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**David Yonggi Cho:
His Life, Theology and Ministry**

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RESOURCES FOR STUDIES OF DAVID YONGGI CHO

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I. Introduction

David Yonggi Cho was born on February 14, 1936. He was the first born of five sons and four daughters. His father was Doo-chun Cho and his mother was Bok-sun Kim. Cho is currently senior pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) in Seoul, Korea, the world's largest congregation with about 700,000 members. He was raised as a Buddhist, but became a Christian when at the age of 18 he was diagnosed with a terminal case of tuberculosis. He almost totally recovered and then was encouraged by missionary Louis Richards to attend Bible school in Seoul. Finally, at the age of 20, he entered the Full Gospel Bible Institute. Between his conversion event in 1954 and his enrollment at Bible school in 1956, he was greatly influenced by missionary Louis Richards.

After graduating from the Bible school, Cho was encouraged to join a tent church at Daejo-dong, which was initiated by his classmate and future mother-in-law, Jashil Choi in 1958 when he was 22 years old. While he was ministering with Jashil Choi, he was invited to become a preacher of a 1,500-seat auditorium, Full Gospel Revival Center, which was built by missionaries in 1961. In 1962, Cho became the senior pastor of Full Gospel Revival Center. Soon, the name was changed to Full Gospel Central Church. By 1964, the membership increased to 2,000 under the leadership of Cho. In 1966, he became general superintendent of the Korean Assemblies of God at the age of 30. In 1973, a 10,000-seat auditorium was dedicated at Yoido-dong, and the name of the church was changed to YFGC, and then it experienced tremendous growth: 23,000 members by 1974; 100,000 by 1979; and 700,000 by 1992. There were hundreds of assistant pastors and thousands of home cell group leaders, the majority of both groups being women.

With his church's growth, Cho also founded Church Growth International (CGI). He emphasizes positive thinking and positive

confession and insists that prayer is the key to church growth. Further, he also stresses being specific in prayer: "one must visualize and specify exactly what is needed."¹ Because of Cho and YFGC's extremely successful ministry, the name of Yonggi Cho and YFGC are well known all over the world. In addition, since Cho is a Pentecostal minister, Korean Pentecostalism has become known to the outside world.

There have been many studies of and about Cho and YFGC. As of 2003, Cho himself has written numerous books and articles.² Among them, a number of books have been translated into English, as well as other languages. This bibliographical essay focuses on providing essential sources, written in English, for general readers and researchers with annotations, and is thus confined to studies published in English either by Cho or about him. In a limited way, the study also intends to suggest recommended areas of further study on Cho and YFGC.

In order to understand Cho's life and ministry properly, one cannot ignore the unique context of Korean Pentecostalism, at the center of which Cho stands. Currently, Cho's church amounts to about 70% of the Korean Assemblies of God.³

This essay is divided into two major sections: Background and bibliography. The former includes three introductory parts: 1) Korean Pentecostalism, to aid the readers in understanding the background of Cho's ministry; 2) The life and ministry of Cho; and 3) Cho's theology. In all the discussions, I have attempted to provide useful, if not comprehensive, bibliographic information for a further study. The second

¹ Young-hoon Lee, "Cho, David (Paul) Yonggi," *The New International Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), p. 522. The Dictionary is indicated as *NIDPCM* hereafter.

² Yoido Full Gospel Church Pastor Cho's Resource Center, ed., *YFGC Pastor Cho's Resource Center, The Index of Resources 2002* (Seoul: YFGC Pastor Cho's Resource Center, 2002). This book, written in Korean, includes all books, articles, photographs, and newspapers of and about Yonggi Cho. It is the most important and valuable resource in order to study about Yonggi Cho and YFGC.

³ The reason Yonggi Cho can represent Korean Pentecostalism is due to the fact that the other Pentecostal denominations came to Korea after 1963 and their constituencies are not significant in Korean Pentecostalism and that the Korean Assemblies of God occupies about 90 percent of Korean Pentecostals. Their years of coming to Korea are as follows. The Church of God in Korea was introduced in 1963. The Church of God Prophecy missionary came to Korea in 1968. The Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Korea was organized in 1969, in Yeol-soo Eim, "South Korea," in *NIDPCM*, pp. 244-45.

section provides a comprehensive list of studies written in English by and about Cho and YFGC. It is possible that I have overlooked many other works in this discussion, but to the best of my knowledge, this list will provide an exhaustive bibliographical resource for the subject matter.

PART I: BACKGROUND

1. Korean Pentecostalism

It is important to understand Korean Pentecostalism in order to evaluate Cho's theology and ministry properly. I believe that Cho's ministry is in concert with Korean Pentecostal/charismatic traditions. The Pentecostal phenomena in Korea were not introduced by American Pentecostal missionaries or Cho himself, but in reality, some Pentecostal features were already present in the Korean church since the beginning of the Protestant mission in Korea.⁴

The *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (NIDPCM)* presents the Korean church as Pentecostal/charismatic: with 2,393,749 Pentecostals (32%), 2,020,598 charismatics (27%) and 3,165,652 neocharismatics (42%).⁵ Although Cho along with his YFGC is the most influential reason for this development, there are other factors that have contributed. Even though it is almost impossible to extract a direct relationship between the early Korean revival movement and Korean Pentecostalism, many theologians regard the early revival movements and the prayer mountain movement of Korea as the background of Korean Pentecostalism. One example is Young-hoon Lee's study, "Korean Pentecost: The Great Revival of 1907."⁶ Here Lee describes the great Pyongyang revival of 1907 as a Pentecostal movement. Yeol-soo Eim's article "The Roots of Korean Pentecostalism" also traces Korean Pentecostalism from the early revival

⁴ E.g., Chang-soo Kang, "The First Diary of Revival Rallies of Early Korean Protestants in 1915 of Janbong and Kangwha Islands in the Western Sea Area of Korea," (A paper presented in the Sixth Annual Meeting of Asian Pentecostal Society, Nov 2003, Baguio City, Philippines), pp. 62-63; Chang-soo Kang, "The Pneumatology of Ick-Doo Kim," (A paper presented in the 12th William Menzies Annual Lectureship, Jan 12-16, 2004, Baguio City, Philippines); Yeol-soo Eim, "South Korea."

⁵ *NIDPCM*, p. 239.

⁶ *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4:1 (January 2001), pp. 73-83.

movement in Pyongyang and the prayer mountain movement.⁷ Myung-soo Park's article, "The Korean Pentecost: A Study on the Great Revival of 1903-1907 in the Relationship with Contemporary Worldwide Revival Movement" likewise views the origin of Korean Pentecostal movement in the Pyongyang revival movement.⁸ Jae-bum Lee, who is not a minister of YFGC but a pastor of Korean Assemblies of God, also wrote a dissertation, "Pentecostal Type Distinctives and Korean Protestant Church Growth."⁹ This study is also in unison with this tradition. Finally, a pastor of YFGC and Pentecostal theologian, Young-hoon Lee, suggests this connection in his dissertation, "The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Doctrinal Development."¹⁰

There have been four Ph.D. dissertations written on Korean Pentecostalism, including the dissertations mentioned above.¹¹ Among these four, two were devoted to the study of Pentecostal theology and especially pneumatologies of Korean Pentecostalism. However, in spite of these dissertations, there seems to be a lack of in-depth studies on the Korean Pentecostal understanding of the Holy Spirit. Boo-woong Yoo's dissertation, the first academic study published on Korean Pentecostalism, is a historical, rather than theological treatment, although the title implies both: *Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology*. At the time when Yoo, a Presbyterian pastor, wrote his dissertation in 1981, Pentecostal churches in Korea were regarded as abnormal or heretical by the Presbyterian churches. Thus, in Yoo's dissertation, many factors of Korean Pentecostalism were seriously caricatured, and this is made clear by the fact that there is no single mention of Cho or YFGC, not to mention their role in Korean Pentecostalism. Surprisingly, he

⁷ A study presented in the 18th Pentecostal World Conference, Seoul, 1998. The revised version is found in Yeol-soo Eim, "South Korea," 239-46.

⁸ A paper presented in the Theological Symposium for Asian Church Leaders, Seoul, 1998.

⁹ Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986.

¹⁰ Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1996.

¹¹ Jae-bum Lee, "Pentecostal Type Distinctives and Korean Protestant Church Growth" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986); Boo-woong Yoo, *Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1988); Young-hoon Lee, "The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Doctrinal Development" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1996); Dong-ho Cho, "Intimate Alien: An Immanent Critique of Korean Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2002)

failed to mention any Pentecostal denomination, church or pastor at all. Instead, he substituted Pentecostalism with mysticism and Minjung theology, a Korean version of liberation theology often advocated by Presbyterian theologians. Therefore, this first work on Korean Pentecostalism is full of stereotypical misnomers and thus is misleading to anyone who would like to study Cho or Korean Pentecostalism.¹² Arguably the contributions of Cho and his YFGC to the Korean Pentecostal movement are too important to ignore. Understandably, Yoo's work was criticized by Pentecostal theologians.¹³

Young-hoon Lee, a minister of YFGC, in his dissertation, fills the gap mistakenly left by Yoo, and for this, Lee's work is valuable. Rightly, Lee proves his points through his analysis and evaluation of Yonggi Cho's contributions to the Korean Holy Spirit movement. However, he also overlooks the prayer mountain phenomenon. Subsequently, Yeol-soo Eim argued that the prayer mountain movement is an indigenous Pentecostal movement.¹⁴

¹² Many theologians relied on Yoo's work and criticized the ministry of Yonggi Cho as the work of a shaman. Further, many theologians followed Yoo's description of Minjung movement as the Holy Spirit/Pentecostal movement in Korea. But the truth is that *Minjung* (people) theology is not a theology of Pentecostals, rather it is a theology of liberal Presbyterians. See, Dong-sik Yoo and others, *Hankuk Kyohoewi Sungryungwoondongkwa Kujo* [A Study on the Pentecostal Movement in Korea: Yoido Full Gospel Church] (Seoul: Korean Christian Academy, 1981); Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley publishing Company, 1995); Jeremy Reynolds, "Shamanistic Influences in Korean Pentecostal Christianity: An Analysis," (www.rickcross.com/reference/voidoyonggi/voido11.html), checked: Dec 2003; Young-hoon Lee, "The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea"; Hong-jung Lee, "Minjung and Pentecostal Movements in Korea," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, eds., Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

¹³ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "Review of *Korean Pentecostalism*, by Boo-woong Yoo," *Pneuma* 12:1 (1990), pp. 60-62 (62); Yong-hoon Lee, "The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea," pp. 154-56.

¹⁴ See for details, Yeol-soo Eim, "The Roots of Korean Pentecostalism" (A paper presented in the Theological Symposium for Asian Church Leaders, Seoul, 1998), pp. 31-55. A revised version was later published in Yeol-soo Eim, "South Korea," *NIDPCM*, pp. 239-46. According to Eim, Woon-mong Na is the founder of the prayer mountain movement and is an indigenous Korean Pentecostal who actualized, for the first time, the Pentecostal movement by including Pentecostal

In addition, my study provides additional support for the above argument that Pentecostal features had been part of Korean Christianity. The findings from the diary are presented as follows:

Through the characteristics of the diary and their understanding of the Holy Spirit, we can propose that early Christians in the diary were like Pentecostals or charismatics. Thus, I can argue that Pentecostal phenomena continued from the beginning of Korean Protestantism and it became the foundation of the further development of Korean Pentecostalism. In other words, Korean Pentecostalism did not blossom fruitlessly.¹⁵

Therefore, it is certain that the Korean church had Pentecostal phenomena from the beginning of its history. Pentecostal/charismatic tradition took place in the Korean church way before the coming of foreign Pentecostal denominations in 1952 and the ministry of Cho which began in 1958. Obviously, this is a promising area of further study.¹⁶

2. The Life and Ministry of Cho and YFGC

Cho's book *To God Be the Glory* outlines his conversion experience. In addition, the website of YFGC (www.fgtv.org) includes a brief biography of Cho. Yet, the most helpful source on Cho's early life is Karen Hurston, *Growing the World's Largest Church* and Nell Kennedy, *Dream Your Way to Success*.

Concerning the ministry of YFGC, since 1978 the Institute for Church Growth has published *Church Growth*, a monthly magazine that deals with a variety of issues of church growth. It provides a continual river of data, insights and bibliographic tips of Cho and YFGC. However, comparatively less work is available in the area of theological formation

phenomena. Na wrote influential lecture notes on the Holy Spirit, entitled: "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," in 1952.

¹⁵ Chang-soo Kang, "The First Diary of Revival Rallies of Early Korean Protestants in 1915 of Janbong and Kangwha Islands in the Western Sea Area of Korea" (A paper presented in the Sixth Annual Meeting of Asian Pentecostal Society, Nov 2003, Baguio City, Philippines), pp. 62-63.

¹⁶ For a general article on Korean Pentecostalism: Wonsuk Ma, "Tasks and Challenges for Korean Pentecostal Churches in the Twenty-First Century," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 5 (2002), pp. 63-94.

of Cho or critical evaluation of his theology or theological assumptions, either in English or in Korean, although there are several written documents about Cho's theological encounters through his early life.¹⁷ The following are several suggested areas for further study.

2.1 The Relationship with Missionaries

First, the life and ministry of Cho must be studied in relation to missionaries. Although Cho came to know Jesus Christ through a girl, "Yongae Kim, the Christian teenage friend of his older sister, Hyesook,"¹⁸ it is evident that he was influenced by a number of missionaries.¹⁹ Louis Richards, the missionary who taught the Bible to Cho and encouraged him to enroll in the Full Gospel Bible Institute, says,

A young girl actually was the one who witnessed to Cho about Jesus Christ. Even though he cursed and rejected her from his sick bed, she was faithful day after day to talk to him about Jesus, and the last day that she saw Yonggi Cho, she left her Bible with him. Her witness stirred faith within him and gave him the desire to know more about Jesus.²⁰

Yet, after Cho heard the gospel presentation from the girl, he met Louis Richards and was healed under his ministry, as Richards notes in his payer letter: "Shortly after our arrival in Korea, Evangelist Cho Yonggi and many others found Christ as personal Saviour."²¹ Cho spent time with him and engaged in Bible studies for about two years. Cho's letter below, which was mailed to Richards, also proves his influence on Cho.

¹⁷ Yonggi Cho, "Jesus Christ Gives Life," *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 5, 1967; "When Buddha Didn't Answer, Jesus did!" *The Pentecostal Evangel*, August 26, 1973; Sung-hoon Myung, "Preaching Ministry of Yoido Full Gospel Church" (Th.M. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988); Nell Kennedy, *Dream Your Way to Success* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, Inc., 1980).

¹⁸ Karen Hurston, *Growing the World's Largest Church*, p. 20.

¹⁹ Concerning this, Myung-soo Park also pointed out in his article, Myung-soo Park, "David Yonggi Cho and International Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12:1 (October 2003), pp. 107-28.

²⁰ Rosemary Jackson, "God Will Direct Our Steps," *Spirit* (spring 1997), p. 3.

²¹ Louis Richards, "Prayer Letter of June 9, 1974," at Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

I do so very often think of you! How the time flies so quick. How the time flies so quick. Now I am already 59 years old! But still I think of the World Mission in Pusan and the blessed time of Worship under your ministry!... but yet in my heart I am your boy and your sheep... I am still your son in Jesus.²²

Mr. and Mrs. Louis P. Richards also outline their ministry as follows in their prayer letter of June 9, 1974:

During the fourteen years we served in Korea, we established the Full Gospel Radio broadcast, the Correspondence School and an extensive literature program. Soul-winning Seminars were conducted throughout South Korea during this period of ministry. Shortly after our arrival in Korea, Evangelist Cho Yonggi and many others found Christ as personal Saviour. This work soon became entirely indigenous and according to our last report, twelve of the original converts were in full-time ministry. For five years I served as an evangelist to the Korean Army, ministering to thousands of Korean soldiers.²³

The influence of missionaries on Cho is not only limited to Louis Richards. It can also be found in other words of Cho, as follows.

When asked how God had led him into this ministry, Brother Cho replied, "Brother John Stetz was my Pentecostal father in Bible School. His teaching in Pentecostal truths concerning the apostolic power that is available today was the beginning of my ministry."²⁴

Furthermore, John Hurston played a significant role in Cho's ministry. He ministered with Cho at the Full Gospel Center and invited him to be a pastor of the church in 1961. The church later became Full Gospel Central Church, and there is no doubt that this was one of the most important times in Cho's life and ministry. Hurston was the first senior pastor of the church, but in 1962 as Cho was ordained, he became

²² Yonggi Cho, "Letter" to L. Richards, quoted in Rosemary Jackson, "God Will Direct Our Steps," *Spirit*, Spring, 1997, p. 4.

²³ Louis P. Richards, "Prayer Letter," June 9, 1974, at Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

²⁴ "Victory below The 38th," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, November 12, 1962.

the senior pastor, while Hurston became a missionary advisor to Cho and ministered with him between 1960 and 1970.²⁵

These three examples clearly show the important role that missionaries played in relation to Cho. Due to the increasing importance of Cho and YFGC, however, the role of missionaries has been minimal in the studies on Cho. We, however, cannot devalue the role of missionaries. In various ways, Pentecostal missionaries paved the way for the unique ministry of Cho as well as other national Pentecostals. More importantly, missionaries provided a Pentecostal theological orientation for the Pentecostal movement in Korea.²⁶

2.2 The Relationship with Jashil Choi, Cho's Mother-in-law

In addition, it is worthwhile to note the relationship between Cho and Jashil Choi, his mother-in-law, in order to understand Cho's life and ministry. There are several pertinent factors, which we must be aware of, to comprehend the role of Jashil Choi.

First, when Cho was seriously ill while studying in the Full Gospel Bible Institute in 1957, Jashil Choi took care of him for several months. Although Cho had been healed, he still retained tuberculosis and had to sleep out of the dormitory for many days; he usually slept in a church. In these lonely hours, Jashil Choi became Cho's best friend and spiritual mother. Through this close kinship, Choi and Cho developed a parent-child relationship. Their close affinity was further developed as Choi became Cho's mother-in-law. Jin-hwan Kim, a former General Superintendent of the Korean Assemblies of God, said that no one can deny the role of Jashil Choi in Cho's early ministry. Although, Yonggi Cho was a senior pastor from the beginning, Jashil Choi was a spiritual leader in Cho's early ministry.²⁷

Second, indubitably, Cho's ministry began because of Jashil Choi. Choi initiated and prepared the tent church by herself. She purchased a U.S. army tent in order to start a church on her property and invited Cho

²⁵ Karen Hurston, *Growing the World's Largest Church* (Springfield, MI: Chrism, 1994), pp. 24-26; "Missionary file of Hurston John W," in Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

²⁶ Concerning this issue, see also Myung-soo Park, "David Yonggi Cho and International Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12:1 (October 2003), pp. 107-28.

²⁷ Jin-hwan Kim, interview by the author, December 9, 2003, Angeles City, Philippines.

to preach at its first service. As the ministry proceeded, Choi became a faithful and helpful supporter of Cho. Cho notes about his mother-in-law as follows:

Pastor Ja Shill Choi, who was my Bible school classmate and later became my mother-in-law, is a supreme example in the ministry of prayer and sacrificial devotion to God. During my years of ministry, Sister Choi has remained close by my side, and I have learned to know, love, and appreciate her greatly. In both word and deed, she devoted her life entirely to serving the Master.²⁸

Third, Choi was the initiator and founder of the prayer mountain of YFGC in 1974. This prayer mountain, now formally called Osanri Choi Ja-sil Memorial Fasting Prayer Mountain, was founded immediately after the construction of YFGC in 1973, and contributed greatly to the growth of YFGC. During this time, the prayer mountain movement was popular amongst Korean Christians. Many Christians experienced Pentecostal phenomena—mostly speaking in tongues and divine healings—in prayer mountains and continued to visit prayer mountains for their spiritual needs. This unique spiritual tradition in Korea began in the 1950s. If YFGC had not had its own prayer mountain, it is hard to imagine what would have happened to YFGC today.

Concerning the ministry of Jashil Choi, Yong-hoon Lee notes, “Many miracles and divine healings followed her co-ministry with pastor Yonggi Cho, which lasted for about 30 years.”²⁹ Pastor Yong-rae Park, who was once an assistant pastor of YFGC also notes, “We cannot think about Yonggi Cho without Jashil Choi. She was a great help in Cho’s ministry.”³⁰ Even if Park overemphasized the role of Choi, still we cannot ignore Choi’s influential contributions to Cho’s ministry.

²⁸ Yonggi Cho’s forward to Jashil Choi, *Korean Miracles* (La Canada, CA: Mountain Press, 1978), p. v.

²⁹ Young-hoo Lee, “Choi, Jashil,” in *NIDPCM*, p. 522.

³⁰ Yong-rae Park, interview by Chang-soo Kang, August 20, 2002, Baguio, Philippines. Concerning Jashil Choi, see in detail, Julie C. Ma, “Korean Pentecostal Spirituality: A Case Study of Jashil Choi,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5:2 (July 2002), pp. 235-54; Nell Kenneday, *Dream Your Way to Success*; Yong-hoon Lee, “Choi, Ja-shil,” in *NIDPCM*, p. 522.

2.3 Cho's International Ministry

Yonggi Cho led countless revival rallies in Korea as well as abroad. There is no disputation of Cho's influence in Korean churches,³¹ but there are only a few studies on Cho's influence in the world. Cho's international ministry began with his participation in the World Pentecostal Conference in 1967. In the following years, Cho preached in several nations and, after the construction of YFGC, he often led overseas revival rallies. Furthermore, through the Church Growth International (CGI), conferences are conducted each year to train leaders and laity from abroad, and CGI published books, brochures, and the Church Growth Magazine are distributed in some 125 countries.³² In this area, only one study is represented, and that concerns Cho's role in Japanese Christianity.³³

3. Theological Studies on/about Cho and YFGC

The primary resources for any theological inquiry on Cho's life and ministry are several books of Cho available in English and his sermons. For instance, through Cho's *Jesus the Son*, we can understand his Christology; *Salvation, Health and Prosperity: Our Threefold Blessings in Christ* provides a valuable theological foundation for his theology of blessing. *The Holy Spirit, My Senior Partner* defines Cho's pneumatology, while his *The Nature of God* delineates his understanding of God. Through his books on Revelation and Daniel, we can grasp Cho's eschatology. The following are a few areas in which I feel that further reflections are urgently needed.

³¹ For example, see Chang-sup Shim, "Assessing the impact of Pentecostalism on the Korean Presbyterian Church in Light of Calvin's Theology," *Chongshin Theological Journal* vol. 3 (1998), pp. 115-31.

³² Peggy Kannaday, "The World Largest Church," *Pentecostal Evangel* (Feb 6, 1994), p. 13.

³³ Mark Mullins, "The Empire Strikes Back: Korean Pentecostal Mission to Japan," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

3.1 Theological Reflection

There are several theological studies about Cho: e.g., Hsieh-Kan Christian Wei, "The Analysis and Criticism of the Theology and Methodology of Paul Yonggi Cho" (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 1992) and Philip Douglass, "Yonggi Cho and the Korean Pentecostal Movement: Some Theological Reflections," *Presbyterian* 17 (Spring 1991). However, most of them are often not well balanced, or highly selective in their treatment. One example is the first controversy surrounding Cho's book, *The Fourth Dimension*, as discussed below. Also Boo-yoong Yoo's misrepresentation of Korean Pentecostalism further contributed to some misunderstandings on Cho.

3.2 Theology of Blessing: Three-fold Blessing

The first critical studies on Cho began with Cho's theology of blessing. Much of the criticism derived from Cho's book, *Fourth Dimension*, as we can see in Dave Hunt and T. McMahan's book, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1985). Here, Hunt and McMahan criticize Cho's teachings as "the seduction of the Church." Sung-hoon Myung defends Cho: "Cho does advocate that, in general, it is God's will for every believer to be prosperous in wealth and health as well as in spirituality."³⁴ The weakness of Hunt and McMahan is their overdependence on just one book. Here, Myung's advice shines: we have to understand Cho's theology in a general context, not merely depending on one book, *Fourth Dimension*.³⁵

There are other studies on the same issue. Some of them are: Soo-young Kim, "A Biblical Critique on the Prosperity Gospel of Paul Yonggi Cho" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989); Richard Nelson, "The Self-improvement Gospel of David Yonggi Cho: A Critique of Self-help Theology" (Th.M. thesis, Lincoln Christian Seminary, 1998); Sam-hwan Kim, "The Question of Good and Evil in Full Gospel Faith: A Study of the Theological Foundation for the Three-fold Blessing of Dr. Yonggi Cho" (paper presented at 2002 Youngsan International Theological Symposium, September 2002, Gunpo, Korea).

³⁴ Sung-hoon Myung, "Preaching Ministry of Yoido Full Gospel Church" (Th. M. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988), p. 94.

³⁵ Myung, "Preaching Ministry of Yoido Full Gospel Church," pp. 94-113.

3.3 Contextualization/Indigenization

The next debate has taken place in contextualization issues. Studies in this area include: Won S. Hwang', "Contextualization of the Gospel by Paul Yonggi Cho in the Korean Context" (Th.M. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1994); Daniel J. Adams, "Reflections on an Indigenous Movement: The Yoido Full Gospel Church," *Japan Christian Quality* 57 (Winter 1991); and Allan Anderson, "The Contribution of David Yonggi Cho to a Contextual Theology in Korea," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12:1 (2003).

3.4 Leadership of Cho and Growth of YFGC

Most studies are devoted understandably to this area because of the tremendous growth of YFGC, and two areas stand out, Cho's leadership and various aspects of church growth. Their related areas include cell-based ministry, church planting, the policy and strategy of supporting the pioneering works of YFGC, prayer movement, leadership of Cho, preaching ministry of YFGC, etc. Most studies are affirmative on Cho and YFGC, and try to adapt the church growth principles of YFGC as a church growth model *par excellence*. In this area, Sung-hoon Myung's Ph.D. dissertation, "Spiritual Dimensions of Church Growth as Applied in the Yoido Full Gospel Church" (1990) is the most recommendable work. Myung describes and evaluates the growth of YFGC using four "spiritual dimensions: the work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, preaching and the leadership of the church." Myung also outlines the manifestations of the Holy Spirit at YFGC, thus his study best deals with Cho's pneumatology by comparing it with other academic writings. Moreover, the First Youngsan International Church Growth Conference, which was held in 2003, provided fruitful studies on the leadership of Cho.³⁶ See the bibliography for related works.

3.5 Sociological Studies

A recent social case study of Cho and YFGC is Dong-ho Cho's dissertation, "Intimate Alien: An Immanent Critique of Korean Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2002). This work deals with YFGC from the viewpoint of social value. Another study

³⁶ Yong-gi Hong, ed., *The Role of Leadership in Church Growth: 1st Youngsan International Church Growth Conference* (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 2003).

also included in this area is Vincent Beng Leoh's "Ethics and Pentecostal Preaching: The Anastatic, Organic, and Communal Strands" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990). A serious attempt is needed to study Cho's life and theology in the socio-political and cultural context of Korea.

3.6 Pneumatology of Cho

Regarding the pneumatology of Cho, the 2003 Youngsan International Theological Symposium provided several meaningful articles. Among the five presenters, four delved into Cho's understanding of the Holy Spirit. Although their viewpoints are different from one another, this conference provides a starting point for further study of Cho's pneumatology.

3.7 Concluding Remarks

Most studies on or by Cho have focused on the growth of YFGC. Sometimes, however, theological studies are collapsed into the church growth aspects of Cho's ministry, and such related topics are Cho's positive thinking, theology of blessings, contextualization and others.

In the academic world, most affirmative writings about Yonggi Cho come from his own disciples; Sung-hoon Myung, Young-hoon Lee, Yonggi Hong, Mun-hong Choi, Dong-sung Lee and others. On the other hand, we have seen critical assessments of Cho's theology and ministry. It is unfortunate that most of the critical studies appear not to have full information of Cho and YFGC. Thus, in a manner of speaking, both groups are biased. This situation made it urgent to see the third category of scholars who are not "obligated" to affirm Cho, and yet have good knowledge of his theology and ministry. It is encouraging, therefore, to see new studies by such scholars, and this volume contains some. We may see more studies by this third category of scholars with appreciation and affirmation of Cho's theology and ministry, and yet with critical assessment and recommendations for future developments.³⁷

³⁷ Recently, beginning in 2002, Hansei University organized Youngsan International Theological Symposium (YITS) and produced studies on David Yonggi Cho. If this conference continues annually, it will provide more theological studies on and about Cho. The 2002 YITS focused on Cho's theology in general and the 2003 YITS devoted its issue to Cho's pneumatology.

In collecting resources by or on Cho, it has become apparent that early material, particularly prior to 1973, was extremely difficult to locate. Until recently, primary sources, especially from the crucially important pre-1973 years, the year when the YFGC building was completed, there is a critically deficiency in relevant material, and this situation is worse for English resources. Thus, there is a need for Korean Pentecostal theologians to devote their attention to this formative stage of Cho's theology and ministry, as a comprehensive and scrupulously objective biography of Yonggi Cho has yet to be written.³⁸

The following section provides possible resources of and on Yonggi Cho, available in English. The resources come mainly from the library of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines, ATLA religion database, Internet research and *YFGC Pastor Cho's Resource Center: The Index of Resources 2002*.³⁹ Outside of Korea, the Logos International and later, Bridge Publishing provided a handy outlet, while in Korea it has been the in-house publishers such as Seoul Logos, International Theological Institute (ITI) and the Church Growth International (CGI). Due to the lack of a worldwide distribution network, most of Cho's works published in Korea have not been widely circulated.

PART II: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AND ON DAVID YONGGI CHO

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1.1 Books

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Born to Be Blessed. Seoul: Seoul Logos, 1993.

³⁸ Regarding American Pentecostal leaders, there have been several studies about their lives. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (Bloomington, IN: Indian University Press, 1985); Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993). In a similar way, Cho's life, ministry and his contribution to world Christianity, deserves a serious study.

³⁹ Yoido Full Gospel Church Pastor Cho's Resource Center, ed., *YFGC Pastor Cho's Resource Center, The Index of Resources 2002*.

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