

**Journal of Korean American  
Ministries & Theology**

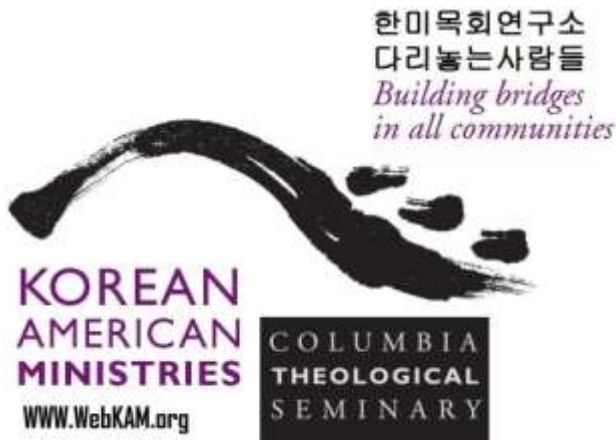
No. 5

2012

**BIBLE**

Columbia Theological Seminary

[www.webkam.org/journal](http://www.webkam.org/journal)



*Journal of Korean American  
Ministries & Theology*

Number 5  
2012

**BIBLE**

**Editor and Publisher**

Paul Junggap Huh, Ph. D.  
Columbia Theological Seminary  
Decatur, Georgia

**Co-Editor**

Daniel Adams, Ph.D.  
St. Johns, Florida

**Assistant Editor**

Hyun Ho Park  
Atlanta Bethany U. M. Church  
Buford, Georgia

For any questions, subscription, and articles please contact:

Tel. 404-687-4538

E-mail: [huhp@ctsnet.edu](mailto:huhp@ctsnet.edu)

Copyright©2012

All rights reserved. No part of this journal may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher, Korean American Ministries at Columbia Theological Seminary.

**COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Korean American Ministries  
701 S. Columbia Dr.  
P.O. Box 520  
Decatur, Georgia 30031  
[www.webkam.org](http://www.webkam.org)

therefore, is often seen as resources, not as children of God who need to be taken care of. Though outside salvation of soul and commitment to God is preached, inside pastors seek their self interest. But, the *oikos* that Jesus tried to build through the story of the Prodigal Son is neither a visible church building nor a group seeking self-interest but a community seeking and embracing lost souls to save and to build the kingdom of God.

**Chun, Sejong. “Exorcism or Healing? A Korean Preacher’s Reading of Mark 5:1-20.”** Nicole Duran, Teresa Okure, and Daniel Patte, eds. *Mark, Texts @ Contexts*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN. 2011.

Sejong Chun’s reading of Mark 5:1-20, the story of the Gerasene demonic, is based on his intercontextual dialogue acknowledging that both text and context influence each other, because “‘text’ is a product of ‘context’ in the sense that the latter shapes the former and ‘context’ becomes ‘text.’” For this dialogue, Chun introduces the story of the Korean shamanic ritual *kut*, performed for a boy named Muno. Muno suffers mental illness caused by spirit-possession of his deceased sister who died with *han*. Being raised in patriarchal and hierarchical Confucian culture, she was treated poorly by her parents as a female and the last child nearly not being able to see a medical doctor. Since she died incompletely in her young age and unmarried even without her own name, she could not go to “Heaven” where she can rest but wanders as a restless spirit between the world of living and the world of the dead and harm Muno by possessing him. By having a *kut*, therefore, Muno’s parents call out her spirit, have ‘spirit talk’ allowing her spirit to speak out her resentment against her mother and to hit herself by a Spirit Stick, and have a wedding between the miniature bride and the bridegroom. In doing so, her misfortune is resolved and now she can go to “Heaven.” Before introducing his interpretation, Chun investigates what scholars think about the point of Mark 5:1-20: 1) Jesus’ superiority over evil powers; 2) a severe battle between God’s power and the destructive power of evil spirits; 3) Jesus’ boundary-crossing ministry; 4) Jesus’ symbolic action of liberation for the colonized; and 5) Jesus’ healing of mental illness caused by oppression of Romans. Unlike those, Chun reads the story of Markan Gerasene demonic story in the light of the story of Muno based on two striking resemblances found in both: spirit talk and dying with *han*. Unlike other Markan exorcism stories, Jesus gives an opportunity for the spirit

to talk by asking its name. Its name is *Legion* which denotes that they died with *han* formulated by “the brutal violence of the Roman imperial force, Legion.” The spirits do not want to leave the area, because they want to live as the “living dead” with their families like it is believed that departed ones still remain present in their family after death. Finally, just like the pig used in a *kut* to take the *han* of the ghost, Jesus permits the spirits to enter the swine so that they may rush into the sea which signifies the resting place, “Heaven” in the story of Muno. This striking resemblance makes clear that “God’s healing power in Jesus cures not only the living one but also the spirits that died with *han*.”

**Reflection:** Chun’s article is a fascinating reading of the Markan Gerasene demonic story by a Korean preacher raised in a shamanistic and Confucian society. Through his inter-contextual dialogue by bringing the story of Muno, Chun shows how a text can be read in a new, fresh way: the story of the Markan Gerasene demonic is not just a story of exorcism but a story of healing.

There are three points worth noting. First, the Korean cultural context can broaden the understanding of Biblical studies. What is in the background of Asians and non-westerners, when they read biblical stories, is that their cultural background might not be helpful, because biblical stories are products of Western thought, which is not true. Though Palestine is closer to Europe than Asia, Asian cultural traditions can have similarities if they have remained intact as ancient human activities. Chun shows how a Korean cultural tradition, *kut*, can unleash mysteries of the Markan Gerasene demonic story. Just as Korean contemporary society still functions with the honor and shame code which was the main code of the Greco-Roman world, other cultural aspects of Korean culture can function as a catalyst for biblical interpretation.

Second, other religious traditions (in Korea) other than Christianity are not antagonistic but can be helpful to understand universal human experience. The feeling of resistance is a tendency or gut-reaction for Christians, when they see any attempts to connect a biblical story with other religious traditions, because they are considered as pagan and idol worship. However, Chun’s article shows that there are universal human experiences even in the realm of the spirit. Therefore, it could be a helpful reference to

see other religious traditions, human experience and even manifestation of the spirit in their rituals, in understanding biblical stories that are difficult to understand in the modern way of thinking and contemporary human experience.

**Cheon, Samuel. “Biblical Interpretation in Korea: History and Issues.” Mary F. Foskett, ed. *Ways of Being, Ways of Reading: Asian American Biblical Interpretation*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2006.**

In this essay, Cheon gives a brief history of Christianity and biblical interpretation in Korea. Though the Chinese Bible was introduced to Korea by Catholic missionaries earlier, it was possible through Protestant missionaries to translate the Bible into Korean, New Testament in 1900 and the Old Testament in 1910. With the rise of Japanese imperialism (1910-1945), Koreans began to read the Bible in relation to their own contexts: God is going to bring liberation from Japan as God saved the Israelites from Egypt. Cheon introduces pioneering interpreters of the Bible in a chronological order. In the early period (1780s-1920s), first, Byung-hun Choi understood Jesus “the one who brought to completion the truth of all great East Asian teachers and the teachings of all religions.” Second, Joo-sam Yang argued the need of knowing historical and literary contexts of the Bible. Third, Hyuk Namgung insisted that the theologies of Jesus and Paul were basically same. Fourth, Chang-geun Song understood Jesus as a social revolutionary and a spiritual leader. In the following decades (1930s-1950s), the conservative tradition and the liberal tradition appeared in Korea regarding higher criticism. Hong-gyu Byun and Hyung-ryong Park supported Moses’ authorship of the Pentateuch, inerrancy of the Bible, etc, while Gyung-ok Jung and Jae-joon Kim introduced form criticism and emphasized the need of Christians’ participation in society. During the era of social response (1960s-1990s), three streams of theology and view of Bible appeared. First is Korean indigenous theology. Tong-shik Ryu paralleled religions in Korea, Shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Donghak, to find the element of self-denial that Jesus accomplished in the incarnation. Second is *minjung* theology. Nam-dong Suh during the era of dictatorship and labor exploitation read the Bible in the perspective of the oppressed – *ochlos* in Mark – and argued that historical and political liberation of God like Exodus event and the crucifixion-resurrection event can be repeated to bring