

Understanding the Kingdom of God in the Tension between Aphoristic and Apocalyptic Motifs: Towards a Hermeneutic of Liberation for Minjung Theology

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I. Introduction: A New Trend of Understanding the Kingdom of God for A Dialogue with Minjung Theology

This paper aims to present a recent view of the Kingdom of God and to integrate it into a constructive hermeneutic for liberation theologies. I will illustrate how Minjung theology, a Korean version of liberation theology, can have a critical and constructive dialogue with the Kingdom of God proposed by recent biblical scholarship on the historical Jesus. I discovered in a recent study of the historical Jesus that non-apocalyptic aphoristic notion of the Kingdom of God is emerging as an important hermeneutical motif of liberation. The new approach to the Kingdom of God uses not only the historical-critical method for reconstructing its social background, but also the literary-critical method for reinterpreting its literary form and rhetorical feature of the Kingdom sayings and parables.

To show this shift in approaches to the historical Jesus, I have chosen the works of two biblical scholars: Norman Perrin and Burton L. Mack. Both scholars use the historical and literary critical methods at the same time. Norman Perrin concentrates on the Apocalyptic thought world of the Kingdom of God in the context of historical Jesus while Burton Mack focuses on the social history of the Kingdom of God in the context of Markan community. Thus we can see a clue of the hermeneutical insight for liberation theology from the tension between apocalyptic and aphoristic motifs imbedded in both scholars' exegetical, literary, and theological interpretations of the Kingdom of God. The literary—critical and historical—critical methods will be separately presented for this purpose. Mack's *Myth of Innocence* is a major reference in this research.

With regards to Minjung theology, I will focus on some issues involved in exegetical, christological, and hermeneutical foundation, which the first world theologians raised after critically reading the theological statements of Minjung theologians. Jung Young Lee noted various responses of worldwide theologians to Minjung theology in his book, *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective*. For making a constructive dialogue between the recent study of Kingdom of God and Minjung Theology, I will concentrate especially on the theme of eschatology and Christology in his book as well as the biblical foundation of Minjung theology in Byung Mu Ahn's book, *A Story of Minjung Theology*.

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II. Historical Critical Approach to Kingdom of God

A. Eschatological Kingdom of God as Individual Existence: Norman Perrin

Minjung theologians pose an eschatological issue involved in the Kingdom of God and Messianism. Kingdom of God in the traditional theology is upheld by rulers and oppressors, while political messianism empowers the oppressed and the ruled.² This sharp dichotomization between two Christian symbols manifests the biblical scholars' shortcomings in understanding the symbol of Kingdom of God. Kosuke Koyama criticizes Nam Dong Suh's misinterpretation of the dynamic symbol of the Kingdom of God, stating:

My response to this is that unfortunately the church, as Suh Nam-dong indicates, misinterpreted the dynamic symbol of the Kingdom of God---. The kingdom of God is to do with the unexpected manifestation of the power of God in this world of ours, not the place the believer enters at death.³

Thus the richness of Christian eschatology represented in the symbol of the Kingdom of God needs to be clarified by a survey of Jesus' Kingdom sayings. In my opinion, Minjung theology tends to depend upon a thoroughly historical eschatology in the apocalyptic-messianic tradition. Because of the urgent demand for a theological rationale of social justice, the significance of the poetic and mythic function in the rich traditions of the kingdom of God and the millennium is by contrast devalued and misunderstood. This limitation can be found in biblical scholar Byung Mu Ahn's understanding of Jesus' message about the Kingdom of God.

Byung Mu Ahn argues that the Kingdom of God is the kingdom of the minjung. He rejects the traditional understanding of the kingdom of God in western theological discussion. Thus it is not the new possibility. The kingdom of God cannot be interpreted in terms of a relative possible future as in the apocalyptic literature. He does not accept both the thoroughly historical eschatology in Schweitzer's historical Jesus and the existential interpretation of Jesus' parables. He rather emphasizes the social aspect of human participation, denying the predominance of the absolute authority of God upheld mainly in the western theology God.⁴ The kingdom of God, for Byung Mu Ahn, constitutes the aspiration of the suffering minjung, the inner-ridden cry of "Han" [unrelieved rage]. Thus, it is actually not a temporal matter of Kingdom of God's arrival for scholar's discussion, but an expression of the anticipation of Minjung in the midst of suffering and oppression. He

² Nam Dong Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981), 162-163; "While the Kingdom of God is a heavenly and ultimate symbol... while the Kingdom of God is used in the ideology of the ruler, the Millennium is the symbol of the aspiration of the minjung."

³ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology: A Critical Introduction", *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective*, pp. 14-15, and Kosuke Koyama, "Building the Horse by Righteousness", *The Ecumenical Horizons of Minjung Theology*, 145-146.

⁴ See Byung Mu Ahn, *Story of the Minjung Theology*, 228-253.

prefers that Kingdom of God is somewhat present in our sight. Jesus' minjung movement is a reality of Kingdom of God. In this sense the realized eschatology of C. H. Dodd is much closer to his emphasis on the present reality of the kingdom of God.⁵

Because Byung Mu Ahn's understanding of Kingdom of God does not take a serious account of the significance of its poetic and mythic function, it does not have any critical distance between Minjung's aspiration and Jesus' proclamation of Kingdom of God. Is there no possibility that both temporality and literary features of the Kingdom of God can create social aspect of the Kingdom of God? For this exploration, we need to review the discussion of Norman Perrin regarding the two issues involved in the diverse interpretations of the Kingdom of God sayings described in its mythic and poetic expression: the relation between apocalyptic imagery and Messianism and the temporality of the Kingdom of God. I will illustrate Perrin's interpretation of Jesus' Kingdom sayings, which are already established as authentic by his criteria of "dissimilarity" for a quest of the historical Jesus.

Norman Perrin, in his book *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, argues that Jesus repudiated the apocalyptic concept of history. Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching does not focus on a preordained climax in the historical determinism of two ages, which is destined to finish with catastrophic end. Jesus restored a prophetic understanding of history. Kingdom of God is set forth as God's activity in the eschatological event on behalf of his people. In the apocalyptic literature, the phrase "the kingdom of God" or its equivalent is used in reference both to God's decisive intervention in history and to the final state of the redeemed. The intervention of God is envisaged in the cosmic conflict and with the imagery of a holy war as in the Qumran War Scroll. Perrin discovers the usage in the two passages:

In the first passage [IQM 6:6] the intervention of God is referred to in terms of the Kingdom which is manifested as God displays his might on behalf of his people, and in the second [IQM 12.7] the glory of the Kingdom is manifest in the activity of God and his angels in the course of the war.⁶

Also, in Qumran literature (IQSb 3:5, IQSb 4:25f) the Kingdom of God is used to indicate the final blessed state in connection to the imagery of a sanctuary and the congregations of the holy ones and sons of heaven.⁷ By examining the kingdom sayings in (a) Mark 1:15, Luke 11:20 (=Matt. 12:28); Matt 11:12 (=Luke 16:16), Luke 17:20f and (b) the beatitudes in Matt. 5:3-12 (=Luke 6:20-23) and Matt. 8:11 (=Luke 13:28), Perrin confirms that the Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching is found in the same two references: (a) to God's decisive intervention

⁵ Kee-Dek Song, "Recent Trends in the Minjung-Theology of Prof. Dr. Byung-mu Ahn: Critical Comments on Prof. Dr. Ahn's New Book, *Story of the Minjung-Theolog*," in *The Theological Thought*, Vol. 60, pp. 159-161. Regarding this understanding of the kingdom of God, Jung Young Lee expresses the danger of overemphasizing the experience of Minjung as the absolute norm of theology. The issue of source of authority in minjung theology also correlates to the "cultural particularity" and "favoritism" in biblical exegesis. This criticism is intensely suggested by the Old Testament African scholar, Kwesi A. Dickson. For this reference, see, Jung Young Lee, *ibid.*, pp. 20-21, and Kwei A. Dickson, "And What of Culture?: An African Reflection on Minjung Theology", in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective*, 176-180.

⁶ Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 170.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 181-185.

in history and human experience, and (b) to the final state of the redeemed.

In contrast with the common factors, the big difference between the usage of Jesus and that of the apocalyptic literature is clearly discovered in the view of history. In prophetic eschatology history is seen as the arena of God's revelation and activity, while the apocalyptic view of history puts emphasis on a wholly new order. In this prophetic tradition God acted in certain historical events. Thus God would intervene in history on their behalf. However, apocalyptic literature understands the concept of history as a universal whole or a unified process in which the beginning of paradise, the middle of cosmic-eschatological conflict in the primeval chaos, and the predetermined climax in the end are consecutively connected with each other in mythic imagery and cosmic metaphor. It is primarily preoccupied with the calculation of the end and with signs of the end.⁸

Jesus emphasizes the kingly activity of God rather than "the consummation", "the end of days", the age to come, the periods and epochs of world history, without describing the eschatological events in mythological-apocalyptic imageries. For Jesus God encroaches into history and human experience in a sudden and unexpected manner, challenging us to be prepared to have the perfect relationship with God and to be in the perfect blessed state. Jesus proclaimed God's abrupt intervention in the redemptive activity without using the specific mythic imageries and forms.⁹

The temporality of the kingdom of God has been an issue in the tension between the present and the future. Norman Perrin discovers two kinds of tension in the interpretation of the Kingdom of God. One is that the Kingdom in Jesus' teaching arrives both at present and in the future in separate kingdom sayings. Another is that in the same saying the present and future aspects of the kingdom's arrival can be discovered. The first kind of tension stresses the concentration upon the experience of the individual. Kingdom is accomplished in Jesus' exorcisms, his challenge of forgiveness of sins as one makes the ultimate decision in response to the challenge. Even in the future arrival of kingdom, e.g. in 'apocalyptic son of man sayings' (Matt. 24:27) and 'parables of contrast' (the Beatitudes in Matt 5:3-12) the kingdom of God does not indicate any specific time in future consummation. Perrin interprets that future aspect of the Kingdom just as he does the present aspect of Kingdom. Thus the believer cannot avoid the eschatological tension between present and future for his mode of human existence. Perrin summarizes his interpretation as follows:

To experience the kingly activity of God one must have faith, i.e. one must interpret the event aright and commit oneself without reservation to the God revealed in the event properly interpreted. Then, and only then, does the Kingdom become a matter of personal experience. But it does become present as personal experience, and so the Kingdom as present in the teaching of Jesus mean, in effect, the Kingdom as potentially-actually present in the personal experience of the believer.¹⁰

In the second kind of tension Perrin illustrates the motif of temptation in the Lord's Prayer.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 176-178. For the secondary source for Perrin's interpretation of Jesus' kingdom, see Calvin R. Mercer, *Norman Perrin's Interpretation of the New Testament*, 77-80.

⁹ Perrin, *Ibid.*, 176-178; Mercer, *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁰ Perrin, *Ibid.*, 187.

Perrin sees both distinctive element and equivalent element in this temptation motif in comparison with that of its contemporary literature of the ancient Jewish prayers (such as the Eighteen Benedictions and Qumran literature: IQM 1:12). In the prayer of Jesus, forgiveness of sins and the motif of temptation are interconnected in our daily experience. The eschatological conflict is sharpened under the attack of Satan. It is distinctive that the cosmic struggle between God and Satan is highlighted in the eschatological and experiential tension between present and future. The blessed state of forgiveness of sins and the consummation of the Kingdom of God will be resolved in the future, while in the present believers are caught in their personal and existential experience of temptation. Perrin interprets the temptation motif as follows:

The disciple is caught up in the eschatological conflict-situation, his experience becomes part of the total war between God and Satan; but in this experience he is not left to fight alone, God will 'strive in his strivings' that he may not find himself to have come into the power of the temptation (periasmos), to have succumbed to the attack of Satan. Here again we must note the characteristic tension between present and future; the peirasmoi of the individual disciple are part of the eschatological struggle, but not yet its climax; the victories gained are real victories, but not yet the final victory.¹¹

Perrin stresses the existential and personal realm of Kingdom of God in the interpretation of the tension between present and future. Jesus' teaching of Kingdom confronts us to make a decision to respond to the advent of Kingdom of God on the existential struggle. This existential and experiential interpretation is not primarily shaped by his selection of the philosophical, theological framework, but by his integrity with exegetical accuracy and interpretation method.

Métis

B. Non-Apocalyptic Kingdom of God as Wisdom (): Burton L. Mack

Burton Mack proposes a new view of Kingdom of God in light of his historical reconstruction of the Jewish and Hellenistic intellectual history. The term Kingdom of God does not function as apocalyptic notion of the new age to come in Jewish popular historical setting. Even though the Jewish people use the idea of God's rule as imaginative vision of restoring and reinstituting Israel's epic ideal kingship, the term Kingdom of God does not often occur either in canonical or apocalyptic literature. Furthermore, the messianic figures underlying the allusions of Kingdom of God do not include apocalyptic notion of God's own intervention in the general Jewish apocalyptic eschatological patterns. The Jews in general are not anticipating the Messiah with Kingdom of God for they are more concerned with their social situation. The apocalyptic imagination was formulated in their struggle to establish their ideological and institutional programs. The followers of Jesus rather project the apocalyptic image of Jesus in order to create their mythic founder as the one who announces the Kingdom of God when they are disappointed at the ultimate manifestation of the vision of the apocalyptic Messiah. For instance, Son of Man is introduced into the tradition of Q, taking the function of interconnecting the appearance

¹¹ Ibid., 198.

¹² Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 69-71. Also, Marcus J. Borg argues that the eschatological Kingdom of God is separated from the "Coming Son of Man" in the history of traditions. The "coming Son of Man" sayings are treated as non-authentic, expressing the early church's belief

of mythic founder Jesus with the expected coming of the Son of Man.¹²

Mack argues that the Kingdom of God is used by the early Jesus movement who wanted to reconstruct their own collection of a new history, starting with Jesus. They wanted to rationalize their own sectarian identity with the term Kingdom of God in accordance with their own "social history". Burton Mack focuses on the process of "social formation" projected in the process of transmitting earlier traditions of Jesus' life according to the rationalization of social history in the Jesus movement. Social formation usually takes some stages. A particular group of the Jesus movement, such as the Q or Thomas community, creates the apocalyptic or Gnostic myth according to the process of their social formation in light of their experience of social history. In stage 1, we can see the authentic life of Jesus in his historic period. In stage 2, the individual form of Jesus' life is reconstructed; Q, pronouncement story, miracle story, "authentic parables" are shaped in this stage. In stage 2, the group strongly expresses their optimism about the emerging movement. In stage 3, the Jesus movement experiences failure, conflicts and rejection; they realize the need to reassess their original social and religious vision and their way of rationalization. In stage 4, the final stage, the Jesus movement creates a mythic charter rationalizing their social experience of conflict and failure. "The Kingdom sayings" and "pre-Markan history" were finally edited in this stage. According to this hypothetical process of social formation, the Jesus movement creates the rationalization of social histories with the novelty of cultural configuration. Jesus is portrayed as founder of their movement and the sole locus of authority, practices, and leadership. The rationales were continually updated, reshaping inherited traditions, epics and folklore. Thus we can see that the sayings reflected their legitimating process, their self-understanding, and their myth of origins.¹³

Reviewing this process of social formation, Mack argues that the primary source for social formation of Christian community in the earliest stage is not apocalyptic mentality as was the case of Qumran as a Jewish sect. It is likely that apocalyptic language in early Christian literature stems from failed expectation of the risen Lord. The earliest phases of social formation is neither from apocalyptic mentality nor a reform of the Second Temple system, but the wisdom tradition of aphoristic nature or sapiential quality. Mack wants to illustrate the supporting evidence for this argument by comparison with the usage of the kingdom of God in the Hellenistic Jewish and Hellenistic literature.

Βασιλεία

Audiences of Jesus in Galilee were engaged in critical issues about power and privilege, e.g. the just and beneficent exercise of rulers' sovereignty. In that setting, *basileia* () meant sovereignty, majesty, dominion, power of kings and rulers. King was also used as the term for the quality of ruler such as his endowment, achievement, ethical excellence, or mythical ideal of the superior person. *Basileia* also functioned as the term of this king's social roles or of the ideal man, indicating diverse connotations such as

in the Second Coming of Jesus. See Marcus J. Borg, "A Temperate Case for a Non-Eschatological Jesus," in *Forum* 2, 3 (1986): 81-102.

¹³ Burton L. Mack, "The Kingdom Sayings in Mark," in *Foundations & Facets: Forum*, Vol. 3, Num. 1 (March 1987), 18-22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-17 and see Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 72-24.

“independent bearing”, “freedom”, “confidence (parresia)”, “strength”, “governance”, “control”.¹⁴ The Kingdom of God was prevalent in the larger cultural philosophical setting. Cynics identified the moral virtue of sages as “kings” over against tyrants. They saw themselves as kings who were commissioned by God to correct and criticize social status-quo, while their vocation was understood as a *basileia* in terms of divine laws of nature. This philosophical setting shows that *basileia* was used to imagine an alternative order based upon divine law standing over against the social state of affairs in Galilee. Philo also fashioned the ideal kingship of royalty, sovereignty, and control to imagine the cosmic order governed by divine wisdom paralleled to virtues of the sage, virtues of self-control. Here *basileia* was used to indicate sophia or “sovereignty of the sage”. Thus, Mack is more interested in the wisdom traditions such as *Wisdom of Solomon* and *The Sentence of Sextus*.

After reviewing these literature, along with Philo of Alexandria’s work, Mack concludes that the language of Kingdom of God in cultural, philosophical context was refined and developed in the struggle with the social and ethical questions regarding ruler’s power by Helleni βασιλεία τοῦ σοφοῦers. In both cultural settings, common factors are shared: (1) the Hellenistic figure of the sage as King; and (2) the Jewish definition of wisdom as creation’s order. In this process of exchange, distinctive features were shaped. The theology on *basileia tou sophou* () was formulated due to the necessity of maintaining Semitic view of creation. The term “kingdom of God” was not used as a technical term in the apocalyptic setting, but was influenced by the wisdom view of the world.¹⁵ Jesus’ kingdom was understood in the popular cultural, religious context mentioned above. His kingdom was not primarily designed to fulfill the old epic ideals in Jewish messianic expectation but to exercise social critique. Jesus’ teaching of Kingdom of God was aphoristic in wisdom rather than prophetic in apocalyptic tradition. The evidence for this characteristic is supported by the sapiential nature of the earliest layer of Q, the aphoristic quality of the sayings of Jesus, and the prominent place of the parables. Jesus did not have any intention to propose a grand social program in terms of his use of kingdom language. He also did not directly oppose any social and political, religious and cultural institution with the polemics against the synagogue, the Pharisees and the temple. Burton Mack characterizes the teaching of Jesus as follows:

Thus Jesus’ “wisdom” was neither a proclamation of an apocalyptic transformation of society, nor a specific charge against this or that form of Judaism, nor an instruction in a new social design. It was a form of parresia (“confidence”), an exercise in defining a stance over against the constraints and inequities of conventions that were no longer thought worthy of unexamined acceptance.¹⁶

He concludes that Jesus integrates popular Hellenistic philosophy with Jewish wisdom ethic in a more sophisticated and conceptual form.

III. Literary Critical Approach to Kingdom of God

ὄχλος

From the gospel according to Mark, Byung Mu Ahn attempts to establish the biblical

¹⁶ Mack, “The Kingdom Sayings in Mark”, 17.

¹⁷ Byung-Mu Ahn, *Story of the Minjung-Theology*, 241-243.

¹⁸ Byung Mu Ahn, “Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Minjung Theology: People as the*

reference for Christian ethics in Minjung theology. The eschatological advent of Kingdom of God is manifested in the Jesus movement executed by subaltern people (*Ochlos*).¹⁷ He discovers the biblical reference to 'Ochlos' as the significant rationale for Jesus' eschatological act: *Hamartōlos* history and its implication to Minjung theology. The primary agents of the Jesus movement were from the Galilean marginalized lower class. They are in Mark designated as 'sinners' () and 'tax collectors', who are socially, politically contrasted with Jerusalem ruling class, e. g. aristocrats and religious leaders like the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They followed the Jesus movement, threatening the established status quo represented by the Jerusalem ruling class. Even though they were not an organized power group, they were looked down with contempt and alienated due to their lack of observance of the social, religious norms, and they were excluded by the nationalists and religious ruling class as criminals before God.¹⁸

Jesus showed a consistent attitude of preference to the *Ochlos* in order to liberate them from sin and sickness, proclaiming the advent of the Kingdom of God over against the whole dominating social system and its oppressing ideologies. Jesus accepted the *Ochlos*, without any conditions. He suffered with them, struggled with them in the midst of the promise of the future and present Kingdom of God. God's will is accomplished in taking side with the *Ochlos*, while his will is revealed in his attitude to stand on the side of the *Ochlos*.¹⁹ The intensification of the role of *Ochlos* in the Jesus movement of the Kingdom raises the critical issue of the particularity of a cultural identity and of the partiality of divine love involved in the interpretation of scripture. Jung Yong Lee disagrees with Ahn's radical affirmation of 'the partial love' over against universal love. For Lee's theological perspective, divine love is both holistic and inclusive even though the profundity of the divine love is manifested in a different mode for the rich and powerful.²⁰ Kwesi A. Dickson suggests an exegetical comment on Ahn's interpretation of divine love of Minjung with partiality. Dickson sees a rigorous restriction of universal divine love in Ahn's interpretation of the gospel according to Mark. This criticism also indicates that Ahn's view of *Ochlos* loses the rich notions of the righteous and sinners. It seems to Dickson that Ahn misinterprets the righteous in Mark 2:17b, equating it with the rich and the powerful. Furthermore, Ahn's view of Jesus' contemporary social situation is criticized by his other references to Jesus' attitude to the rich and the powerful such as in the gospel according to Luke (Luke 18:18f and 23:34) and the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 10:1ff, 17:12), where the rich and the powerful are acknowledged as persons to be saved and loved by special divine treatment.²¹

These two criticisms encourage us to review the relationship between eschatology and Christian action for love, and whether the literary feature of the Kingdom of God contains

Subjects of History, 138-146. *Ochlos* is contrasted with both Jesus' disciples and people of God (*Laos*). Dr. Ahn emphasizes the fluid notion of *Ochlos* as used to indicate the social class.

¹⁹ Byung Mu Ahn, *Ibid.*, 146 and 151. Prof. Ahn argues that "Jesus never showed what may be called universal love. He loved people with partiality. He always stood on the side of the oppressed, the aggrieved, and the weak."

²⁰ Lee, "Minjung Theology", *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective*, 21-23.

²¹ Dickson, "And What of Culture?", in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective*, 176-179.

²² Dennis C. Duling, "Norman Perrin and the Kingdom of God: Review and Response", in *Journal of Religion* 64 (1984): 461-472. This article reviews the contributions of Norman Perrin's research on

connotation of hierarchical social order. For this discussion, we need to review the comparison between Perrin's and Breech's understanding of Kingdom of God.

A. Mythical Kingdom of God as "Tensive Symbol": Norman Perrin

Perrin's earlier solution to the tension between present and future is corrected by his later development of literary critical approach.²² He uses the literary distinction between myth and symbol, between steno-symbol and tensive symbol. Symbol evokes myth, while myth is able to interpret the experience of the people. Tensive symbol is plusignificant, while steno-symbol has one corresponding meaning to one referent. Paul Ricoeur and Philip Wheelwright adopted these distinctions in their works, *The Symbolism of Evil* (1969) and *Metaphor and Reality* (1962). Grounded upon these distinctions, Perrin argues that the Kingdom of God as tensive symbol is used to evoke the myth of God who created the world, or the myth of God who participate in the history of God's people. Perrin points out scholarly mistakes of interpreting the Kingdom of God as a steno symbol. For instance, Weiss and Schweitzer see Jesus' Kingdom of God as an apocalyptic concept; Bultmann conceives it as a concept of human existence; and C. H. Dodd is engaged in the temporality of the Kingdom of God as present or future. Contrary to this interpretation, Jesus does not make any clear, constant and well-defined concept of the Kingdom of God. Also, Perrin contrasted Jesus' use of Kingdom of God as tensive symbol with the apocalyptic usage of Kingdom as steno-symbol. Ancient Jewish apocalyptic literature sees Kingdom or Messiah as historical activity or historical figure at a specific time. But Jesus' Kingdom has infinite number of connotations.²³ This new critical literary insight enriches and modifies his earlier results.

1. Non-Eschatological Kingdom of God as "Human Experience": James Breech

Breech opposes Perrin's interpretation of mythic associations in the symbol of Kingdom of God. Breech does not accept the eschatological element in the Kingdom language, e.g. the historical experience represented by the Sovereign God, the tribal memories evoked by myth. Unlike Perrin's interpretation and exegetical results, Breech states that Jesus challenges contemporary religious expectations and hierarchical image of God as King. God in Jesus' teaching cannot be conceived as King who heroically shatters the human's world. In Perrin's exegetical, theological view of God, the hierarchical sovereignty of God dissolves the human world when the Kingdom as tensive symbol refers to the historical experience of God as King in myth.²⁴ For Breech the sayings of Jesus' kingdom function to redescribe our experience in real life situation, expressing Jesus' world attitude and vision of reality. By this form of Kingdom sayings and parables Jesus wanted to convey his world

Kingdom of God for exploring the new direction of research on Kingdom of God .

²³ Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*, 16-40 and Mercer, Norman Perrin's Interpretation of New Testament, 83-89.

²⁴ Perrin, *Ibid.*, 29-30.

²⁵ James Breech, "The Silence of Jesus: The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man", 13-20.

²⁶ James Breech, "Kingdom of God and the Parables of Jesus," 24 and *The Silence of Jesus*, 14-16. The resentment is conceptually defined according to Max Scheler's ethical insight: "As is affirmed, valued, and praised not for its own intrinsic quality, but with the universalized intention of denying,

attitude to others, e. g. "love" as capacity to engage with the personal mode of being over against four types of commonly confused Christ-like love: feeling sorry for others (pity), love of humankind (humanitarianism), self-denial (altruism), and wanting to be in union with others (sentimentalism).²⁵ These four types of love easily represent a world attitude to others with "ressentiment". Jesus never shows this form of world attitude, indicating the heavenly realm of human life with the symbol of kingdom of God.²⁶

2. Comparison of Perrin's and Breech's Interpretations of Kingdom of God

Breech and Perrin illustrate their interpretations with reference to the authentic Kingdom saying (Matt. 11:12) and eschatological reversal saying (Mark 10:23b, 25).

Matt. 11:12— "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of God has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force." In this passage Perrin discovers the myth of God engaged in eschatological conflict with the power of evil. The symbol of God evokes the myth of eschatological war between the powers of evil and God. This myth functions to interpret the fate of John Baptist and the future fate of Jesus and his disciples as manifestation of the dramatic conflict between God and Satan. Thus, the Kingdom stimulates men of violence to plunder John the Baptist and Jesus.²⁷ In contrast, Breech says that Jesus does not preach the Kingdom of God as future transcendental event; rather it started with the concrete human activity of John the Baptist. It is important for Breech that the Kingdom does not appear with political or social events, but with the individual, John the Baptist. Jesus' Kingdom does not refer to an imminent judgment but to Jesus' activity of exorcism and John's activity of repentance movement. Both activities are concerned with the mode of human being as free from any tribal and mythic constraints and expectation.²⁸ In contrast, Perrin emphasizes the myth of cosmic war between God and Satan, where human beings are agents of domination and destruction against Jesus' mode of freedom.

Mark 10:23b, 25—"How hard it will be (v. 24:is) to enter the Kingdom of God---. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Perrin's interpretation is criticized by Breech's philosophical view of "love" as "ressentiment." Perrin implicitly denigrates the rich and affirms the poor, when he perceives a great hindrance to the self-surrender in riches.²⁹ According to Breech, Perrin imposes his exegetical and theological view of proclamation of Jesus' Kingdom in his

devaluating, and denigrating B. A is "played off" against B."

²⁷ Perrin, "Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom," 46 and Perrin, "Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus", 74-77.

²⁸ Breech, "The Silence of Jesus", 32-42, and "Kingdom of God and the Parables of Jesus," 19-20.

²⁹ Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 143-144. Perrin states that "Jesus, on the other hand, sees in riches a great danger. The reason is probably that he saw in riches a hindrance to the absolute nature of the self-surrender necessary as response to the challenge of the proclamation."

³⁰ Breech, "Kingdom of God and the Parables of Jesus," 24-26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16-19.

³² Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics*, 50-54.

³³ Mack, "The Kingdom Sayings in Mark", 7.

identification of the rich and poor with an economic position. Breech argues that this interpretation exposes an attitude to others characterized by resentment: the poor are “placed off against” the rich. Breech sees the categories of rich and poor as a mode of being. The rich have mode of being in “having” while the poor have a mode of being in “receiving.” The Kingdom does not have any intention to reverse the positions of the rich and the poor. Anyone who has mode of being in the sphere of “receiving” can “enter” the Kingdom. Unlike Perrin, Breech sees the Kingdom of God not as a mythological place in which one could live at the end. The Kingdom of God is rather the human sphere where new mode of being in freedom can be sustained and nurtured.³⁰ When Breech says “receiving” is a key word for entering the Kingdom, he connects the passages in Mark 10:23b, 25 with Mark 10:15: “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” Also the mode of being free from anti-human forces (Luke 11:20) and the mode of being cannot be observed by historical or cosmological signs (Luke 17:20).³¹

B. Plotted Kingdom of God as “Myth of Origin”: Burton Mack

1. Mack’s Use of Petersen’s Theory of Plot for Interpreting the Markan Kingdom

Petersen’s theory of plot is illustrated especially in Mark 1:1-15 and Mark 13. Within the Markan narrative of 1:1-15, all narrated events are predictions by Isaiah, John’s action and prophecy about Jesus’ baptism, Jesus’ temptation, Jesus’ preaching, and Jesus’ predictive pronouncement. John’s prediction is completed by Jesus’ appearance and action.³² However, the prophecy of Jesus’ pronouncement about the Kingdom of God is open-ended. This open-ended suspense of Kingdom of God in Mark 1:14-15 provides readers with the question of how the Kingdom of God is related to Jesus and when it will come true. The fulfillment of the impending Kingdom of God and the concealing of Jesus’ identity become sharpened and deepened in Mark 8:28-9:1 and chapter 13. Mack emphasizes the apocalyptic notion of the Kingdom of God in the beginning of the Markan narrative (Mark 1:1-15):

Jesus’ announcement of the Kingdom of God in Mark 1:15 is Mark’s announcement of a narrative theme. The kingdom theme will be developed in conjunction with the narrative of Jesus’ destiny. Just as the story of Jesus is viewed apocalyptically, so the kingdom Jesus proclaimed ultimately requires an apocalyptic manifestation. Jesus will preach and teach about the kingdom as well as represent it, both in its conflict with the kingdoms of this world and in its final manifestation in power. Ultimately the sovereignty is God’s, but in the world the power and authority referred to as the kingdom are clearly lodged in the figure of Jesus.³³

³⁴ Petersen, *Ibid.*, 52. Petersen states: “Plotted incidents being the description of successive actions by actors in the descriptions of the appearances and activities of John and Jesus. Suspense enters this sequence in connection with the predictions, which prove to be the major plot device in Mark’s narrative. Although predictions are issued in incidents that may or may not be plotted, what is predicted belongs to the level of story time until it comes to pass in the form of other plotted incidents. In this light, Isaiah’s prediction was issued in an unplotted incident which therefore belongs to the level of story time.”

³⁵ Mack, “The Kingdom Saying in Mark,” 7.

ἔσχατον

The first part of Markan narrative is shaped by the plot-device of prophecy-fulfillment, while it is selected and combined by a repetitive or equivalent form of a narrative sequence. Petersen clarifies the plotted time (plotted incidents) which is distinguished from the unplotted incidents (story time).³⁴ According to Mack, Petersen answers a question of whether Jesus is portrayed as a person who fulfills his own prediction or as a person who predicts yet another *eschaton* (: end), whether Markan narrative represents as a predominant theme a myth of origins for the new time of Jesus' followers or a visionary revelation of the future end of the world. Mack recognizes Petersen's contribution that those tensions between present unfulfilled kingdom and future expected kingdom are resolved in a literary technique of distinguishing plotted time from story time. Moreover, he suggests the tentative socio-historical significance of this apocalyptic time based on the distinction between plotted time and story time. The history of Israel in story time is disrupted by Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God as a creation of a new social order distinguished from Jewish history. Mack states:

The end time event was simply elongated and elaborated, applied distributively both to the appearance of Jesus at the beginning of the end time, as well as to the manifestation of the Son of man (and the kingdom of God) with power at the *eschaton*.³⁵

Thus the end of the old social order coincides with new social order of "Synagogue Reform." The judgmental divine intervention is interwoven with the redemptive divine intervention by inaugurating a social order of synagogue reform movement. Mack summarizes his thesis, thus:

...Jesus appeared as the king of the kingdom destined to be established in place of the evil kingdom of the world. This role was necessary in view of the claims of the synagogue reform movement to be the people of the kingdom of God. Jesus had inaugurated the time of the new kingdom destined to substitute for the old demonic order.³⁶

2. Function of the Son of Man and Kingdom of God in Markan narrative

Within the narrative of temple destruction (chapter 13) the title 'Son of Man' (13:26) functions as a future vindicating figure. The destruction of the temple is prophesied by Jesus, whereas the actual arrival of the Kingdom of God is postponed to the end of cosmic order. Thus the "plot device"³⁷ of prophecy – fulfillment is not resolved by the fulfillment

³⁶ Mack, "A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins", 327.

³⁷ Petersen, *Ibid.*, 47 and 52-53. Norman R. Petersen distinguishes "plot device" from plot, stating, "Plot: (sujet) thus refers to the order of events and their relations as seen in the narrative while methodologically plot devices are identified by contrasting the sequence of incidents in the narrative itself."

of Jesus' prophecy. The fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy was hindered by the disciples' ignorance of the Son of God and their misunderstanding of Jesus as a political Messiah. The Son of Man functions in fact to correct this misunderstanding and to answer the question of when the Kingdom of God was to be fulfilled. In "plotted time" of Markan narrative, the Kingdom of God dramatically clashed with the Jewish leader's symbolic authority, which is represented in the Temple in Jerusalem. This religious conflict is intensified by the appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem. The Temple will be destroyed after Jesus dies on the cross, if we see this event of Jesus' crucifixion in the perspective of "story time" in the narrative as illustrated in the theory of Petersen's distinction between "plotted time" and "story time." Petersen argues:

In the first projection we find a new tension between the plotted time understanding of Jesus as the king and the future coming to pass of a time when Jesus, as the Son of Man, will be killed and then rise from the dead (8:27-31). The second projection is a little more complicated because it refers both to two points in time, the time of the plotted incident of Jesus' speech and the end time of Mark's narrative world and to events transpiring between them (8:34-9:1).³⁸

Therefore, the Son of Man takes a place of intersecting the prophetic speech in plotted time and the destruction of the Temple in story time as well as interconnecting the present of Jesus' action and his future action. However, the vindication of this destroyed temple will be finally accomplished when the Son of Man is enthroned in the future. The Son of Man not only takes a role of correcting the disciples' misunderstanding, but also vindicating Jesus' death on the cross by destroying the temple in the final end. Jesus' prophecy of destruction of the temple and the enthronement of the Son of Man are designed to be reinterpreted by the historical event of Jesus' death. Jesus' death on the cross will be the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy of his death (Mark 8:31, 9:12) while it is problematic for vindicating the redemptive history of Israel. Thus the image of enthronement of the Son of Man in the future will be an answer to Mark's readers' question regarding the significance of the destruction of temple and of the future restoration of the New Israel. The prophecy of the destruction of the temple functions to establish Jesus as an apocalyptic seer who will finally be enthroned in the Kingdom of God. As Mack puts it:

To imagine the inauguration of the kingdom of God before the apocalyptic script of the woes and final judgments had run its course, however, inverted the normal sequence of apocalyptic drama and meant, in effect, that the divine interventions of judgment and the announcement of the new kingdom coincided in the appearance of Jesus in Galilee. His battle with the demons demonstrated the eventual victory.³⁹

Therefore, Jesus' title of Son of Man in Mark 13 evokes readers' retrospective recollection of Jesus' prophecy about suffering (Mark 9:31, 10:33) and Jesus' authority in conflict with

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

³⁹ Mack, "A Myth of Innocence", 327.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 94-97. Mack explains the synagogue reform movement as a Jesus movement over against "Christ cult" who does not preserve the life or words of the earthly Jesus. He characterizes the movement, stating: "One also has to assume that Jesus people thought of themselves as a Jewish reform movement of some kind with something to say to Jewish communities where the synagogue was the institutional form of Jewish identity and activity."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 328.

Jewish leaders (Mark 2:10, 2:28). It also projects the readers' prospective imagination about the destruction of the temple and restoring the new Israel. This is recreated by the "Synagogue reform movement"⁴⁰ when Mack concludes:

Jesus' own vindication was assured in the resurrection that follows. The destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. answered the establishment's destruction of Jesus. And the yet-to-occur announced and represented by Jesus at his appearance in Galilee, temporarily postponed by the forced still lodged for a time in Jerusalem.⁴¹

In conclusion, the Son of Man in the Markan apocalyptic history provides the rationalization of a new social order in the face of the temple's apocalyptic destruction. It also supplies the apologetic setting which explains both the reason of Jesus' death and the way the death is vindicated. The apocalyptic situation of the destruction of the Temple requires Markan narrative to adopt the Son of Man in order to establish the apologetic setting for answering the question of the relation between Jesus' martyr—like death and the destruction of Jerusalem and of the relation between his resurrection in Galilee and his future vindication.

IV. Conclusion: Reconstructing a New Hermeneutic of Liberation for Minjung Theology in Light of the Recent Study on the Kingdom of God

Does not contemporary biblical scholarship in the historical Jesus support any Korean Minjung struggle? How can we reintegrate "Western scholarship of the historical Jesus" into our theology of Minjung for a new hermeneutic of theology for liberation? Critical hermeneutical and theological reflection suggests a careful approach to biblical text for modern political situation. The historical Jesus based on the synoptic gospels does not directly provide any political insight into our struggle for liberation of Minjung. Our hermeneutic stance for liberation theology can guide us to create and reinterpret biblical scholarship of the historical Jesus with a critical perspective. Because we see only a fragmentary evidence of Jesus' cultural ethos such as aphoristic rhetoric of social critique, Cynic-like wisdom, we need to establish a hermeneutic of liberation with an adequate theological stance. In my viewpoint, Byung Mu Ahn uses the same or equivalent hermeneutic key as "advocacy stance" for Minjung just like the "advocacy stance" for the poor in Latin American theologies.⁴² Minjung has the hermeneutic privilege as the oppressed. As Bonino denies that the Bible is a book of 'pure kerygmatic truths or events', Minjung theology views the Bible as a source book for Christian obedience in discipleship for present praxis.⁴³ For Minjung Theology the historicity of biblical truth provides the imperative guidance for the historical praxis for liberation of Minjung.

⁴² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Toward a Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation and Liberation Theology", in *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald McKim, 354-364. She defines the critical insight of this hermeneutic key of advocacy stance, stating, "The insight that all theology knowingly or not is by definition always engaged for or against the oppressed. Intellectual neutrality is not possible in a historical world of exploitation and oppression."

⁴³ Jose Miguez Bonino, "Hermeneutics, Truth, and Praxis," *doing theology in a revolutionary situation*, 86-105.

⁴⁴ Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 15-24. See his methodological assumption.

But this view of the text and hermeneutical option become problematic. Ignored are both the historical, cultural gap between two horizons of the Jesus movement and Minjung struggle and a hermeneutic, literary gap between meaning and event and the text and language. I implicitly find that in Mack's careful analysis of the Markan narrative the history of the Jesus movement is interwoven with mythic and fictional narrative.⁴⁴ He teaches us how mythic rationalization and historical recollection of Jesus' life are ingeniously mixed together in the Markan narrative. If we use Markan narrative only for reference to historical praxis of Minjung, we do not distinguish history from mythologizing rationale for the Jesus movement in the Markan narrative. Moreover, Mack, Perrin and Breech affirm that contrary to hermeneutical assumption upheld by Minjung and Latin American theologians, the biblical text primarily unfolds the distance in history, the transcendence in our political engagement, and wisdom in our courage to debunk our ideological, mythmaking rationalization in our group formation and social inter-relation. Then how can Minjung theology, which sees the historical engagement in Minjung struggle as a normative value, be creatively interconnected with Perrin and Mack's understanding of Kingdom of God and Markan narrative?

Critical Juxtaposition between Minjung Theology and the Kingdom of God

Perrin's understanding of Kingdom of God with the interpretative key of "individual existence" stands in sharp contrast with the intense emphasis on communal and social aspect of the Kingdom in Minjung Theology. We can see a limit of Perrin's hermeneutic key of individual existence in comparison with that of Minjung theology. But unless Perrin imposes his philosophical, ideological assumption on his exegetical process, we can integrate his important discovery of the existential struggle in language of tension between present and future into a hermeneutic program, e.g. new hermeneutic of liberation theology for Minjung. Perrin taught us a very evident feature of Jesus' attitude to apocalyptic view of history. Perrin's authentic Jesus does not adopt the total framework of apocalyptic thought-world for his theological and social speech. In this sense Minjung theology needs to avoid any tendency to oversimplify the influence of apocalyptic view of history in Millennialism on Jesus' Kingdom or Minjung's struggle. Also, the historical struggle for justice of Minjung cannot be so easily rationalized by the apocalyptic view of history in Millennialism. The existential tension supported by Perrin's exegetical integrity can function to protect minjung theology from becoming a political ideology. If the historical distance between Jesus' period and Korean struggle of Minjung should be recognized as a significant hermeneutic factor, Minjung theology needs to establish the hermeneutic key for interpreting the apocalyptic and eschatological element in the Kingdom sayings in the Synoptic Gospels, overcoming the limits and weaknesses of the existential tension as suggested by Norman Perrin. Ahn's hermeneutic "advocacy stance" for Minjung is testified in interpreting the text with an exegetical integrity. The "advocacy stance" for Minjung should also be further applied to the tension of language between present and future without ignoring the feature of the tension in existence.

⁴⁵ Byung Mu Ahn, *Story of the Minjung Theology*, 92-128, and Young-Bock Kim, "Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics Over Against Political Messianism", in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, 183-193.

Minjung theology projects the image of Jesus as the suffering servant for and with Minjung. Or roughly speaking, it is inclined to see Jesus as the political liberator or cultural disrupter.⁴⁵ Jesus as a liberation fighter cannot fully be discovered in the text by a contemporary study of the historical Jesus of Burton Mack and Norman Perrin. The synoptic gospels do not give the full picture of the freedom fighter for political justice. The rich traditions offer us the clearer picture of the cultural aspect of Jesus. Jesus' language of the aphoristic, sapiential and parabolic rhetoric is more plausible for portraying his image, while this scholarship does not emphasize Jesus as a liberation fighter to provide any social program and political ideologies for the public.

Jesus as a sage in Mack's picture at most shows him as one who disrupts the false vision of life or uses the cynic-like social critique. He might not be conceived as one who participates in political revolutionary process with an ideological propaganda. His language is primarily poetic or mythic, not ideological or political. Perrin also manifests the picture of Jesus who rejects the apocalyptic rhetoric of messianism. He does not provide any clue for Jesus' image as political liberator. Jesus' image of suffering servant is too broad and too stereotyped to be more appealing to the modern biblical scholarship of the historical Jesus. But this image challenges us to pose a hermeneutic question of how we can see his language, action and death. Thus the modern scholarship of the historical Jesus has a danger of losing the hermeneutical balance between his life and his death, his history in life and kerygma. In this sense Ahn's complaint about the overemphasis of kerygma against his historical death should be seriously admitted in this recent scholarship of historical Jesus. It is very remarkable that Mack criticizes the Bultmanian reading of Jesus' death as kerygma, with René Girard's framework of the "scapegoating mechanism" or "persecution text".⁴⁶

B. Constructive Dialogue between Minjung Theology and the Kingdom of God in the Recent Study for a Hermeneutic of Liberation

1. Hermeneutic of Tension in Language: New Mode of Being

I suggest a hermeneutic key of tension in language. Perrin's discovery of the tension between present and future in interpreting the arrival of the Kingdom of God is reevaluated in light of his later development of the literary—critical approach. Also Perrin's explanation of this tension with the existential framework should be critically integrated into the hermeneutic of liberation. This tension in language cannot be ignored due to the overwhelming significance of an ideological, political struggle as in the case of Minjung theology. One step further, I suggest that the hermeneutic of liberation theology based upon the historical Jesus should fully observe this tension in language as the tension in dialectic between human experience and mythic narrative, between existential question and mode of being, and between two stages of social formation. The existential framework adopted

⁴⁶ Burton Mack, "The Innocent Transgressor: Jesus in Early Christian Myth and History", *Semeia* 33, pp. 141-162. I did not have any room for full discussion between Ahn's emphasis on "Jesus-event rather than Kerygma-Christ" and Mack's emphasis on the "scapegoating mechanism rather than Bultmanian demythologization."

by Perrin does not fully appreciate the mythic and poetic function of tension in language and formal expressions. I believe that the tension in language or the formal expressions of transgression, hyperbolic and odd rhetoric (Kingdom Sayings of Luke 17:20-21, Matt. 11-12, Luke 11:20, Mark 10:23b) unfolds the new mode of being to subvert our fundamental world attitude or our philosophical, theological bias. This language in tension is extended to a mythic narrative which challenges our ideological slant in manifesting a new mode of being in our human experience, even in our social and political horizon. Thus, a new mode of being emerges out of our social, political struggle with our existential tension for decision. Just as Perrin's literary critical approach opens up the diverse possibility of interpreting the Kingdom sayings, we need to treat the literary form of myth and symbol as the formal vessel of inheriting the historical collective experience as well as the existential individual struggle. Those forms preserve the vision of life, mode of being and world attitude.

The hermeneutic process of the explanation of those forms and the comprehension of the mode of being unfolded by those forms are necessitated for our task of establishing a more adequate hermeneutic key for our Minjung struggle. Unless we carefully follow this long route of interpretation process, we easily identify the historical experience of Jesus' people with Minjung struggle. In this interpretation process, which I suggested above, even purely historical experience of the Jesus movement cannot be appropriated into our hermeneutic program of rationalizing our Minjung struggle. We need to critically observe how their ideological bias and cultural particularity, political illusion and mythic rationale are expressed in the tension in form and language, narrative and mythic charter. By this critical reflection on the dynamic relation between form and content, event and meaning, we can establish a relevant vision of life and mode of being, a critical-transcendental reference point and a world attitude as a hermeneutical key or normative model for our struggle of liberation for Minjung. It is easier for us that this normative model of new mode of being can have a constructive dialogue with the "Han" of Minjung experience. Political engagement is guided by this world attitude unfolded from hermeneutic key, not by a concrete political strategy imposed by another political dogma or ideological enclave from social scientific *metis*: μητις [his indirect hermeneutic guidance from biblical reference can be critically juxtaposed to our own ideological or ethical ideal for Minjung struggle and to our experience of "Han" and "Dan."

metis

2. Hermeneutic of Radical Wisdom: New Way of Social-Critique

Minjung theology can also integrate a hermeneutic of Jesus' wisdom from a recent study of the historical Jesus with an agenda of Minjung struggle. Mack argues that Jesus' wisdom in his parables, pronouncement story and aphorisms is very much in affinity with Cynic's practical wisdom (). This is contrasted with the more systematic wisdom as Sophia, appropriate to stable situations, and fit for general truth. Mack illustrates this kind of wisdom, stating:

Professions understood to require were, for example, those of the physician, navigator, and rector. That is because, in each case, situations to be addressed could not be determined always in advance. The challenge when confronting a disease,

⁴⁷ Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 67-69.

storm, or unruly audience required a skillful strategy. Assessing the situation, anticipating the way things might go, a sense of timing, waiting for the opportune moment, dodging, moving in quickly with a forthright initiative were all known about...⁴⁷

I suggest that this kind of practical wisdom is a new mode of social praxis for liberating Minjung. This mode of praxis is contrasted with myth-making rationalization to hide our scapegoating mechanism. While myth establishes the victor's history, yet, Jesus' practical wisdom subverts the victor's heroic mythologization of history. Practical wisdom leads the oppressor's rhetoric to the absurdity of their logic of oppression, the unjust rich to the play of ridiculing game. This wisdom is a radical wisdom, because it also penetrates into the oppressed's rage for violence and the sinfulness of both the oppressed and the oppressor and of the both the rich and the poor. Jesus' wisdom behind his Kingdom of God is intriguing not only to a political agitator, but also to both a revenged oppressed and a Minjung obsessed with revolution. Mack explains this 'radical wisdom' with a poetic form of praise:

Wisdom calls for the fiction of divine ordination, on the other hand, and provides for instruction in techne and ethics on the other, a clue! Wisdom departs when the city comes apart (Proverbs 1-9). It returns when the city can be built again (Sirach). It flees before violence and keeps alive the hope for justice (Wisdom). It does not invite the hero to the quest, though it does invite the scholar to the texts.⁴⁸

Jesus' wisdom is a profound rhetoric for social critique, for social justice. But it ridicules our myth-making ideology, self-righteous mode of being, and lifestyle of "ressentiment." Jesus' radical wisdom is not a domesticated social custom and cultural code, but a genuinely liberating force for transcending our own fundamental bias to other communities and cultures, and for debunking our mythmaking ideology.

Applying this radical wisdom to Minjung theology, I will deal with the issue involved in the relation between Minjung and Jesus. We can find close relation between Minjung and Jesus in Ahn's formation of story in Minjung theology.⁴⁹ In Mack's social history of the Jesus' movement we can also discover the close relation between Jesus and the Jesus movement, which is composed of "The Itinerants in Galilee", "The Pillars in Jerusalem", "The Family of Jesus", "The Congregation of Israel", and "The Synagogue Reform".⁵⁰ But we need to keep Minjung theology from simply identifying Minjung with *Ochlos* and Jesus Movement with Minjung. The Jesus movement inherits Jesus' life story and sayings on which they formulate their own mythic charter to rationalize their own new community over against Jewish institutions and other Jesus movements. According to Mack's analysis of the Markan narrative, Mark creates a myth of innocent victim persecuted by the Jews, the loser of Jesus movement, rather than a historical Jesus. Markan narrative portrays Jesus as an apocalyptic vindicator, the Son of Man over against the persecutor of the

⁴⁸ Burton L. Mack, "Gilgamesh and the Wizard of Oz," in *Forum* 2.2, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁹ Ahn Byung Mu, *A Story of Minjung Theology*, 257-284.

⁵⁰ Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 84-97. Mack contrasts the Jesus' movements with the Hellenistic cult, the "Congregations of the Christ."

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 325-331 and 353-376.

Jewish people. According to Mack, because they crucified Jesus, they would be regarded as responsible for the destruction of the temple. The Kingdom of God in Markan narrative is wrapped with an apocalyptic view of history due to their own literary purpose of legitimating, rationalization and mythologization with another scapegoating mechanism. The idealized image of Jesus as a suffering servant is highly sophisticatingly transmuted into a victim of innocence in Markan narrative.⁵¹ According to Mack's social history, the suffering servant, an image of Jesus, is used to rationalize the social formation of both the Jesus movement and Markan community and to conceal the scapegoating mechanism of persecuting the loser of the Jesus' movement, the Jewish people.

Can we create another Kingdom of Minjung on the basis of debunked myth of innocent victim? Should the vicious circle of "Han" be permanently cut off? Then we need a totally different quality of "myth", not another myth but a "radical wisdom." A history of persecution will be in vicious circle, unless we penetrate the myth of origins for Jesus' movements, and into the scapegoating mechanism. The Kingdom language without self-critique of "radical wisdom" still re-describes another false ideology or false mythic charter. This is a powerful lesson from Mack's analysis of the Markan narrative and the radical wisdom of the historical Jesus. Furthermore we need to explore some more the relationship between Jesus' radical wisdom and the rhetoric of Jesus' movements.

If we integrate Mark's social history and Markan narrative into a hermeneutic of liberation for Minjung, we set the radical discontinuity between Minjung and Jesus in order to hear from Jesus' authentic voice of aphoristic, sapiential and parabolic vision of new mode of being unfolded in his "Kingdom of God." Minjung theology inherits a similar wisdom in the way of releasing "Han" of anger and sadness, rage and revenge. Professor Young Hak Hyun argues that the Korean mask dance performed by Minjung enables the audience to experience "critical transcendence". They can release the accumulated "Han", which is understood as the unresolved sense of resentment against unjust suffering, cut off the vicious circle of evil and to be empowered to revolt against the ruling class through self-transcendence, not through self-righteousness.⁵² This experience is called "Dan" by Minjung poet, Chi Ha Kim. He states that "Dan" has two dimensions of Minjung's experience: at the personal level, self-denial; at the social level, to cut off the vicious circle of Minjung's revenge and repressed feeling of sufferings. This creative energy surmounts the destructive force of Han, shaping the creative driving force for struggle with Minjung for social justice, cultural liberation and political participation.⁵³

The experience of "critical transcendence" and "Dan" can be more fully refined, elevated and sublimated by both "tension in language" and the "radical wisdom" of the historical Jesus. Thus the discontinuity between Jesus and the Jesus movement, between Minjung and Jesus, clearly needs to be maintained for our social critique of "tension in language" and self-critique of "radical wisdom."

⁵² Young Hak Hyun, "A Theological Look at the Mask Dance in Korea," in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, 50-53.

⁵³ Jae Shik Ko, "Minjung Theology and Liberation Theology," [Unpublished article], 13-14, and Andrew S. Park, "Theology of Cosmic Shaman: in 'Minjung Theology'", [Unpublished article], 15-16.

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