

人間解放におけるパウロ・フレイレの神学とジェームス・コーンの 黒人神学と韓国民衆神学の比較

Paulo Freire's theology compared with James Cone's black
liberation theology and Korean minjung theology in the theme of human liberation

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Theology has always been a significant element in any religious education theory and practice, whether it is consciously articulated or not, especially for liberative Christian educators like Thomas Groome, Daniel Schippani and John Westerhoff, advocates of liberation and social transformation. Liberative Christian education in any context must have a solid theological foundation and underpinning that sustains Christian educational praxis. I argue that Cone's Black liberation theology and Minjung theology are compatible partners and provide insightful supplements to Paulo Freire's critical theory and educational praxis, particularly in the *Zainichi* Korean Church context. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to begin to outline the theological contours of an educational philosophy for the *Zainichi* Korean church that combines these areas of thought. I will begin by highlighting Freire's theology in the areas of Humanity, God/Jesus, the Church, the Holy Spirit and History/Eschatology and connect these with those found in the theology of Cone, and Minjung theology. I will then discuss Freire's educational philosophy in the context of the *Zainichi* Korean church as an important step toward the reformulation of Freire's educational philosophy for that context.

Humanity

Freire has noted, 'Just as the Word became flesh, so the Word can be approached only through man. Theology has to take its starting point from anthropology'.¹ Therefore, he avers that one of the purposes of Christianity is to make all people fully human. Humans exist only within the possibility of either humanization or dehumanization. While the former is the vocation of all people, it is constantly being either negated or affirmed. It is negated by injustice, exploitation, violence and oppression. It is affirmed by the oppressed people's yearning for freedom and justice and the struggle of the oppressed to recover lost humanity.

Freire also avers that humans are essentially defined by their relationship to God, who has given them the power of reflection and free choice. Humans are beings of relationships, first of all to God and second to other humans. Maturing via the dynamics of these relationships, humans become the persons that they are destined to be. According to Freire, "humans must struggle to become what they are by virtue of the essence they have been given by God."² Freire contends that "the world and human

¹. Paulo Freire, "Letter to a Theology Student," 6.

². See John L. Elias, *Concientization and Deschooling: Freire's and Illich's Proposal for Reshaping Society* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 37-38.

beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction.”³ Freire’s understanding of the dynamic relationship between humans and the world is that what the world or reality becomes is a result of human action.⁴ Humans act in, and with, the world as subjects, as agents, as creators. Notwithstanding, humans can be agents of justice or injustice, splendor or cruelty.⁵ Thus, Freire sees history in many modes: as a possibility, that which is being made, and made dynamic, and that yet to come.⁶ Thus humans can operate in the world through action and reflection for a purpose. They are capable of knowing the world, and of knowing that they know it. Humans are in, and with, the world through critical contact. Since humans have the capacity to reflect, they are able to discover the contradictions inherent in reality and how to transform it. They are also able to “name the world” and transform it through their new ideas in order to create history and the future.

The entire corpus of Cone’s theology focuses on oppression and white racism. Therefore, he explains his theological view on humanity in terms of redeeming persons who were once used by oppressors by focusing on dehumanization of Africans and African Americans in particular. Cone views human nature in such a way that “to be man is to be free, and to be free is to be man.”⁷ The important consequence for understanding human nature as free is the possibility of African Americans defining their own meaning of African American existence. Cone understands human nature in relation to God as many theologians do. But the new emphasis Cone places on human nature is to make humans responsible to God so as to oppose oppressive regimes with God. He argues: “To be man is to be in the image of God, i.e., to be creative—revolting against everything that is against man.”⁸ Human in this sense is understood in light of praxis, a being of action and reflection. In fact, for Cone, revolutionary action is the only appropriate response to oppression. “To be man is to be involved, participating in the societal structure for human liberation.”⁹ In oppressive regimes, humans encounter their own limits and fight against them as they attempt to define their own meaning as persons. Cone demands: “to be free means that man is not an object, and he will not let others treat him as an it. He refuses to let limits be put on his being.”¹⁰ Cone is ultimately concerned with the recovery of humanity which means the establishment of an authentic existence for the oppressed.

Minjung theology does not have traditional theological doctrines which are a discipline of the systematization of the philosophical assumptions about theological issues. Minjung theology views the *minjung* as oppressed humans who can become the subjects of history in their struggle for a more humane society. Minjung theology does not have a theological doctrine specifically on the subject of human nature. However, Minjung theologians attempt to define “minjung” as an essence of human nature.

Byung-Mu Ahn, a biblical scholar, sought to find a biblical equivalent for the term, the “*minjung*.” He found “*am ha arets*” (the people of the land) in the Old Testament and the term, “*ochlos*,” (the crowd)

³. Ibid., 50.

⁴. Ibid., 51.

⁵. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage Critical Perspective Series* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 1998), 53.

⁶. Paulo Freire, *Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1985), 103-04.

⁷. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (New York: J.B.Lippincott Co., 1970), 160.

⁸. Ibid., 169.

⁹. Ibid., 163.

¹⁰. Ibid.

in the New Testament.¹¹ Besides these two terms, there are more words that depict people in social oppression such as “*habiru*” (the Hebrew), and “*anawim*” (the poor). Minjung theologians use these terms as Biblical references that connect the *minjung* with the Bible. He connected the *ochlos* with the *minjung* in terms of being heirs of the kingdom of God. He notes that the similarity of the *ochlos* to the *minjung* as the sick, sinners, tax collectors, and women.¹² Another Minjung theologian Yong-Bok Kim understands that the “*minjung*” is a term that is dynamic and relative in historical situations.

“*Minjung*” is not a concept which can be easily explained or defined. “*Minjung*” signifies a living reality which is dynamic, changing and complex. This living reality defines its own existence, and generates new acts and dramas in history; and refuses in principle to be defined conceptually.¹³

It is difficult to define the *minjung*'s identity in a simple concept because an understanding of the *minjung* can be viewed as paradoxical. *Minjung* is an active and relative concept. The *minjung* are the oppressed but, at the same time, according to Geeduck Song, are the subjects of history. Geeduck Song denotes several reasons why they are subjects of history. First, the *minjung* produce food, clothes, and houses for human existence. Second, if history is understood as a process to realize humanization, the *minjung* carry out the leading role in this process of humanization.¹⁴ Both Minjung and Cone's liberation theology understand that God has a special concern for suffering human nature and the desire to liberate human nature. Both Minjung theology and Cone's liberation theology begin and end with the experience of the human person in relation to other persons, not as a creature created by a Triune God. Both theologies deal primarily with reflection as related to social injustice and oppression, and moral limitations of the human person systemically and structurally rather than focusing on them individually or personally.

In this sense, both theologies cohere nicely with Freire's view of humanity. Freire believes that humans possess an ontological vocation to pursue the goal of becoming more fully human and that this is the way to complete their incompleteness (moral limitations of human) as unfinished conscious beings. Freire's concern for humanity is to restore humanization through the education of conscientization. Cone's main concern for humanity is to achieve liberation from racism, white supremacy and oppression that is systemically executed through fighting against the government. Minjung theology's concern for humanity is to overcome the oppressions of classism and sexism by transforming the world such that oppressed people becoming the subject of history. Cone's theology for humanity deals with the emotion of the blues and Minjung theology for humanity deals with the emotion of *han*. Both emotions express negative feelings about the world and the people's oppressors. In fact, both emotions are essential to initiate the people's reflection on the past and present. However, Freire's pedagogy goes beyond those emotions and aims at solidarity on the basis of the virtues every human being can

¹¹. Byung Mu Ahn was awarded his Ph.D. degree in the 1960s at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, with a dissertation entitled, “Jesus and the Ochlos in the Gospel of Mark”.

¹². Byung Mu Ahn, “Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed., The Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 143-6.

¹³. Yong Bok Kim, “Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics Over Against Political Movement,” in *Minjung Theology* (Singapore: CTC-CCA, 1983), 186.

¹⁴. Geeduck Song, “Minjung Messianism,” *Shinhaksasang [Theological Thought]* 96 (Spring 1997): 188-192.

share together. Freire said that:

It (was) written in rage and love, without which there is no hope. It is meant as a defense of tolerance-not to be confused with connivance and radicalness. It is meant as a criticism of Sectarianism.¹⁵

Freire's pedagogy, and its democratic attitude toward people through education, fulfills the hope of humanization as the bearer of love, respect, responsibility, and tolerance.

In summary, these theologies are inductive with human suffering as their starting point, denying the abstract principles of traditional theological views on humanity. Freire, Cone and Minjung theologians aver that humans have an ontological vocation to change the reality of oppression and work towards humanization. Freire and the Minjung theologians believe that humans are to be the subject of history and that God endows humans with the ability to become subjects in history, whereas Cone believes that the ontological vocation of humans is to fight against social injustice, racism and oppression and to achieve freedom and humanization.

God/Jesus Christ

Freire regards God as one who is present in history and pushes humans towards world transformation in order to restore the humanity of the oppressed. Although God is seeking to transform the situation, God is not the cause of the situation. Hence, those who rebel against the unjust order are not going against the will of God.¹⁶ God will manifest in the making of history through those who work in solidarity with the oppressed.¹⁷

Freire's God is a presence in history, empowering people to transform reality. God endows humans with the ability to become subjects in history, unlike the Hegelian "*Geist*"¹⁸ who is moving and shaping history, with humankind as passive objects in the dialectical transformation of reality. Freire understands God as the one who invites humans to become subjects in order to change the world through reflection-action.¹⁹ Also, unlike Marx who removed Geist from the process of history and made humankind the initiator, Freire's God partners with people.²⁰ For Freire, it is the word of God which actively invites people to re-create the world for liberation.²¹ This word demands from us a historical commitment. It is the voice of God for the oppressed. Freire believes that God is active in human history. God, through Christ, is acting in solidarity with the poor and oppressed of the earth to bring about their liberation.

Freire considers God as a presence in history, inviting humankind to participate in the transformation of the world. Yet, for Freire, while the presence of God can be found in all of human

¹⁵. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, 10.

¹⁶. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart* (New York: Continuum 1998), 103.

¹⁷. Ibid.

¹⁸. It is a German word that does not translate very well into English. It is usually translated as mind, spirit or ghost but can be associated with drive or motivation. Closer approximations include the Greek word "*pneuma*".

¹⁹. Thomas Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 164-65.

²⁰. Ibid., 166.

²¹. Paulo Freire, "Letter to a Theology Student," 7.

existence, God does not impose himself upon human history.²² In this respect, Freire has reduced God's activity to human history making, and by doing so, it makes no distinction between secular aspirations for a just society and the image of the kingdom of God.

Freire focuses on the Gospels and the witness they contain of Jesus Christ. Freire believes that just as the Word became flesh, so can the word be approached through humankind, and this is the basis for Freire's insistence that the starting point of theology is anthropology. Freire regards Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, an example of the teacher who was the Truth.²³

Cone identifies two basic principles relative to a God hermeneutic. First, there is a biblical view of revelation that began with God's liberation of the people of Israel and concluded when Jesus became incarnate to fulfill God's purpose as foretold in Scripture. Second, God is an active participant in the liberation of all human kind. This is because God was revealed in the plight of an oppressed Israel and in Jesus Christ, who was also seen as oppressed.²⁴ This God is revealed through their liberation, just as with the Israelites and Jesus Christ.

Cone points to the Exodus event as God acting in history to liberate God's elect people—the Israelites, from bondage. It is in the Exodus event that God reveals God's self as the liberator or Savior of the oppressed Hebrews.²⁵ Moreover, God elects the Israelites to be God's people, to be in covenant with God. God creates for the Israelites what they cannot create for themselves.²⁶ Because of this act, God is known as the One who brought Israel out of bondage and into a new future. Cone believes that the Exodus event is important and he suggests Israelite's history actually begins with this particular event.²⁷ The Exodus event is not only historically important, but has significance for the oppressed individual today. The Exodus event is an example of God's willingness to act for the oppressed, freeing them from social and political bondage.²⁸ God not only seeks freedom (social) in the sense of no longer being enslaved, but God seeks freedom (political) in the sense of having self-determination.

Cone regards Jesus Christ as the essence of Christianity in that "Christianity begins and ends with the man Jesus -- his life, death, resurrection."²⁹ Because Jesus is the essence and central focal point of Christianity, Cone is convinced that "to talk of God or of man without first talking about Jesus Christ is to engage in idle, abstract words which have no relation to the Christian experience of revelation."³⁰ Cone believes that Jesus Christ is the starting point for any analysis of liberation in the black community.³¹ Cone claims:

There is no liberation independent of Jesus' past, present, and future coming. He is the ground of our present freedom to struggle and the source of our hope that the vision disclosed in our historical fight against oppression will be fully realized in God's future. In this sense, liberation

²². Paulo Freire, "Education for Awareness: A Talk with Paulo Freire," *Risk* 6, no. 4 (1970), 17.

²³. Paulo Freire, "Education, Liberation and the Church," *Religious Education* 79, no.4(1984), 547.

²⁴. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 54-56.

²⁵. James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 58.

²⁶. Ibid.

²⁷. Ibid.

²⁸. Ibid.

²⁹. James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 34.

³⁰. Ibid.

³¹. James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 127.

is not a human possession but a divine gift of freedom to those who struggle in faith against violence and oppression.³²

Cone grounds liberation in Jesus Christ because he perceives liberation as a divine gift. If liberation is simply a human enactment, then he cannot make the link between the works of God and the works of humanity to seek freedom for the oppressed. By arguing that Jesus Christ is the ground of liberation, Cone creates a link between the divine and humanity. The claim that Jesus is fully human and fully divine means Jesus' s action for the downtrodden are not merely human actions, but also divine in nature. As Cone states, "Jesus Christ ... calls the helpless and weak into a newly created existence."³³ This existence is possible because Jesus Christ offers to humans a divine gift—the gift of liberation.

In Minjung theology, Byung-Mu Ahn identifies the *minjung* with Jesus. He states, "Jesus is the *minjung*, and the *minjung* are Jesus."³⁴ The *minjung* have a salvific function for the *minjung* and others. Minjung theology replaces "the Savior-saved schema" with "the Jesus-*minjung* schema."³⁵ Nam-Dong Suh and Byung-Mu Ahn developed their particular understanding of Jesus Christ based on the *minjung* perspective. For them, Jesus Christ is important not because he is the divine man, but because he shows God' s new reign among the people around him. Suh' s focus on *am ha'aretz* and Ahn' s dealing with *ochlos* place the oppressed *minjung*, not Jesus, at the center of their Christology. Therefore, Jesus' s ministry and passion story is more important than his nature. It is the Jesus event that is important in *minjung* Christology. Jesus in *minjung* Christology is one of the *minjung*—not different from them. This *minjung* Jesus uses *minjung* language, dances with them and enjoys *minjung* arts. Suh sees the ministry of Jesus as the ministry of *dan*. Suh understands Jesus as the priest of *han* who lived among the *minjung* and who listened to their *han*-ridden cries, and resolved their *han*. Jesus was the priest of *han* who worked hard to meet the physical needs of the *minjung* of his time. Jesus' s work as the priest of *han* was to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and to restore the rights of the alienated. Suh says:

Jesus Christ works with those whom he meets, sees, hears about. He works around, heals the sick with his own hands, feeds the starved, spits on dirt and makes clay of the spittle to put on a wound. At other times the sick people come near him and touch his clothes. Therefore, the works of Jesus Christ were physical work, physical interactions, missions of the body, and materialistic work. It was not the thoughts of the head, not the mission of the mind.³⁶

Suh sees that Jesus tried to cure the *minjung's han* of poverty, oppression, and alienation in his time. In order to overcome these problems, "Jesus lived with the *minjung* and was hanged on the cross."³⁷ His understanding of *dan*, on the other hand, shows that salvation is achieved by the *minjung*

³². Ibid.

³³. Ibid., 139.

³⁴. Byung-Mu Ahn, *Minjung Sihakui Tamgu [A Study of Minjung Theology]*, 180-181.

³⁵. However, the notion of "*minjung* Jesus" is against traditional Christian doctrine. Jurgen Moltmann asserts, "Minjung Theology is not the exclusive 'representation' Christology of the Reformation' s *solus Christus*. It is the inclusive solidarity Christology of the divine Brother, who suffers with us and who identifies himself with 'the least' among the people." Jurgen Moltmann, *Experience in Theology*, (PUBLISHER), 256.

³⁶. Nam-Dong Suh, "Theology as Story-telling: A Counter-Theology," *CTC Bulletin*, 11.

³⁷. Ibid., 14.

themselves. The *minjung* save not only themselves, but also their oppressors by practicing *dan*. Jesus in this perspective plays the role of the priest of *han*.

In summary, Cone's theology understands that God works on behalf of the poor and oppressed, seeking their liberation and freedom. Cone contends that God is the God of, and for, the oppressed and that God comes into view in their liberation. Cone understands that the white doctrine of God had failed African Americans in that God was used by whites to perpetuate oppression. Cone avers that Jesus' suffering in life, and on the cross, signified his identification with the oppressed so that Jesus' liberation needed to be viewed in the context of black oppression. In order to accomplish liberation for the oppressed African Americans, Christ had to become black.

The Minjung theologians do not insist on the uniqueness of Jesus. Rather they insist that Jesus is one of the *minjung*. Therefore, Jesus is understood in the context of the community. Like Black liberation theologian James Cone, the Minjung theologians criticize the excessive emphasis of Western Christology on the divinity of Jesus Christ. Also Minjung Christology pays close attention to the people around Jesus. The focus of Minjung Christology is not Jesus but the *minjung*. Suh thinks of Jesus as one of the *minjung* who played the role of the priest of *han*. Thus, he makes *han* the main theme of his Christology. Therefore, Minjung Christology contends that when we acknowledge who these people around Jesus were in terms of socio-economic analysis, we can understand the ministry of Jesus better and thus his meaning to us today.

Comparatively speaking, although Friere believes that God, through Christ, is acting in solidarity with the poor and oppressed of the earth to bring about their liberation, I find that Freire's Jesus Christ is not as deep in meaning and nature for the oppressed people of his time as James Cone's and the Minjung theologian's articulation of Jesus Christ. I aver that Jesus is more than just a liberator of the poor and oppressed people in the Latin American society of his time. Jesus can be *minjung* in *Zainichi* Korean society, and Jesus can be black in the African American society. Freire's theology should deepen and define who Jesus is to the poor and oppressed in Latin American society. Nevertheless, the question of who Jesus is to certain oppressed people has no definite answer because the answer is always changing in socio-economic and cultural situations. However, the fact that Jesus as God incarnate is always on the side of the poor and oppressed will never change.

Holy Spirit

Freire does not maintain a doctrine of the Holy Spirit in his theology. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in his writings as one who is enabling the oppressed to perceive reality. Rather, he discounts any valid religion-based action among the oppressed. He negates any supernatural role of the Holy Spirit that does not result in critical reflection toward liberation. Freire follows Marx's social analysis and his views on religious behavior. He sees the cause of the oppressed's religious behavior as being the basic alienation arising from class divisions. For Freire religious behavior is a reflection of one's socio-political status.

In Minjung theology, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the Messiah, is related to the *minjung*'s revolutionary movement. Minjung theologian Yong-Bok Kim says that "the main content of the Holy Spirit's activity is to sensitize the *minjung* to become conscious of themselves (conscientization) as the historical subject in the course of their social biography."³⁸ The Holy Spirit is manifested in the *koinonia* of the *minjung* in God.

According to Byung-Mu Ahn, the Jesus event is happening today in the *minjung* event. His identification of the *minjung* event with the Jesus event is based on his understanding of the Holy Spirit. He argues that the *minjung* event is a Holy Spirit event and³⁹ quotes Luke 4:18-19 to show that the Holy Spirit is related to the liberation of the oppressed. That is why Ahn understands the Holy Spirit not as *individuum* but as event.⁴⁰

Ahn interprets the Pentecost event in Acts 2 as a *minjung* event. The Pentecostal event which took place among the poor oppressed Galilean people who followed Jesus was their experience of the presence of Jesus among them. When they experienced the presence of Jesus among them, they began to rise and speak bravely about the injustice of their oppression. Their forced silence became broken. More importantly, they overcame the language problem. Ahn interprets the speaking in tongues at Pentecost as a breaking down of their differences. The oppressed people's voice began to be heard. This means that "the Holy Spirit event is a revolutionary event by the *minjung*."⁴¹

Suh argues that *minjung* are those who can transcend themselves. This is the messianic characteristic of the *minjung*. Ahn developed this concept of "self-transcendence of the *minjung*" based on his understanding of the Holy Spirit. He says that this understanding of the *minjung* event is similar to Bultmann's understanding of the *pneuma* as self-transcending consciousness. For Ahn this means that "the *minjung* event itself is the Holy Spirit event."⁴² However, Ahn adds that the *minjung* event is of the same nature as the Jesus event, because the historical reference of this Holy Spirit event is the Jesus event.⁴³

Cone believes that the "Holy Spirit is the power of God at work in the world affecting in the life of his people his intended purpose."⁴⁴ Moreover, the Holy Spirit is perfecting not only sanctification and justification in the private life of the believer, but also working in and through the believer to engage the world in order to confront the evil and the suffering humanity.⁴⁵ Total surrender to the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit positions one to both live and die for God;⁴⁶ as God confronts evil and oppression through God's spirit. The believer also is engaged in a process that is costly and requires a tremendous amount of sacrifice, discipline, and trust in God to embody the effectual redeeming work of the Holy Spirit.

The African American experience of oppression, alienation and dehumanization has brought about a clear understanding that reality must be overcome for justice and that justice over oppression must come by the Holy Spirit in and through the people of God. Cone has not been satisfied with attempts to

³⁸. Yong-Bok Kim, "Theology and the Social Biography of the Minjung," op. Cit., 76. (This is not in your bibliography and does not have enough information)

³⁹. Byung Mu Ahn, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, 220.

⁴⁰. Ahn says: "The institutional church regards the Holy Spirit as *persona* so that it may accept the Trinity. However, since it understood *persona* as *individuum*, each God, Son, Son, and the Holy Spirit is *individuum*. However, it had the danger of polytheism. In order to overcome the polytheism, the institutional church suggested the Trinity, but it did not overcome the confusion out of the doctrine of the Trinity." Ibid., 215.

⁴¹. Byung-Mu Ahn, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, 221.

⁴². Ibid.

⁴³. Ibid., 222.

⁴⁴. James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 57.

⁴⁵. Ibid., 58.

⁴⁶. Ibid., 59.

solve the problem of oppression with individual piety. Cone insists that ‘liberation is not only a relationship with God but an encounter grounded in the historical struggle to be free.’⁴⁷

The Holy Spirit puts into action what both Korean *minjung* and African-Americans believe about God. The Holy Spirit keeps them keenly aware of God’s presence in their historical reality of being oppressed people. While Jesus is considered a liberator for the work he accomplished through his life and death, it is the Holy Spirit that allows them as an oppressed people to keep in touch with God. The Holy Spirit keeps God present in the lives and condition of both the Korean *minjung* and African Americans. The Holy Spirit not only sustains them in their oppression, but assures them of a hope in God.

It is evident that Freire has left the Holy Spirit “undernourished” in his theology and pedagogy. The importance of the Holy Spirit can not be overlooked in the *Zainichi* Korean Christian Community because it is the Holy Spirit of freedom that empowers them to feel strong in spite of their situation that renders them weak and helpless. In essence, God as the Holy Spirit is still working in them for freedom and transformation of the Japanese society. Thus, the liberatory work of the Holy Spirit must be included in the liberative education for the *Zainichi* Koreans.

Church

Freire identifies three types of churches existing in Latin America: the traditional, the modernizing and the prophetic. The traditionalist church is described as having a colonialist bias and a dichotomizing rejection of the “world.” For Freire, this type of church becomes a “heaven of the masses” rather than a force of continuing social revolution. He describes it as “intensely colonialist ... a missionary church in the worst sense of the word—a necrophiliac winners of souls, ... a church whose members are drawn in their culture of silence and whose anger is directed at the world rather than systems that are running the world.”⁴⁸ Education in this context is, in Freire’s terms, “paralyzing, alienating and alienated, denying praxis to its people.”⁴⁹

Freire describes the modernizing church as having abandoned its traditional perspective for one of “do-goodism” and populism rather than one of true social change. This type of church has improved “working tools,” such as mass media, but rejects radical social transformation in favor of structural reform.⁵⁰ To Freire the modernizing church is reform-oriented, concerned with structural reform rather than the radical transformation of structures and with the humanization of capitalism rather than its total suppression. The modernizing church, according to Freire, “gives the impression of moving but it is standing still.” Its members “die(s) because they refuse to die” and its rulers “are so drugged with having that they have ceased to be.”⁵¹ Freire believed that the liberating education described by the modernizing church amounts to “liberating the students from blackboards, static classes, and textbook curricular, and offering them projectors and other audio-visual accessories, more dynamic classes and a new technico-professional teaching;”⁵² even though it may speak of “liberal” education as the liberating

⁴⁷. James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 134.

⁴⁸. Paulo Freire, *Politics of Education*, 131-133.

⁴⁹. Paulo Freire, “Education, Liberation and the Church,” 537.

⁵⁰. *Ibid.*, 540.

⁵¹. Paulo Freire, *Politics of Education* (South Jadley, MA: Bergin Garvery, 1985), 133-137.

education.

For Freire, it is the prophetic church which identifies itself with the struggle of the oppressed and actively pursues liberation and social transformation. This church clearly aligns itself with the poor but is not naive in its world-view. It knows that its role is to “make history” for the cause of liberation.⁵³ Freire claims that the prophetic churches live out “the true Easter,” and understand that they “are not abstract entities” but “are institutions involved in history.” Such churches understand that they cannot be neutral in the world.⁵⁴ He notes that the prophetic church “rejects all static forms of thought. It accepts becoming in order to be, because it thinks this prophetic church cannot think of itself as neutral.”⁵⁵ He notes that this church “does not separate worldliness from transcendence or salvation from liberation.”⁵⁶ Rather, it has a scientific knowledge of the reality of the world, knowing that this reality is in need of the denunciation of the present order and the birth of a new order through a state of permanent revolution.⁵⁷

The prophetic church is a church of the oppressed and for the oppressed. The prophetic church is the church of the base communities, the church that never compromises itself in its option for the poor and oppressed. The church lives a theology borne of struggle. As Freire said, “Since it is prophetic, this theology of liberation cannot attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable.”⁵⁸ He avers that the traditional and modernizing churches fail to carry out their prophetic role because they proclaim neutrality in the face of injustice. It was this ‘proclaim neutrality in the face of injustice’ that Freire objected to because churches are not afforded the luxury of being politically neutral while supporting the political status quo. For him, churches must ally themselves with the poor for the sake of the poor.

Cone is clear about the role that the church is called to play in society in terms of participating in God’s liberating work.⁵⁹ He relies on prophetic tradition and argues that the “church is the community that participates in Jesus Christ’s liberating work in history; it can never endorse ‘law and order’ that causes suffering.”⁶⁰ Basically, Cone works with the tension between the Hebrew text and the New Testament and perceives similarities relating to the unjust suffering experienced both by the Israelites and African Americans.

Cone defines the characteristics of church as participation in the historical liberation spearheaded by God. He clearly does not consider people as the subject of history, and the oppressed African Americans as the church but as the community that participates in Jesus Christ’s liberating work in history.⁶¹ Cone argues that the church must move beyond just the dialectic of the ‘wasness’ and ‘isness’ of Jesus Christ to “Jesus is who He will be.”⁶² For the Black church, Jesus is not only the crucified and risen one, but the Lord of all who will come again to consummate the liberation taking

⁵². Ibid., 137.

⁵³. Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 136.

⁵⁴. Ibid., 121.

⁵⁵. Ibid., 137.

⁵⁶. Paulo Freire, “The Education and Liberation of the Church,” 540.

⁵⁷. Ibid., 543.

⁵⁸. Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 139.

⁵⁹. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 130.

⁶⁰. Ibid.

⁶¹. James H. Cone, *The Black Theology of Liberation*, 130.

⁶². James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 116.

place in oppressed communities.⁶³

Moreover, Cone is adamant that “where Christ is, there is the church. Christ is to be found, as always, where men are enslaved and trampled under foot; Christ is found suffering; Christ is in the ghetto – there also is his church.”⁶⁴ Ultimately, Cone’s support is for those churches whose mission is defined by liberation. Simultaneously, he criticizes those churches which fail in this responsibility. Cone defines what exactly for him is the true nature and mission of the church for liberation. For Cone, “the black church is the single most important institution in the black community.” He argues:

Beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing to the Present, it has been the oldest and most independent African-American organization. Its importance is so great that some scholars say that the black church is the black community, with each having no identity apart from each other. Even if some will deny this claim, no informed person can deny this claim, no informed person can deny the centrality of the black church in the black community. Therefore black liberation is, at least in part, dependent upon the attitude and role that the church assumes in relation to it.⁶⁵

Cone seems to equate, to some degree, the African American church and the African American community in the sense that the nature and mission of the African American church and the African American community are apparently inseparable. This means that if the African American church is found lacking in its responsibility to initiate liberation, the African American community must be held responsible, and vice versa. On the other hand, if liberation is the central theme, both the African American church and the African American community are equally responsible. Cone contends that both the African American church and the white church are anti-Christ if they do not assume responsibility for liberation of the oppressed. In regard to the white church being antichrist, the white church has supported slavery, segregation, and oppression. But, the African American church, according to Cone, has also failed in its responsibility, particularly the post-Civil War African American church which resigned itself to placing emphasis upon going to heaven rather than to sound the call for liberation in this world.⁶⁶

Minjung theology emphasizes that the Church is not merely for the *minjung* but also of and by the *minjung*. In other words, the Church is the *minjung*’s movement. The *minjung* church in the Old Testament is the Tabernacle which the Israelites built in the Sinai wilderness. The Tabernacle was portable and could be moved to any place the Israelites wanted. The *minjung* church is a church which moves to wherever the *minjung* are, and where they want to be in their search for the kingdom of Heaven; while the institutional church is fixed, standing where it is, and asks the people to come to where it is like the house of the Lord that Solomon built.⁶⁷ The *minjung* church, as a people’s movement,

⁶³. Ibid.

⁶⁴. James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, eds., *Black Theology: A Documentary History, Volume I: 1966-1979*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 118.

⁶⁵. James H. Cone, *For My people: Black Theology and the Black Church, Where Have Been and Where we are going?* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), 99.

⁶⁶. James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 107-108.

cannot ignore the situation of the people who are oppressed, exploited, marginalized, and depleted.

The *minjung* church in the New Testament is the Jesus movement which is deeply rooted in the relationship between Jesus and *ochlos*.⁶⁸ Therefore, examining the relationship between Jesus and *ochlos* is a way to understand what the Jesus movement is and/or represents. The Jesus movement was a liberation movement of the *ochlos* who had been oppressed, exploited, and marginalized by the powerful and dominant class. The core of Jesus' teaching was the proclamation of the kingdom of Heaven in which the *ochlos* are the subjects, and the goal of the Jesus movement was the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven on earth. And there are many common grounds between the concept of *minjung* and *ochlos*, both of whom are the subjects of the *minjung* church and the Jesus movement. And, both the *minjung* church and the Jesus movement have a common goal, which is the liberation of the *minjung* (*ochlos*) from their respective sufferings, oppression, and painful present realities. Therefore, the *minjung* church can embrace the Jesus movement as its model in the New Testament.

The *minjung* church is a church against the church, because the *minjung* church is a church against a culture and it denounces the dominant culture since the established church is in captivity of today's "money-mad competitive culture."⁶⁹ And it is a church of the culture, because the *minjung* church is the inheritor of the *minjung* culture, thereby restoring the values and heritage of true humanity coming from below.

Minjung theologians and Cone believe that the appropriate mission of the church is to lead a call for justice, liberation and empowerment of oppressed people. Justice, liberation and empowerment are important in the sense that the *minjung* church and the African American church when properly fulfilling their duties, are in tune with the mission of Christ. Otherwise the church is anti-Christ -- similar to Freire's notion of the "traditional church" -- and is self-serving in the sense of satisfying its parishioners with the message of going to heaven. Cone argues that the "white church" is guilty of engaging in conservative politics counter to the African American people's quest for liberation. In both cases, the theological view of church -- both traditional and institutionalized churches -- fails to recognize that God has been working all along with the oppressed as they struggle to be fully human.

The *Minjung's* aim is to build a Jesus-movement community in order to make the *minjung* subjects of history. Cone seeks liberation of the African Americans as a social responsibility of the African American church. Freire's prophetic church aims at denouncing the present order, and the birth of a new order through a state of permanent revolution. Each of these examples were born in the suffering of an oppressed context of people and started where the marginalized people were suffering and

⁶⁷. The purpose of the building of the Tabernacle was explicitly presented in the order of Yahweh. "And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8)

⁶⁸. '*Ochlos*,' used by Mark, has many similarities with the word '*minjung*' although it is not literally identical. First, the *ochlos* are tax collectors and sinners. Tax collectors were marginalized in society because they were considered betrayers of their country and people. Jesus became a friend with tax collectors and one of them became his disciple. Second, the *ochlos* are the sick, those who have no financial ability to treat their illnesses, and the possessed who were in deep trouble psychologically. Third, the *ochlos* are also the women who gathered around Jesus including those who were cured by Jesus from various diseases. Jesus showed unconditional compassion toward women who were accused of being sinners by the dominant group of men, who were in deep trouble physically and psychologically, who were poor and sick. Fourth, the *ochlos* are the poor. Those who followed Jesus were mostly poor although there are no written documents to prove that they were poor.

⁶⁹. Frederick Herzog, *Justice Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1980), 78.

struggling for their dignity and calling, and accepting those who are poor, oppressed, exploited, and alienated, to be transformers of history. The church model of the *Zainichi* Korean Church must consist of all elements: a Jesus movement, liberation as a social responsibility, and denouncing the old order to birth a new order, to effectively deal with the problem of racism and oppression. However, the *Zainichi* Korean church is based not only on resistance against its Japanese oppressors by fighting against the Japanese government, but is also based on the Biblical tradition of the Jesus movement which aims at building the 'Kingdom of God' in the present world, not in the world beyond death. *Zainichi* Korean praxis is firmly grasping the tradition of the Jesus movement such that it believes in the immanent 'Kingdom of God' on earth and takes the suffering of the cross as its methodology for the movement.

History/Eschatology

Freire has a Christian-Marxist view of history. Freire contends that the "world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction."⁷⁰

Freire's understanding of the dynamic relationship between humans and the world is that what the world, or reality, becomes is a result of human action.⁷¹ Humans act in and with the world as subjects, as agents, as creators. Notwithstanding, humans can be agents of justice or injustice, splendor or cruelty.⁷² Thus, Freire sees history as possibility, that is being made, is dynamic, and yet to come through liberation praxis.

Freire considers God as a presence in history, inviting humans to participate in the transformation of the world. For Freire, while the presence of God can be found in all of human existence, God does not impose him/herself upon human history.⁷³ In this respect, Freire reduced God's activity in human history-making and, in doing so, makes no distinction between secular aspirations for a just society and the image of the Kingdom of God.

However, the God of the Israelites clearly chose to impose him/herself upon human history in order to alter events. The presence of God in the exodus event was an imposition, not only upon the Egyptian Pharaoh, but also upon the lives of the Israelites, God called for liberation of the Israelites. I aver that what Freire fails to enunciate is a concept of how God relates to human history.

There is a limitation of Freire's understanding of history in that he looks at history from a philosophical, humanist perspective that does not explicitly account for God's action and presence in history. Hence, history is a combination of what God brings, and will bring to humanity and the human ability to discern and respond accordingly to what God brings to the world.

Cone observes that no eschatological perspective is sufficient which does not challenge present order. The eschatological promise for the future is seen in contrast to the present reality of evil and suffering. The promise centers on abolishment of the present order and establishment of a new kingdom where suffering, evil and the formidable hardship of oppression will be vanquished. Therefore, Cone affirms that the black concept of liberation is both historical and transcendent over history

⁷⁰. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 36.

⁷¹. Ibid.

⁷². Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans., Patrick Clarke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2001), 53.

⁷³. Paulo Freire, "Education for Awareness: A Talk with Paulo Freire" *Risk* 6, no. 4 (1970):7.

(*ahistorical*).

It is important to note that Black Theology, while taking history with utmost seriousness, does not limit liberation to history. When people are bound to history, they are enslaved to what the New Testament calls the law of death. If the oppressed, while living in history can nonetheless see beyond it, if they can visualize an eschatological future beyond the history of their humiliation, the sign of the oppressed' to use Marx's phrase, can become a cry of revolution against the established order.⁷⁴

For Cone, liberation has both a historical and an *ahistorical* nature. Rather than dismissing the "speaking out" done by generations of African Americans who never knew concrete liberation, he has considered it as a legitimate form of announcing liberation. Cone's analysis of the 'speaking out' which has occurred within sermons and testimonies of African American worship suggests that it represents not passivity but the African American peoples' experience of liberation as hope for a new heaven and new earth. This new kingdom promised for the future would be able to be realized in the present, and it is essentially a new moral order, an order where racial distinctions and economic and political disparity are abolished, where all humanity work together for the common good. For Cone, the eschaton⁷⁵ is realized within the context of history and community. He avers that:

God is conceived not only as a God who acts in history for me; he acts in the history of a particular community, and his action can only be for me, insofar as I choose to belong to his community. A man's selfhood is bound up with the community to which he belongs.⁷⁶

Cone states that the promise of freedom is held by communities in bondage. The oppressed community is where individuals find wholeness, peace, and understanding of their true ontological nature in relation to their neighbors. It is a context in which all historical acts for freedom are actualized and the promise of justice is fulfilled.

But eschaton, for Cone, like freedom, is not something merely to be anticipated. Humans cannot simply anticipate freedom but must actively struggle against the evil powers and principalities. In this sense, humankind is an extension, an ontological embodiment of God's will for the realization and actualization of the promise. Humankind must denounce oppression, repudiate and eliminate the ruling power of evil and do whatever possible to announce the coming of the kingdom of God. The eschaton is anticipation of God's promise of freedom in the future and active engagement in the realization of freedom in the present.

Minjung theology understands history eschatologically in such a way that the aspiration of the oppressed *minjung* does not point to an *ahistorical* paradise, but inevitably requires an earthly society, such as is symbolized by the coming millennial kingdom, to be established through a historical

⁷⁴. Ibid., 160.

⁷⁵. The eschaton is both political and moral: political because the powers and principalities are stripped of a previously impregnable authority, and moral because it is God's concern for justice and equality that precipitates its coming.

⁷⁶. James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 138.

revolution. *Minjung* theology focuses on the symbol of the millennial kingdom, which is expressed through an understanding that the messianic kingdom of social justice must be restored and the insistence that the redemption of the *minjung* is to be realized when the *minjung* have full subjectivity in history.

The *minjung* church, as a people's movement, is based on eschatology. But it denies the notion of the unrealistic armed struggle against the contradiction of this world. It also denies a naïve eschatology which could lead people to the false attitude of postponing difficult tasks of the present world to the future in expectation that God will intervene in human history with God's almighty power. The *minjung* church is firmly grasping the tradition of the Jesus movement so that it believes in the immanent 'kingdom of God' on earth and takes the suffering of the cross as its methodology for the movement.

Byung-Mu Ahn contends that the church is an eschatological community through which the kingdom of God is realized.⁷⁷ According to him, the eschatological consciousness of the *minjung* inevitably rescinds the existing social system or ruling order, because the social, political, moral, and religious status quo cannot be acknowledged in the context of the coming of the kingdom of God.⁷⁸ The *minjung* church as a people's movement is also based on eschatology. The *minjung* church is a people's movement with a strong conviction that the *minjung* can accomplish something in this world.

In summary, Freire's eschatology is based on his understanding of the nature of God and the will of God for the world connected with denouncing injustice and announcing the Kingdom of God, which can be realized when God and humans work together for the liberation of the oppressed. Cone's eschatology affirms that the eschaton restores full humanity to the oppressed by meliorating the external conditions necessary for humanization. *Minjung* theology's eschatology argues that the kingdom of God will come onto the earth in the not-too-distant future and to a great extent by one's own effort so that kingdom of God must be fulfilled by the *minjung* in terms of the elimination of socio-politico-economic injustice on earth. Ultimately, the Kingdom of God is accomplished not by the authority of God, but by the power of the *minjung* in the world. However, the *Minjung* church as a people's movement is based on eschatology.

Together with these understandings of history/eschatology, the *Zainichi* Korean Church fits well with the *Minjung* church as it aims for the kingdom of God, which will not be a replacement of the *Minjung* church in this world at the end of human history, but will be a continuation of the *Minjung* church in human history. Thus, the *Zainichi* Korean Church is in the process of a gradual completion of the kingdom of God, not preparing for the kingdom of God.

⁷⁷. Byung Mu Ahn, *Minjung Shinhak Yiyagi*, 164-68.

⁷⁸. *Ibid.*, 168.

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