt change to the political, economic, social, and moral landscape of the world. The two older social classes of capitalists and workers are being transformed into knowledge workers and service workers. In the future, the central wealth-creating activities will neither be capital nor labor but productivity and innovation.

In this rapidly changing society, especially in urban contexts, churches should find new forms of leadership, church structure, lay training methods, and evangelism.

In his article, Dr. Gibbs suggests five aspects of challenges from inside and outside of the Korean church.

*2) Responding to a situation of non-growth*

During 1970s throughout 1980s, individualism, growth first mentality, tendency toward exclusiveness, division of churches and denominations, and emphasis on offerings brought enormous growth of churches in Korea. However, when the society became diverse, this kind of church growth began to slow down and faced prospects of decline.

The main factors of church growth in Korea such as home visitation, early prayer meetings, and all-night prayer meetings are losing their effectiveness in this diverse society.

In this situation, Korean churches must develop ecumenical spirit while reclaiming enthusiastic evangelism. The change of the Korean society in which large corporations and social units are divided into small units of specific groups with networking are going to push the Korean churches into various types of cooperation. Also, the Korean society formerly divided into pieces is seeking harmony and reconciliation requesting for the Korean churches to suggest some good models. Furthermore, the current theological development calls for reconciliation of divided churches and renewal of the devastated world by the work of the Holy Spirit. As a partner in God's mission, the churches should cooperate with one another to spread the kingdom of God.

*3) Adjusting to the knowledge revolution*

In the information society, traditional authorities are losing their power because everyone now have access to the information that were formerly possessed and owned by the higher authorities. Furthermore, the organizing principle of social structure will be shifted from a top-down model to a bottom-up model. This society, therefore, will be restructured from a pyramid type into a network system.

This kind of new society requests a new type of leadership, such as the servant leadership, mentoring leadership, and coaching leadership. The church must make efforts for laypersons to find their own visions and leadership styles that can contribute to the kingdom of God as well as church growth.

*4) Equipping lay leaders to relate their Christian faith to their daily lives*

The only sacrifice of the church is to present herself as a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1-2) and offers "the sacrifice of praise." (Heb. 13:15) As a result, we need to come up with various places and settings where gatherings can be held together for a communion of Christians, and not just a holy place for wor-

ship and sacrifice. (Jn. 4:20-24) Christianity has no holy place, only holy people. We can distinguish the churchgoer from a Christian as a church. From the biblical point of view, we are the church wherever we go. This people-centered church structure can form a life-sharing structure not only in the church but also out in the world. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt. 18:20)

Such structures could exist in families, schools, institutions, and in many companies in their own diverse forms.

*5) Adjusting to the increasing demands of urban living*

I agree and feel for the laypersons in their ministry, especially to the demands of cell group ministry as an increasing burden. How then can our church programs be pruned and made less demanding? I believe that the Korean churches should carefully consider a radical paradigm shift of their ministries from pastor-oriented ministry to layperson-oriented ministry.

Layperson oriented ministry which fits to the laypersons' ordinary lives must admit some shifts, such as:

- (1) Shift from Sunday-centered ministry to weekdays-centered ministry
- (2) Shift from church building-centered ministry to world-centered ministry
- (3) Shift from program-oriented ministry to real life-oriented ministry

Korean churches, especially in the urban settings must develop their theological foundations, for example like urban theology, lay theology, and worker's theology. Those theologies enable us to explore new ways of mission strategies focusing on laypersons' competitive work places, specific family lives, and their ordinary lives. Urban Churches should help laypersons to live in their work place as witnesses of Jesus Christ.

When we talk about the mission of laypersons, we should not forget the church in relationship with the kingdom of God, which influences the vision of the church. The core of the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14: 17) The vision for the kingdom brings communal life in God's love. This kingdom movement, the mission of the church, starts from tiny gatherings and grows like a mustard seed or yeast. This movement, as a form of incarnation and the way of mission of Jesus, has a down-up or horizontal form, which spreads out, into the world with concern for human lives. This kingdom movement denies the hierarchical, top-down, and management-oriented approach to mission. The belief in the Kingdom will be very helpful in understanding the paradigm

shift of Korean churches' ministry structure.

6) *Affirming and empowering younger leaders*

Dr. Gibbs suggests, "The bold step today is to appoint couples to share the leadership responsibilities, and to appoint younger leaders in order to bring their insights and concerns for Christians of all ages to give their response."

I believe that building leadership of younger generation is one of the most important tasks of Korean churches today. Without the younger generation, churches cannot have their future. Also, the young adults feel this world in a different way. In this rapidly changing world, older generations need to listen more carefully to the voice of the younger generation.

Here, I would like to raise one more issue.

7) *Responding to diverse society*

Diverse forms of lifestyles were generated together with the rise of economic development. Due to better education, professional areas are becoming more varied. Many diverse civil groups and spontaneous gatherings are growing. Various cultural activities are flourishing. As a result of the improved living standards we now have a wide variety of food and see a wide variety of fashion. Multiforms of hobbies and dilettante lives are developing. In the society in which diverse values co-exist, authoritarianism is not viable.

For effective mission in diverse society, the church should develop new church structure, which emphasizes dispersal of power rather than a concentration of power. The church should work through diverse communities in specific context. For example, if a church identifies a need, for example like the mission for the disabled, this church can start organizing a group of volunteers and experts in this particular area. They can gather, pray, plan, and do their mission work. Here, we can clearly see that the church is not the leader or controller but rather the helper and supporter. As a result, this church can have various communal groups according to their working areas in mission. The numbers of groups grow as the tasks grow. Also, these groups can gladly work with non-Christian communities in their societies for their mission. These kinds of approaches to non-Christians will provide very good opportunities for evangelism.

I would like to hear someone from YFGC on this matter.

I'd like to finish my response by saying that Dr. Gibbs' presentation will lead us to more profound discussion for the new tasks of lay equipping leadership, evangelism and church growth in the new millennium.

Writer

Chang, Sung-Bae: Professor of Missiology, Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea.



## Mission Leadership and Church Growth

Chris Sugden

### *Introduction*

Dr. Yonggi-Cho's experience in growing the Yoido Full Gospel Church has been described and reviewed in many articles, reviews and discussions. I do not intend to repeat the issues that have been raised in them. They and the life of his community are testimony to God's blessing on his preaching and teaching of the scriptures. In the Korean context that growth has taken place in a situation of war and deprivation. Dr. Cho's approach has not necessarily been, as everyone everywhere else would have undertaken the work. But then Dr. Cho and his community and not everyone else were the instruments that God chose to use.

### *What can we learn from Dr. Cho's experience?*

My question is what we can learn from Dr. Cho's experience and writings about the role of leadership of Christian communities in Church growth. It is quite legitimate to do this as there are precedents in Christian history to characterize a movement of God by the writings and activities of a leader – there are Lutheran churches and Wesleyan churches. We are meeting to reflect on what characterizes a Choian church.

### *What we learn about leadership.*

Leaders lead. They take initiatives and risks. They pioneer new territory and methods. They are the first to do things, and they determine what must be done first. They appoint others whom they deem fit to carry out the similar vision. They provide a narrative, the story, and the framework for understanding the history and experience of the group over time.

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

Dr. Cho has clearly done this in his writings. He narrates his own experiences of starting with nothing; of undergoing great anxiety and suffering, and sometimes rejection. This narrative both repeats the experience of Jesus in his ministry of death and resurrection, and illuminates the experience of many of his church members as they go through suffering.

His experiences provide examples of how to respond to suffering and risk in prayer and faith. He builds a theology of faith and prayer based on the bible and his experiences in interaction.

He draws on the bible as the appropriate justification for his teaching and his action, thus illuminating the meaning of God's word for people in the Korean situation.

*Studies on Christian leaders at OCMS.*

In our research at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, our research colleagues are studying the leadership roles of a number of contemporary church leaders. A recent doctoral study focused on Archbishop David Gitari, former Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya and his role in giving leadership for justice and truth in a society of declining standards in political life.<sup>1</sup> A current doctoral study is focusing on the role of bishops in Kenya in giving leadership in the transition from colonial to independent rule and the factors that shaped the emerging new leadership of the church. These studies found that the leaders of the church have had such a profound influence in Kenyan national life because they provided the role of the old tribal religious leaders – they were the defense of vulnerable people in the community against the extremes of their political leaders. Thus church leaders had a major role in national life when people saw them fulfilling the expectations they had of religion in their society – to protect the vulnerable.

These leaders provided a narrative for their leadership. In the case of Archbishop Gitari it was the sacrifice he endured in his opposition to President Moi, in which at least two attempts were made on his life. He provided an example of standing up against injustice in his own culture. He constantly provided biblical justification for his actions in preaching from biblical texts with consistent relevance to his experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Taking these initiatives and taking these risks with justification delivered from the Bible means seeing beyond the horizon and pointing out the direction to others.

*Leadership in Mission*

Dr. Pervaiz Sultan from Pakistan undertook a study on the development ministry of two dioceses in the Church of Pakistan,

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

published subsequently as *The Church and Development*.<sup>3</sup> He examined the approaches to development of two dioceses, one that followed an evangelical ministry in development and one that concentrated on social changes. He discovered that what determined the approach of each diocese was the approach of the leader – one was evangelical and one was ecumenical. But both leaders were similar in exercising an authoritarian approach in giving leadership in the diocese. Essentially both regarded the people in their dioceses more as objects of their leadership, to carry out their agenda.

My own doctoral research in India and Bali focused on the evangelistic and social ministries of churches in South India and Bali among poor people.<sup>4</sup> I studied two leaders, Dr. Vinay Samuel in India and Dr. Wayan Mastra in Bali. I discovered that what motivated them both was an understanding that central to the development and growth of poor people was for them to recover and discover their own identity and dignity. The heart of this process was the preaching and teaching of the gospel, which told poor people who had been treated as nobodies, that through the grace of Jesus Christ they could be sons and daughters of God. Though society around treated them as expendable and marginal, they were of inestimable value to God.

It was not enough to leave this new value at an abstract, conceptual or even religious level though it had vital and irreplaceable religious foundations. Both leaders realized that this new identity and dignity had to be expressed and supported in a number of ways. These ways were also informed by their theological understanding of who people are.

Wayan Mastra particularly focused on expressing people's identity in their community culture. He built churches in the local Balinese style. He recovered the use of Balinese music in church. He promoted cultural dance in worship. He clearly understood that people need to express their new identity in cultural forms that connect them with their surroundings, their fellows, their past and their community. He found a church that was cut off from its culture as Dutch culture had replaced all local Balinese culture for the Christians. Thus Balinese were known as Black Dutch. He built a theology seeing continuity between what God wrought in nature and what he brought about through grace. As a result he gave Balinese Christians a new confidence to play a role in their communities, and to provide a lead in some of the important national initiatives such as emigration to less overpopulated parts of Indonesia.

Both Mastra and Samuel saw the need to express people's identity and dignity in their calling to be stewards of creation.

This was rooted in the Genesis narrative to be fruitful and multiply; to exercise dominion over the creation as the images and representatives of God the absentee landlord to whom all people must give account. Mastra saw this calling in the promise to Abraham to be a blessing to the nations. To be a blessing one needs the strength to hold one's hand out palm down, not palm up to receive a handout. They both saw a particular calling through the gospel to enable poor people to play their role as stewards. Both the Old and New Testament witness to God's special concern for the poor: in liberating the Hebrew slaves from Egypt and in defining the gospel of the kingdom as good news to the poor. Both Mastra and Samuel developed important ministries of Micro-enterprise development among poor people to express the calling to be stewards.

Both Mastra and Samuel saw the need to model in their leadership the cross-cultural partnership that expressed the gospel breaking down barriers between races and cultures. Both were very aware of their own strong identity and worth as national leaders, yet provided space to Christians from other races and cultures to work closely in partnership with them, a partnership which would be mutually enriching to both parties. This follows the pattern in the New Testament where Paul the Jew had a close partnership with for example Luke the Gentile doctor.

In these two leaders we see biblical understandings of human personhood determining their involvement and the sort of leadership they gave in building Christian community: it embraced and expressed the new identity and dignity that people receive through the gospel as sons and daughters of God; the role that expressing people's personhood in their community and cultural context played in affirming their growth and gifts in their culture; the need to enable people to express God's calling to be stewards of creation and provide for their families through enterprise development; and the importance of expressing life and leadership in Christian communities in cross-cultural and international partnership.

We see here how theological and biblical understanding of the nature of human personhood, human flourishing and human community formed the sort of leadership and priorities that both these Asian Christian leaders expressed in their ministries and sought to build into their communities.

*Studies on Pentecostal Churches in Contexts of Poverty*

A recently completed doctorate on Pentecostals in the Philippines by Dr. Joseph Suico of the Asian Pacific Theological

Seminary addressed the picture given of Philippine Pentecostals that they were otherworldly and not concerned with or involved in social change. His study finds that their focus on evangelism, prayer and deliverance gives them a tremendous sense of confidence and ability in what can be done in their lives, and families and communities to bring change. They are tremendously empowered to believe change is possible. This is a great resource for poor people.

Dr. Suico draws parallels with studies done among Pentecostals in Latin America by Dr. Doug Petersen who addressed the same perception.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Petersen showed that Pentecostals there did not have a social theology, but their very nature as a community believing in the power of the spirit (not the government nor the church) but the power of the spirit in them to bring change was itself a social theology. I noted that Dr. Suico though himself an East Asian did not draw on any examples or writings of Korean Pentecostals which might show the same reflection. I ask whether Dr. Cho might give leadership by encouraging similar studies on how it is that Pentecostal faith and practice gives dignity and confidence and hope for change to the poor.

#### *Mission as Transformation*

These components of mission focusing on human personhood, human flourishing and human community have been brought into a coherent understanding of Christian mission, which has been styled "Mission as Transformation". Transformation has been defined by Vinay Samuel as enabling God's vision of society, to be actualized in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual, so that God's will may be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all communities, especially the poor."<sup>6</sup>

Transformation is about a vision of society where God's will is done and his love experienced. Thus "mission is individuals coming to Christ, challenging corrupt and sinful systems, structures and cultures and enabling individuals and communities to experience God's transforming power".<sup>7</sup> How do we see God's transforming power acting in communities today?

1. Transformation is focused on persons
2. Transformation is about the development of personhood in community and thus the building of communities.
3. Transformation is through the action of communities and community institutions. Through communities we create the public good and attack evil systems.

1. Transformation is focused on persons: on reorienting their relationships and empowering their choices to develop their character.

*Transformation is*

- *about bodies in time and space and therefore in relation to others.* Personhood is both ourselves and ourselves in relationships.
- *about the development of the self:* the substance of the person expressed in the choices we make in relating, receiving and understanding people and situations.
- *about understanding the role we have been entrusted with.*
- *about the ability to make moral choices living up to convictions, codes of conduct, standards and guidelines.*
- *the integrity of a person's belief and actions:* that which holds one together and expresses truth, faithfulness and dependability.
- *the ability to be other-regarding:* showing love in sacrifice, compassion, acceptance of difference and inclusion.
- *the ability to resist wrong-doing:* with strong ethical resistance but also are able to forgive, heal and rebuild.
- *reconciling and renewing:* recognizing that you yourself also have to be cleansed, renewed and reconciled.
- *the development of creativity and stewardship:* seizing the opportunity, building and taking responsibility.
- *the reality of worship:* in worshipping and turning to God in prayer we are really fulfilled and flourish.

As we grow in personhood we become the home where Christ dwells through his spirit. And as we relate to people so that Christ may be formed in them, through our intervention in people's lives be it in medical treatment, teaching, adult literacy, project planning, visiting and having fellowship the Holy Spirit works through us for them.<sup>8</sup>

2. Such personhood takes shape in community, between people in a covenant relationship. Such communities are moral communities and are marked by freedom, justice, righteousness, order, law, truthfulness, love and grace.

*These are*

- *creative communities:* encouraging stewardship, truthfulness and hope;
- *nurturing communities,* nurturing people with mercy, forgiveness, patience and long-suffering and building them up.

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

- *communities that provide security and a sense of belonging.* These are communities of belonging - where orphaned children and battered women can find themselves in a community that cares as personhood is restored.
- *communities that worship* - that are open to the action of God's kingdom and overcome divisions among themselves, unite us and give us energy.
- *communities with character* - being faithful and honest, compassionate and caring, concerned for justice. The community character reinforces the character of persons.
- *communities that reflect the kingdom of God* - living in anticipation of its reality, especially in worship.<sup>9</sup>

Here is the model and criteria for our churches, and our churches as examples to the surrounding community of what they can be and become.

3. Through communities we create public good and attack evil systems. We build people's personhood as they engage in public action.

*Poverty is virtually eradicated and people are lifted out of poverty*

- *not through conversion* - Conversion produces freedom from the misery and violence of poverty as in particular men desist work and are committed to their families
- *not through ethical change.* Ethical change produces a lift out of poverty to a level of sustainable growth.
- *through the development of a strong law-governed state* with individual freedoms, property rights and civil society institutions.

Communities are focused on institutions. We cannot access the community as a whole without mediating entities and institutions. These institutions are rooted in the culture. They belong. The church is a mediating institution, part of the community landscape, committed to the community, rooted in the culture. The church is called to be a good civil society institution, a good voluntary organization existing for the public good. The church should be wholistic.

Transformational development is rooted in communities. Mediating institutions are rooted in the culture of a community. These communities are shaped by their culture. Cultural change is community focused. So transformation must address culture.

*Culture*

- is the ideas that people have about people, community, individuals, sin, love, what is or is not important.

- perpetuates these ideas through institutions and practices.
- is constructed by people. They live with it, seek their profit in it, want to feel good about it.
- change in culture will not come unless people see the advantage in it.

In each culture we have to ask what are the norms that Christian transformation seeks to promote within a culture? Is it possible for culture to be resource for change rather than a barrier to change.

So we see that there is a large horizon for the mission of the church and thus for the leaders who are called to lead God's church. There is a role for individuals, families, movements and institutions in cultural transformation.

*Leadership and the Mission of the World Church.*

I am therefore minded to ask of David Yonggi-Cho at this point in his leadership and in the mission of the world church a number of questions with relation to these themes.

*1. The gospel in a context of poverty and suffering:*

We are set in a context where Christianity is moving south. Churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia are growing. Churches in Europe are declining. In Korea the church has been through poverty and suffering and now has many resources. But the current generation of young people in Korea have not known the struggles that shaped Dr. Cho. How will he ensure that his successors in leadership understand the same profound realities of the gospel amidst suffering and trial? What part will the experience of and relationships with the two-thirds world church play in this?

*2. Partnership in the Gospel:*

- 1) Does the Korean church believe it is qualified to be a leader in the world church through its numerical success? What identity does he see the Korean Church having in the world church? What gifts does it bring? To what model of participation in the world Church does he see the Korean Church aspiring?
  - a. Is it the model of being part of the western hegemony through financial resources?
  - b. Is it a model of being part of the two-thirds world focus on the resources of its people and their eagerness for evangelism?
  - c. Is it a model of being part of the suffering



church because of its recent experience of suffering and trial and the Korean cultural theme of "grudge".

- d. In the photograph of the world church, who does he want to be seen standing next to and why?

2. Would the opportunity to relate as partners with the Two-Thirds World Church enable a clear witness to be drawn between the very fruitful alliance of Christianity and Korean Nationalism? Studies show that the success of Christianity in Korea related to resistance against the Japanese Invasion identified Christianity with Korean national identity.<sup>10</sup> Studies also show that the masification policy of the Korean government, kick starting the Korean economic miracle by encouraging people off the land into the new industries in the city has set a cultural pattern making gigantism part of Korean culture and church life. How will he lead the Korean Churches to face the challenge of being Christians in partnership with those who are Christians in small scattered communities and what enrichment will they bring to the life of the Korean Church?

2. How does he relate the financial resources of the Korean Church to the financial needs of the church in other parts of the world? What responsibility does he regard the Korean church as having for those churches and for the global witness of the church in those contexts? Churches in Africa and Asia are faced with he challenges: disease, poverty, AIDS. They have wonderful resources in their people and their faith. They are thirsty for knowledge to address their problems. For example we at OCMS are working with a small college in Kenya to train 25 church leaders over two years to give care and counsel for those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS. These 25 people will as part of their post-graduate course each train 20 people in an area base group. Each of these 500 people will be in touch with 20 people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Thus 10,000 people will be impacted by gospel-based care for AIDS. They need \$1500 dollars a year each to supplement what they are providing for the costs of this course. For the lack of this their studies may not go ahead. Given the considerable investment of churches in the United States in the early development of Korean

churches, what view does he have of a similar investment in churches in the Two-Thirds World? Why is it that Korean churches are not currently seen as sources of potential financial support by churches in the Two-Thirds world when seeking for resources? What might be the cultural issues and perspectives that need to be addressed?

3. Many churches in the US and the UK are encouraging their members to make exposure visits to the Two Thirds World to build relationships and gain a world perspective on world Christianity. It is now well recognized that Christianity is moving south. Korea is no longer economically in the Two-Thirds World. Are Koreans making exposure trips to the Two-Thirds World not only to build relationships and gain a perspective on world Christianity but also most importantly to share their narrative of surviving and growing churches in the midst of poverty with churches in Africa and India?
4. What is the relationship of Korean personnel to local Christian leadership?

### Conclusion

I ask these questions in friendship and respect. An international mission symposium and seminar at this important level requires that the respect we give each other include the respect to ask the most important questions. I suggest that the current research being done on leaders who have promoted the growth of the church in other parts of the world prompt these questions of the leadership of the growing church in Korea. I have every expectation of stimulating and exciting answers.

Writer

Sugden, Chris: Director, Oxford Center for Mission Studies, Oxford, England.

### NOTES

1. Gideon Githiga, *The Church as a Bulwark against Authoritarianism* (Nairobi, Regnum/Uzima, 2001)

2. David Gitari and Ben Knighton: *On being a Christian Leader : Story contesting Power in Kenya Transformation* October 2001; David Gitari: *In Season and Out of Season: Sermons to a Nation* (Oxford, Reg-

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

num, 1996).

3. Pervaiz Sultan: Church and Development: A Case Study from Pakistan Centre for Mission and Development, Karachi.

4. Chris Sugden: Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus, Oxford, Regnum Books, 1997.

5. Doug Petersen Not by Might nor by Power (Oxford, Regnum 1996)

6. Preface to Mission as Transformation edited by Samuel and Sugden, Regnum 1999

7. "Mission as Transformation" by Vinay Samuel in Transformation Vol. 19 No 4 October 2002 p 244

8. Summarizing "Mission as Transformation" op.cit p 245-246

9. From "Mission as Transformation" op.cit. p.246-247

10. Mou Youl Choi Korean Presbyterianism and Social Work: A Critical Analysis of the Social Work of Four Presbyterian Denominations. (PhD, OCMS/University of Wales, 1996)



### A Response to Chris Sugden

Peter Beyerhaus

The concise lecture on “Mission and Church Growth” by Dr. *Chris Sugden* is an appreciative evaluation of Dr. *Yonggi Cho’s* outstanding leadership in the mission of his *Yoido Full Gospel Church* [YFGC]. At the same time it is a straightforward challenge to him to reconsider the range and depth of his mission in our age of globalization in world evangelization. Dr. Sugden agrees with many Christians all over the world that Paul Yonggi Cho and his community are a testimony to God’s blessing on his biblical ministry that made them instruments to bring about an unprecedented example of church growth in modern times.

In his observant approach the speaker aims at a *double focus*:

One is looking back at the role, which the Korean pastor has played in gathering a fast growing community in a situation initially marked by war and deprivation.

The other one lies ahead. He is asking how the Yoido Full Gospel Church could improve and widen its contribution to the universal church, especially to the indigenous churches in the Two-thirds World. These are generally churches of the poor and suffering, highly in need of fraternal assistance from such fellow communities, which are privileged to benefit from the economic affluence of their countries. The common factor in both historical stages is the ability of the Gospel to bring about a social transformation by the life and witness of congregations with simultaneous growth both in spiritual character and in numbers.

To our speaker, an outstanding representative of the “Social Concern Wing” of the Evangelical Movement<sup>1</sup>, the former aspect is the more important one. This becomes obvious—but not only here—in the critical note of his question: “Does the Korean Church believe it is qualified to be a leader in the World Church through its numerical success?” Maybe he has in mind such ver-

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

sions of *Donald McGavran's Church Growth-Movement* where the rapid multiplication of newly established churches in Latfricasia is seen to be the one clue for fulfilling the unfinished task of world evangelization<sup>2</sup>. But any church growth advocate would maintain that growth in quantity and growth in spiritual depth are not mutually exclusive. They are two expressions of the same movement by the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup>, a gladdening experience that Paul Yonggi Cho would be the first one to testify to.

Yet Chris Sugden is quite right in pointing out that social-economic transformation has been one major attractive force and result in the history of the YFGC, - at least in the early stage. It enhanced also the appeal of Paul Yonggi Cho's evangelistic preaching. The very name "*Full Gospel Church*" adopted for his Pentecostal community anticipates the modern emphasize on a holistic approach made in both evangelical and conciliar missiology. In the self-understanding of the Yoido Church the aspects of redemption, healing and prosperity form an undissolvable trias, in which however—at least theologically—priority is given to the first aspect<sup>4</sup>. This will become evident to everybody who visits the worship of the YFGC and listens to the sermon of one of its numerous preachers.

The presentation of Dr. Sugden can be divided into **four parts**, where sections I, II and IV are about equal in length. The widest space is given to section III, which deals with the Korean Church's actual and desirable contribution to the World Church. This conception gives a forward-looking drive to the paper.

In *part one* Dr. Sugden analyzes the personal experience underlying Dr. Cho's pastoral leadership.

In *part two* he compares it with the example given by other contemporary church leaders.

In *part three* Dr. Sugden asks six penetrating questions concerning the present and future leading role of the Korean Church in World Mission generally, and in his conclusion—*part four*—he comments on the missiological discovery that—contrary to common prejudices—Pentecostals in several Two-thirds-World countries exhibit a "*Social Theology*", —not in theory but in practice.

Let me briefly comment on each of these four sections:

**I. Christian leadership** is indispensable for fruitful evangelism and church growth. It is marked, as Sugden, too, points out, by the following qualities: an inspiring vision, an existential experience resulting in humility and compassion, a strong personality, a strategic mind, a charisma to motivate and train fellow workers and successors.

Sugden rightly puts his emphasize on Yonggi Cho's experi-

ence of anxiety, suffering and rejection. For this enabled him to sympathize with his deprived compatriots and to kindle new hope in them. Dr. Sugden is right in associating this experience with that of Jesus himself, who, indeed, predicted suffering and rejection also to his followers (Mt. 10:16-26).—But it is an overstatement to call this a “repetition”<sup>5</sup> of the experience of Jesus. In fact it is theologically illegitimate. For what Jesus in his atoning self-sacrifice suffered for us, including the wrath of the Holy God over the sinfulness of the world (Hebr 9:26.28), can never be repeated and does not need to be (Hebr 10:10.12-14). Here we must clearly distinguish between the exemplary and the *soteriological* nature of Christ’s suffering. Emphasizing the pain of human suffering might lead to a Pelagian change of subjects: Man is regarded there as an innocent victim of the cruelty of others<sup>6</sup> rather than a sinner who by his guilt has deserved the punishment of God—temporal and eternal. The joyful news of the Gospel is primarily not that we can be relieved from our social suffering in an ethically transformed society. Rather it is that we are relieved from God’s eternal punishment, because on his cross Jesus Christ took upon himself this punishment on our behalf.

This is the deep existential experience, which Korean Christians made in the Great Revival Movement of 1903-07<sup>7</sup>, and which has set its stamp on the vigorous evangelical piety of the Korean Church. It has enabled Korean Christians to become outstanding martyrs<sup>8</sup>, and in this way it has made martyrdom part of the secret of Korea’s phenomenal church growth. It would be tragic if this spiritual tradition were lost under the impact of a materialistically oriented “Theology of Prosperity”—a great temptation in an affluent Korea today!

II. Dr. Sugden’s refers to the **ecclesial and national leadership** given by Archbishop *David Gitari*<sup>9</sup> to his Kenyan Church in the midst of a society, where justice and truth are damaged by declining standards in political life. This is highly relevant to his topic “Christian Leadership”. He does, however, at this point not draw a parallel to the social-political dimension of Paul Yonggi Cho’s ecclesial leadership, although it would be interesting to investigate by a special study.

Some liberal theologians who seem to be rather biased in their derogative judgment upon conservative evangelical churches in Korea generally have indeed, undertaken such investigations. In their anti-American outlook they accuse Korean Evangelicals of complacency with former authoritarian regimes in Korea, leading to blindness to the social misery of the underprivileged classes.<sup>10</sup>

What is true in this presentation is that there was a certain degree of evangelical sympathy with former Korean State Presidents on the basis on their common stance against the danger from communist North Korea, of which Korean Christians and Churches had made horrible experiences. On account of this sympathy churches were granted a degree of liberty, which highly favored their rapid expansion, especially during the 1960ies and 1970ies. Evangelical Churches in general and Pentecostals particularly did make a contribution to the economic and cultural development of the Korean nation, although not—unlike *Minjung theologians*<sup>11</sup>—by a policy of opposition. Instead, they trusted in the morally transforming effect of spiritual regeneration. They built their social strategy on the evangelistic effort to convert influential members in all segments of national life. With his specific emphasize on the power of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Yonggi Cho and his YFGC were part and parcel of this evangelistic strategy.

III. The main concern voiced in Dr. Sugden's lecture pertains to the **contribution** which Paul Yonggi Cho and his community is rendering or should render **to the Mission of the World Church**. He asks a number of questions which finally could be answered only by Dr. Cho himself. As it appears to me, the speaker himself suggests that the model of the Korean Church's participation in the life and ministry of the churches in the Two-thirds-World is to be "part of the suffering church because of its [own] recent experiences of suffering and trial and the Korean cultural theme of "grudge" (in Korean: "*han*"). Here, however, I see a *twofold problem*:

1. One is pointed out by Dr. Sugden himself: "The current generation of young people in Korea have not known the struggles that shaped Dr. Cho." But it is from this younger generation from which almost all of the 10.000 missionaries are going out to the 161 countries where Korean Christians are at work now.<sup>12</sup> Their own outlook is much more conditioned—for better or worse—by the affluence in consequence of the Korean economic post-war miracle. The main problem of Korean Christianity nowadays is not so much the trials of persecution and poverty through which the elder generation has passed, but rather the decline of spiritual zeal on account of the secularization of minds and lifestyle. To the outsider, the fervor exhibited in early morning prayer, church attendance and the sacrificial mood shown in church collections are still remarkable. But on the whole, the majority of churches complain about a decreasing interest in evangelism, which has led to the saddening effect, that—with some noteworthy exceptions—the stupendous numerical growth of

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004



former decades has come to a standstill. This experience is even made by so famous mega-churches as the *Presbyterian Young Nak Church* and also by the *Yoido Full Gospel Church* itself<sup>13</sup>.

This indicates that Korean church leaders should pause for a time of critical self-examination, before the possible role of Korean leadership in the World Church can be defined convincingly. In the case of the Pentecostal Church on Yoido-Island, the question might be asked whether its traditional stress on the social-economic aspects of a "holistic mission" that had such an appeal in the miserable post-war situation is still equally relevant in the present situation. The worst of the social problems of former generations have been basically coped with by the public economic welfare.

2. I do not believe either that the exploration of the concept of "*han*", which was introduced by the Feminist theologian *Chung, Hyun-Kyung* in her syncretistic address to the WCC's at Canberra Assembly in 1991<sup>14</sup> will be taken up by Korean Evangelical and Pentecostal missiologists in their attempt to develop a contextual biblical theology. "Grudge, wrath and bitterness" are not the characteristics of the public mentality in Korea today, if my observation is correct. It is far more optimistic, but dangerously *hedonistic* at the same time.

What, however, seems to be relevant and necessary in the present situation is an evangelistic power-encounter between the eschatological message of God's judgment and mercy in the sacrificial death of his Son and a self-sufficient second generation church which is in danger more and more to resemble the church at Sardes: "*Wake up, strengthened what remains ... remember what you have received and heard; obey it and repent!*" (Rev. 3:2-3)

By God's grace this could lead to a new revival, an awakening of conscience. The Korean Church has experienced this in earlier times, and it is an indispensable experience for any local church in the world, which obeys her calling to be a living church.

IV. In his final section Dr. Sugden addresses himself to Dr. Cho as leader of a ***Pentecostal church***, the specific characteristic is to believe in and to experience the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about change. Here - as throughout his paper - his emphasis lies on the social condition of the poor and deprived that calls for a change. He convincingly refers to historic models on the Philippines and in Latin American. Here Pentecostals, by their focus on evangelism, prayer and deliverance, have been instruments to bring about change on all levels of life: the personal, familiar and communal. He challenges Dr. Cho to encourage such research that most likely will prove that the Pentecostal

faith and practice were led to similar effects amongst the poor in Korea.

Such study would, no doubt, support the contemporary stress on the holistic nature of the Gospel in its biblical fullness which—let us never forget it!—includes suffering for Christ's sake (Acts 14:22). At the same time. It would also show that the core of the Gospel is Christ's concern to restore people suffering under spiritual and physical pain to a loving relationship to their heavenly father. *Holistic mission* is less a matter of strategy than of performing it in the compassionate mind of Jesus. He in his own ministry applied the holistic diagnosis and therapy: preaching the Gospel, exorcizing evil spirits and healing diseases (cf. Mt. 9:35-10:1). But he clearly attributed the priority of his mission to the proclamation of the Kingdom (Mark 2: 38; Lk 4:42-43). Consequently he admonished his followers: "Seek first his [your heavenly Father's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:33).

#### Writer

Beyerhaus, Peter: Professor, Tübingen University.

#### NOTES

1. Chris Sugden: "Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism", in: Vinay Samuel and Albrecht Hauser (Eds.): *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way*, Studies in Integral Evangelism, Oxford 189, pp. 29-51.—C. Sugden: "A Presentation of the Concern for Kingdom Ethics", in: Oliver Barclay and C. Sugden (Eds.): *Kingdom and Creation in Social Ethics*. Nottingham 1990, pp. 12-17.—C. Sugden: "Theological Developments since Lausanne" in: *Transformation 7:1* (Jan.- March 1990), pp. 9-12.—C. Sugden: "What is Good about the Good News to the Poor?" In: Vinay Samuel and C. Sugden (Eds.): *A.D. 2000 and Beyond. A Mission Agenda*. Oxford 1991, pp. 56-81. René C. Padilla and C. Sugden (Eds.): *Texts on evangelical social ethics 1974-1983*. Nottingham 1983.

2. W. J. Hollenweger: "Church Growth: A Faulty American Strategy" in: *International Review of Missions*, July 1968. Reprinted in: Donald McGavran (Ed.): *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents 1964-1976*, William Carey Library, Pasadena 1977, pp. 108-114.—Jordan Bishop, O.P.: "Numerical Growth—An Adequate Criterion of Mission?" *ibid.* pp. 115-120.—Marie-Louise Martin: "Does the World Need Fantastically Growing Churches?" *ibid.* pp. 15-157.

3. Melvin L. Hodges: *A Pentecostal's View on Mission Strategy*, reprinted *ibid.* pp. 142-149.

4. Cf. Allan Anderson's contribution to this Symposium: "David

---

Journal of the American Society for Church Growth, Spring 2004

Yonggi Cho's Pentecostal Theology as Contextual Theology in Korea".

5. "This narrative ... repeats the experience of Jesus in his ministry of death and resurrection ... "

6. In his address to the 7th World Conference on Mission and Evangelism at Melbourne 1980 Raymond Fung declared: "If we look at people as sinners (as distinct from the 'sinned-against'), we may have concern for them, affection or pity, but not compassion, i.e. suffering together with another, fellow-feeling, sympathy. Many of the evangelistic activities of today have little perception of the people as the sinned-against." R. Fung: "Good News to the Poor—a Case for a Missionary Movement". In: *Your Kingdom Come. Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia 12-25 May 1980.* Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, WCC, Geneva, 1980, pp. 83-92. esp. pp 84-87 "Human Sinned-Againstness".

7. L. George Paik: *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910.* Pyonyang 1927, <sup>3</sup>1980 Seoul, Yonsei University Press, pp. 354-364. —W. H. Blair: *The Korean Pentecost.* New York 1908.—Peter Beyerhaus: *Die Selbständigkeit der jungen Kirchen als missionarisches Problem.* Wuppertal <sup>3</sup>1964, pp. 240-243.

8. Sohn, Dong-Hee: *My Cup Overflows. The Wonderful Testimony of three Martyrs, Her Father and Two Brothers.* Christian Literature Society, Seoul 2001.

9. David Gitari: "Church and Politics in Kenya". *Transformation* 8:3 (July/Sept. 1991), pp. 7-17.

10. Choo, Chai-Yong: "A Brief Sketch of a Korean Christian History from the Minjung Perspective". In: Kim, Yong-Bock (Ed.): *Minjung Theology. People as subjects of history.* Christian Conference of Asia; Singapore, (no year stated), pp. 69-776.

11. In: Jürgen Moltmann (Ed.): *MINJUNG: Theologie des Volkes Gottes in Südkorea,* Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984, pp. 62-77.

12. Kang, Sung-Sam: "Korean Churches Today", in: *Missions and Missionaries* (Bi-monthly magazine, Grand Rapids) Aug./Sept 2002, pp. 5-7.

13. Kim, Myung-Hyuk: "Gebet und Gemeindegewachstum in der koreanischen Kirche". In: *DIAKRISIS* (Quarterly periodical of International Christian Network) 20 (December) 1999, pp. 207-216. 208.

14. Chung, Hyun-Kyung: "Komm, Heiliger Geist—erneuere die ganze Schöpfung", in: Walter Müller-Römheld (Ed.): *Im Zeichen des Heiligen Geistes. Offizieller Bericht der Siebenten Vollversammlung des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen,* 7-20. Februar 1991 in Canberra/Australien, Verlag Lembeck, Frankfurt a.M. 1991, pp. 47-56.



## Information for Subscribers and Writers

**Copyright :** Copyrights on articles are held by the writers. Requests for permission to reproduce material from the journal, except for brief quotations in scholarly reviews and publications, should be directed to the writers.

**Subscription Rates:** The subscription rate is \$24 per year for three issues. Canada and foreign subscriptions are an additional \$5 for each year. Individual copies are \$10 each. All prices are US Funds. Subscriptions, renewals, orders, and change-of-address notifications should be sent to: Dr. G.L. McIntosh, ASCG Journal, 13800 Biola Ave, La Mirada, CA 90639 USA. Copies are distributed free of charge to all paid-up members of the American Society for Church Growth and to supporting institutions.

**Sponsoring Institutions:** Talbot School of Theology (La Mirada, CA), Leadership Network (Dallas, TX), The McIntosh Church Growth Network (Temecula, CA), and The Church of the Nazarene (Kansas City, MO). [Sponsoring institutions assist in the publication of the ASCG Journal by contributing a minimum of \$100 per year. Two copies are sent to the sponsoring institution for the library or designated individual.]

**Submission of Articles:** The *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* welcomes articles of high standards of original scholarship and of general interest dealing with all aspects of Church Growth. Reasoned responses to past articles will be considered, as well as book reviews.

- Send two copies (typewritten and double-spaced) to Dr. Gary L. McIntosh, Editor, Talbot School of Theology, 13800 Biola Ave., La Mirada, CA 90639. One of the two copies should delete the author's name on the title page, etc. for purposes of blind review. In addition, please include a copy of the article on computer disc if at all possible.
- Follow the guidelines for style found in *The Chicago Manual of Style* or K.L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*.
- Include an abstract of no more than 150 words on a separate sheet of paper.
- Limit articles to 20 double-spaced pages, excluding tables, figures, and references. Book reviews should be 3 to 4 pages and responses 7 to 10 pages in length.
- Include the following current vita information for each writer: address, title, degree(s), and institution(s) where

earned, and specialization(s).

All manuscripts will be acknowledged promptly and processed as quickly as possible. The review process generally takes two months. Appearance of accepted articles in print is approximately six months or as forthcoming article backlog allows. Contributors receive five complimentary copies of the issue in which their article appears. Correspondence with the editor may also be by phone (562) 903-6000 X5559, fax (909) 506-3086 or e-mail: [gary\\_mcintosh@peter.biola.edu](mailto:gary_mcintosh@peter.biola.edu)

*The Donald A. McGavran Award*

Once each year the American Society for Church Growth presents the Donald A. McGavran Award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the Church Growth Movement in the United States.

The award recipients to date are:

Win Arn	1989
C. Peter Wagner	1990
Carl F. George	1991
Wilbert S. McKinnley	1992
Robert Logan	1993
Bill Sullivan	1994
Elmer Towns	1994
Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr.	1995
George G. Hunter, III	1996
Eddie Gibbs	1997
Gary L. McIntosh	1998
Kent R. Hunter	1999
R. Daniel Reeves	2000
Ray Ellis	2002

## The American Society for Church Growth

### *What is the ASCG?*

The American Society for Church Growth is a professional association of Christian leaders worldwide whose ministry activities are based on the basic and key principles of church growth as originally developed by the late Donald McGavran.

### *Who Can Join the ASCG?*

ASCG membership is open to all who wish a professional affiliation with colleagues in the field. It includes theoreticians, such as professors of church growth, and practitioners, such as pastors, denominational executives, parachurch leaders, and consultants. Some members specialize in domestic or mono-cultural church growth, while others are cross-culturally oriented.

### *Why Join the ASCG?*

The ASCG provides a forum for maximum exposure to leaders, ministries, and resources on the cutting edge of the Church Growth Movement.

The Annual meeting provides the opportunity for research updates and information on new resources and ministry developments, as well as fellowship and encouragement from colleagues in church growth. Membership in ASCG includes a subscription to *Strategies for Today's Leaders* magazine and the *Journal of American Church Growth*.

### *How to Join the ASCG?*

For further information on membership, the annual meeting and registration contact:

The American Society for Church Growth  
Office of Continuing Education  
Fuller Theological Seminary  
135 N Oakland Ave  
Pasadena, CA 91182  
Phone: (626) 584-5290  
Fax: (626) 584-5313  
E-mail: [cee@fuller.edu](mailto:cee@fuller.edu)