

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is one of the most appealing topics for many people in contemporary society. Since the middle of the 1990s, selling spirituality has been a booming business, not only in North America but throughout the world. Local bookstores have large sections titled, “spirituality,” adjacent to other popular topics such as psychology, self-help, and mental health. Training centers for spiritual practices and psychological well-being in various religious and secular traditions are flourishing in many parts of the world. East Asian religions have become one of the fastest growing religions in North America, especially Zen Buddhism due to its well-developed spiritual practice and meditation. For many people today, “spirituality” seems to be a new form of psychology, pseudo-psychotherapy, or an alternative, universal religion to traditional world religions.

The widespread popularity of spirituality is a phenomenon not only among non-religious people in a secular society but also among religious persons within traditional churches. Contemporary Christians, especially those who are in mainline Protestant denominations, often express their frustration and hunger for spiritual growth. In search for available sources and guides for spiritual growth, Christians often seek help from outside their own religious tradition. This result is due to the lack of attention to the abundant spiritual teachings and practices within Christianity, such as the spiritual disciplines of Eastern Church Fathers and Celtic spirituality or within Protestant Reformers as well. In addition, it is partly caused by the loss of awareness of

the abundant Christian symbols and rituals that provided deeper meanings for faith communities throughout Christianity's long history.

The recent popularity of Protestant monastic communities such as the Taize community in France and the Iona community in Scotland, as well as numerous Christian retreat centers and monasteries throughout the world, indicates the desperate search for contemporary Christians to find an intimate, deeper, interdependent relationship with God. Many Protestant Christians and theologians are searching for good spiritual sources and guides within the Catholic tradition, which has maintained a stronger emphasis on disciplined spiritual life for its members and clergies.

Joseph D. Driskill, a professor of spirituality at Pacific School of Religion in Berkley, claims two serious spiritual needs of contemporary Protestants and churches: the need for “experiential” relationship with the Divine rather than “intellectual” relationship, and the need for recovering spiritual practices and disciplines in order to facilitate spiritual development.¹ For the last two decades of the twentieth century, Protestant churches have experienced several serious issues²: 1) intense spiritual longing; 2) the “exodus” of faithful members searching for alternative ways of fulfilling their spiritual needs such as Eastern religions, new religious movements, New Age spirituality, and Jungian psychology; 3) the lack of reliable sources and tools for spiritual development; 4) uncritical reading and acceptance of available resources, resulting in “spiritual chaos”; and 5) the lack of direction or guidance from faith communities.

This situation is not different in the Korean context. Contemporary Korean Christians, churches, and society have been searching for adequate sources, norms, and models for spiritual

¹ Joseph D. Driskill, introduction to *Protestant Spiritual Exercises: Theology, History, and Practice* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), xii.

² *Ibid.*, xv-xvi.

and psychological development during the last decade. During that period, spirituality, counseling, and psychology have been popular themes in theology, religion, ministry, and even in the public sphere. However, the ongoing search for an appropriate model has not been successful, and the existing models and methods such as James W. Fowler's faith development theory (FDT) have not been effective for the Korean culture. This dissertation is a response to this problem.

In this situation, the primary question for this dissertation is: What is an effective theological model for the spiritual and psychological development of contemporary Korean Christians? In addition, this dissertation will address the following related questions: What are the major spiritual and psychological challenges for Korean Christians today? What are the major social and cultural trends and changes that contribute to these challenges? What are the deeply embedded theological, psychological, and cultural issues involved? What is the role of the community in the process? How and in what ways does an adequate model make a difference in forming and transforming Korean Christians and communities?

Driskill claims that Protestant churches need "a model for spiritual development" that accounts for "the variety of ways in which the spiritual needs of their members are awakened – the intimate link between our spiritual and psychological selves."³ For this task, he suggests five important principles in developing a model of Protestant spiritual development. First, Protestant churches should provide a firm theological and historical grounding for an effective model of spiritual development, addressing concepts such as the nature of God, Spirit, human nature, divine love, grace, daily divine activity, the process of creation, justification, sanctification, and salvation. Second, Protestant churches should explore and examine resources and tools within

³ Ibid., 37.

the Protestant heritage rather than searching for outside sources from different religions, psychologies, or New Age spirituality. Driskill claims that it is necessary to study not only spiritual practices, disciplines, rituals, and methods of the Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Wesley, but also the pre-Reformation resources since the Reformers had a deep heritage and foundation in the Early Church and Catholicism.⁴ Third, Protestant spirituality should connect and balance spiritual practices and social actions. Driskill identifies the main, unbalanced characteristic of Protestant spirituality throughout the twentieth century as its exclusive focus on social justice and ethics. Fourth, a Protestant spirituality model should focus on nurturing an experiential relationship with God both personally and within a faith community. Fifth, Protestant spirituality model should facilitate the “lived experience of faith and Christian life.”⁵

In developing a spiritual and psychological development model for contemporary Korean Christians, with Driskill’s five principles in mind, I claim three additional foundational principles for the Korean context. First, there should be important paradigm shifts in two areas: 1) a central theological emphasis in Protestantism from an exclusive and limited understanding of grace and justification to an inclusive and comprehensive meaning of grace and sanctification, and 2) the model of divine-human and human-human relationship from separated, hierarchical relationship to interconnected, horizontal dynamic in the community of faith. The theological emphasis on justification by faith was the motto of the Protestant Reformation and the legacy of Martin Luther who stressed that God’s grace, saving love, was granted to the believers as a gift rather than being acquired by human efforts. Sanctification emphasizes the necessity and process for continuous spiritual growth through God’s grace in horizontal, intimate divine-human, human-

⁴ Ibid., xviii.

⁵ Ibid., 10-11.

human dynamics in the community of faith. God's grace is free, but not cheap. Grace not only brings the moment of justification but also leads people toward continuous growth.

Second, it is important to acknowledge serious misconceptions about spiritual development that may lead to possible dangers. Many people often understand that spiritual growth is an individual achievement toward a better state, and often seek for the next, higher level of spiritual development. Human beings have the lifelong need and necessity for continuous spiritual growth, but that growth does not require worrying about one's level of spiritual achievement, striving for the next level, or arduously climbing the ladder toward the higher stage. The ultimate goal of spiritual development is continuously and faithfully being on the journey with God and others, triggered and empowered by the power of grace in the community of faith. It is also continuously questioning one's own identity: "Who am I on this journey?"⁶ Thus, there are no distinct hierarchical stages in the model of spiritual and psychological development for contemporary Korean Christians.

Third, there should be a comprehensive framework in developing a model of spiritual and psychological development: particular spiritual practices, daily spiritual discipline, spiritual direction or guidance, spiritual discernment, and spiritual development.⁷ In creating intimate relationships with God and other human beings, there must be specific and effective channels such as prayer, meditation, reflection, and critical reading, etc. These channels work effectively when they become a crucial part of people's daily lives, and thus, people practice these regularly. Therefore, these channels are called spiritual disciplines. Spiritual direction or guidance is important in regard to facing and realizing one's own past and present spiritual and emotional

⁶ John McDargh, "Group Psychotherapy as Spiritual Discipline: From Oz to the Kingdom of God," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 22, no. 4 (1994): 296.

⁷ Driskill, *Protestant Spiritual Exercises*, 43-48.

struggles or traumas. It is usually provided by an individual spiritual director or a leader and members of a small group. Spiritual discernment requires critical examination of, and reflection on, people's daily lives employing both cognition and emotion. It raises constructive questions about issues within personal lives, interpersonal relationships, and social problems, and realizing possible answers and confirmations. When people deepen their relationships with God and other human beings through spiritual practice, discipline, direction, and discernment for months and years, they often achieve notable changes, such as growth in personality, improved attitudes and interpersonal dynamics, and increased awareness and participation in social problems. This process of change is called spiritual development.

Along with three major principles for a spiritual developmental model, I also claim three major challenges that contemporary Korean Christians and faith communities are experiencing: 1) the challenge of narcissism and the formation of the healthy self; 2) the challenge of religious and cultural identity formation; and 3) the challenge of the embodiment of religious beliefs and practices. These three challenges are closely interconnected and represent three dimensions of a larger challenge facing Korean church and society.

As a response to these three major challenges, this dissertation will argue that a more adequate theological model of spiritual and psychological development for Korean Christians can be developed out of psychological understandings of narcissism and the self, anthropological understandings of *communitas* and *habitus*, the Korean cultural concept of *jeong*, and the Wesleyan ideas of grace and sanctification. Korean spiritual and psychological development is possible when people experience the dynamics of grace and *jeong* in divine-human, and human-human relationships both in communal ritual and daily lives. The desirable setting for experiencing growth and healing through grace and *jeong* is a long-term small group setting

within the community of faith. The emerging model is a theological model with a firm Korean Wesleyan theological foundation. It is a way of providing spiritually and psychologically informed pastoral care for both prevention and healing of spiritual hunger and psychological deficiency. In the following section, I will explore the three major challenges of Korean spiritual and psychological development.

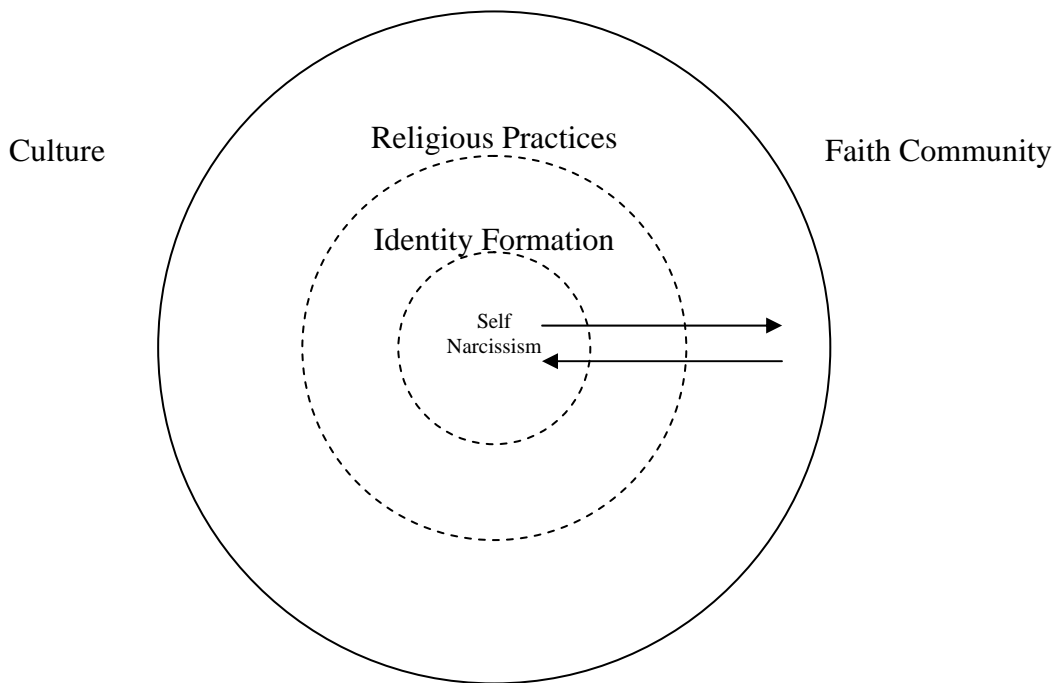


Figure 1. Three Interconnected Challenges of Korean Spiritual and Psychological Development

The Challenge of Narcissism and The Formation of the Self

Narcissism has often been misunderstood by many people as excessive self-love, self-respect, self-pride, and self-grandiosity. Narcissism is obviously related to the structure of the self, but typical descriptions of narcissism by the general public are often incorrect. Freud

explored narcissism in his 1914 article from the perspective of his traditional tripartite model of *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. He explained that narcissism was mainly caused by 1) the withdrawal of an interest and instinctual energy, *libido*, from the objects in the external world and 2) the investment of an instinctual energy and interest in the *ego*.⁸ This investment in the *ego* makes a person unable to develop relationships with others or love others, and thus become self-absorbed.

Heinz Kohut (1913-1981), a classic Freudian psychoanalyst and an immigrant from Vienna, Austria who spent most of his professional life in the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute, explained narcissism differently. In his early career he worked out of a classic Freudian model, and was the president of the American Psychoanalytic Association from 1964 to 1965. In his later career, during the 1970s, he retreated from the classic model of *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, and changed his perspective in order to deal with narcissism. Kohut's significant change in theory was caused by his direct observation of a new type of patient. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of rapid cultural shift and significant change in family interactions in U.S. society and culture. Narcissism became a widespread phenomenon during that time and Kohut recognized its emergence and widespread existence among his patients and within the U.S. society, and was sympathetic to the problem.

Kohut differed from Freud because he believed that narcissistic patients do not withdraw their interests from external objects. He instead argued that they are not able to rely on resources from within themselves because they had not developed in early childhood a strong, cohesive self-structure. As a result, they have weak sense and structure of the self and are intensely attached to others.

⁸ Michael St. Clair, *Object Relations and Self Psychology: An Introduction* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), 140.

Among his patients, those with narcissistic traits are often successful professionals, but have neurotic suffering such as emptiness, shame, loneliness, lack of joy and happiness, extreme sensitivity to disappointments and failures, and mixed feelings of self-esteem and inferiority simultaneously. On the surface, they function well socially, with quite acceptable impulse control. However, they suffer seriously due to their continuous pursuit of love and admiration from others, and feel little empathy for the emotions of others. Kohut points out that they do not have strong, cohesive self structure, and their self-esteem is very unstable. It is the image of a hungry, empty, and enraged self. They cannot have empathy for others' feelings because they did not experience an empathic interaction between their parents and themselves in their early childhood. In addition, they have a different kind of interpersonal relationship – a fused relationship without clear boundaries.

In dealing with these patients, Kohut changed the perspective of the classical Freudian model that concentrated on the ego in dealing with narcissism to the psychology of the self. While the Freudian model emphasized the ego as an active agent, Kohut put the self at the center of his theory and practice. He defined the self as “a unit, cohesive in space and enduring in time, which is a center of initiative and a recipient of impressions”⁹ and “the center of the individual’s psychological universe.”¹⁰ The self is not a “representation, a product of the activity of the ego,” but “is itself the active agent.”¹¹ It is the locus of relationships.

The understanding of the self is the main focus in dealing with narcissism. Asian culture generally has a more explicit emphasis on relationship. The Chinese, Korean, Japanese word for

⁹ Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International University Press, 1977), 99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹¹ Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 353.

human being is *inn-gahn*, which is literally translated into “human (*inn*) between (*gahn*).”¹² The self is always relational, and the formation of the self is not “what happens within an individual . . .” Instead, it is what happens, “between individuals that makes us human.”¹³ Human-heartedness is fundamentally relational and human beings experience it through devotion, love, and sacrifice of their parents. It is because a person is born into “a particular family.”¹⁴ The parent-child relationship is the primary relationship defined by filial piety, which requires fulfilling one’s responsibility for others. Children are required to show obedience, reverence, and respect for their parents, while parents are expected to give love, benevolence, and wisdom.

Andrew Sung Park, a Korean-American systematic theologian at United Theological Seminary in Ohio, also points out that the Korean word for human, *inn-gahn*, denotes that “a human being emerges from between persons,” and “our authentic self emerges from the communal unity of the two clans to which the two parents belong.”¹⁵ The self in the Korean mind emerges from an I-We relationship. The parents are always “we,” and they “can never be otherness from whom our consciousness of the self derives.”¹⁶ Park points out that “‘I’ is closely interwoven with ‘we,’ yet develops its own identity in solidarity with ‘we.’”¹⁷

Narcissism is mainly caused by a weak sense and structure of the self, and the formation of the weak self is related to the significant changes in family interactions in Korean society and culture. Korean psychologists Young-Shin Park and Uichol Kim point out that the rapid disappearance of traditional extended families as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and

¹² Uichol Kim and Young-Shin Park, “The Scientific Foundation of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology: The Transactional Approach,” in *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology: Understanding People in Context*, ed. Uichol Kim, Kuo-Shu Yang, and Kwang-Kuo Hwang (New York: Springer, 2006): 38.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁵ Andrew S. Park, “The Formation of Multicultural Religious Identity within Persons in Korean-American Experience,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 34-35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

globalization is a major cultural and social change in the last three decades.¹⁸ Currently, less than 10 % of Korean families are extended families with three generations in one household, and the average size of the household declined from five in 1975 to three in 2004.¹⁹ The interactions in a traditional extended family have been “the basis of the development of the self,”²⁰ but the traditional family structure has been replaced by the nuclear family. Moreover, younger parents in contemporary Korean society struggle with a lack of time and energy for spending more time with children due to their mutual commitments for work and family.

The social and familial contexts of human life have significantly influenced the emergence and presence of narcissism in contemporary Korean society and culture. Christopher Lasch, a Western cultural critic who was not sympathetic to narcissistic needs and disliked psychologists, claimed that narcissism is closely related to the everyday life of contemporary society: the anxieties, tensions, survival mentality of contemporary life, the absence or lack of hope for the future, and the dysfunction of families.²¹ These social phenomena were the characteristics of the social condition in 1979 when Lasch’s major book, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations*, was published in the United States.

Object relations theorists and self psychologists emphasize the importance of early child-parent interactions, and cultural anthropologists and sociologists confirm each culture’s distinctive patterns of socialization and child-rearing and the influence of culture on personality.

¹⁸ Young-Shin Park and Uichol Kim, “Family, Parent-Child Relationship, and Academic Achievement in Korea: Indigenous, Cultural, and Psychological Analysis,” in *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology: Understanding People in Context*, ed. Uichol Kim, Kuo-Shu Yang, and Kwang-Kuo Hwang (New York: Springer, 2006): 428.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 428.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 424.

²¹ Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 34-41.

Self psychologists believe that, though parents try to convey love to their children, the fact that they remain emotionally detached may cause the formation of narcissistic children. There are parents who are narcissistic themselves, and they often see their child as the extension of themselves. Thus, they make the child feel special yet they lack enough affection to fulfill the needs of the child. With a firm conviction, the parent tries to arrange everything with a zeal for the child who deserves the best, but in so doing actually undermines the child's will and initiative and ignores the child's ability to develop self-support and self-help. The "helicopter" parent who is overprotective, overbearing, and over-the-top is always hovering around the child, and leaves no space for the child to make a decision by him/herself. According to Kohut, the parent leaves the child "with the feeling that he has no mind of his own."²²

As a direct response to the insecure, competitive social condition, these types of parents and families became more and more common in the society. However, as Lasch points out, it does not mean that the entire American society was sick or all Americans had problems with narcissistic personalities. Rather, ordinary people were affected by the social condition and mood: "As the world of business, jobs, and politics becomes more and more menacing, the family tries to create for itself an island of security in the surrounding disorder."²³

James W. Fowler (1940 -), who is a scholar well-known for his faith development theory, also points out that narcissism is formed in early childhood by inadequate, insufficient, or inconsistent mirroring of the child by parents.²⁴ The parents' own narcissistic deprivation in their early childhood produces emotionally inattentive and empty interactions with their child. The child tries to get the affirmation and approval of their parents by following their expectations and

²² Ibid., 173.

²³ Ibid., 172.

²⁴ James W. Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 114.

values. In order to get approval, the child denies his or her own emotions and experiences, which eventually creates a false self. Thus, the child loses access to one's own emotions and the joy of life.²⁵

Interestingly, about three decades after the publications of Kohut's major books on narcissism, *The Analysis of the Self* (1971) and *The Restoration of the Self* (1977), narcissism has become a widespread phenomenon in contemporary Korean society and culture influenced by the rapid process of westernization and globalization, and severe competitiveness in schools, work places, and homes. Narcissism in Korean society is particularly related to fused, intense, and inverted relationships, and imbalanced power dynamics between parents and children.

In the context of severe competitiveness in Korean society, parents are obsessed with the security and success of their own children, and with their desire to feel self-affirmation and self-value through their children's accomplishments and success. In order to accomplish this, parents often identify and merge with their children mentally and emotionally as if the children are the extension of their own selves. The culture of narcissism and victimization of children by their narcissistically immature parents are major roadblocks for the younger generations' healthy psychological and spiritual development.

Volney P. Gay, a scholar of religion and psychoanalyst at Vanderbilt University, provides a vivid description of a patient's parent-child interaction in his book, *Joy and the Objects of Psychoanalysis* (2001). In the beginning of the book, Gay defines neurotic suffering as "the absence of joy" and "little joy," thus "to be neurotic is, perhaps, to be the opposite of joyful" and "to be miserable and suffer in a special kind of way."²⁶ In his interpretation of his patient's story

²⁵ Ibid., 114.

²⁶ Volney P. Gay, *Joy and the Objects of Psychoanalysis: Literature, Belief, and Neurosis* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001), 19.

titled, “Taking Care of Daddy’s Feelings,” Gay shows how the patient’s intense and inverted relationship with his father in his early childhood was due to his father’s strong narcissistic concern for having a smart and proud son just like himself, disregarding the fact that the child could not yet have developed that level of ability. The father had an exaggerated wish for his son’s physical well-being, which caused pathogenic beliefs, guilt, and suffering in the child’s mind. In facing his father’s demand and in trying to satisfy and please his father in order to help him feel better, the child unconsciously adopts “a pattern of behavior” that seems to please his father and so keep his father’s “availability as emotional affordances.”²⁷

Similar to the pattern of behavior adopted by the child of a narcissistic parent, there is a culture-specific pattern of behavior called *noon-chi*, which is often found among young contemporary Koreans. The literal translation of the word, *noon-chi*, is “awareness by eye,” which is “a nonverbal sense of communication.”²⁸ It is the child’s or younger person’s being sensitive to and figuring out other’s feelings, perception, and needs rather than focusing on one’s own feelings and needs. This awareness and pattern of behavior is formed by conscious and unconscious family training.

Even while the Korean society and culture are in the midst of a rapid cultural shift, Young Gweon You, a Korean pastoral theologian at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, also points out the importance of family network and community. He describes the major causes of the rapid increase of mental problems in Korean community and culture: “misconceptions about counseling, being anxious about losing face, not having enough resources, and losing the

²⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁸ Park, “The Formation of Multicultural Religious Identity,” 37.

traditional therapeutic community.”²⁹ Among these major causes, You emphasizes losing the community and family network, which have been primary resources for Korean people in the past, as “the main reason for the increasing rate of psychological problems among Koreans.”³⁰ Koreans used to live with strong support and practical advice from the community and family network. However, rapid changes in their context of living influenced by Westernization and globalization caused the sudden loss of therapeutic community. While losing the traditional therapeutic community, other appropriate resources such as individual and group counseling models and practices developed by Western scholars have not been effective for the Korean setting.

Contemporary Koreans undergo this time of rapid transition and ongoing confusion. Korean people are living in between two worlds – traditional ideals and values that still support a group culture and family structure and the Western ideals and values of freedom and individuality that are strong dominating forces in Korean minds and lives. You describes that “the world that Koreans born into is a communal environment, yet the world that they try to survive is in an individualistic society,” thus contemporary Koreans experience “two different internalizing processes.”³¹ Contemporary Korean communities are not traditional Korean communities but neither do they fit typical Western social models; rather they exhibit qualities of both. They are neither completely communal nor completely individualistic.

You further claims that people with “a dual mental structure” build up “a double repression barrier” and see the world as a hostile place.³² As a result, they experience “symptoms

²⁹ Young Gweon You, “Seeking for Authentic Self in Community,” *Pastoral Psychology* 51, no. 1 (September 2002): 87.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

³² *Ibid.*, 89.

of depression” and often “suffer from a sense of alienation, self-negation, and ambivalence about their personal identity.”³³ You points out that these rapid cultural shifts and social changes cause depression and a sense of identity confusion and alienation among contemporary Koreans.

An indigenous Korean cultural emotion closely related to narcissism and depression with which many young contemporary Koreans struggle is *jeong-han*. *Jeong-han* is a specific dimension of *han*. *Han* often operates at an unconscious level and is a suffering that has emotional, rational, and physical dimensions in it. It is a Korean culture-bound syndrome that actually causes physical and mental illness. It is a psychosomatic pain caused by frustrated hope, which produces sadness, helplessness, and aggression.³⁴ It is “the collapsed feeling of pain” due to oppression and repression in a personal, interpersonal, social, cultural levels.³⁵ *Han* is also the mixed emotion of bitterness and resentment, and the “division of the tissue of the heart” caused by violence, abuse, and exploitation.³⁶ When people experience unendurable pressure and stress, they lose control of their emotions and let go of those emotions.

Han has been formed by national catastrophes and tragedies, as well as Korea’s unique historical, political, economical, and social context. It is similar to the racial ethos of Jewish Holocaust survivors’ emotion and the Irish’s ethnic depressive characteristic. Interestingly, *han* still exists in the minds and hearts of contemporary young Koreans, even though the life context of contemporary Koreans are much safer and more comfortable than that of the previous generations.

³³ Ibid., 89.

³⁴ Andrew S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 15.

³⁵ Ibid., 16.

³⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

The specific type of *han* widely exists in the everyday lives of young Koreans is passive individual unconscious dimension of *han* – resignation or withdrawal. It is called *jeong-han* and shares similarities with depression, narcissism, and masochism. The literal meaning of *jeong-han* in Korean is affection and hatred. It is the mixed emotion of affection and hatred simultaneously. Common emotions of *jeong-han* are emptiness, loneliness, longing, self-reproach, anguish, pain, worthlessness, and resignation.³⁷ A person with *jeong-han* projects one's hatred not to others but towards oneself, and shows concerns about the well-being of the loved one while harming or punishing oneself. Similarly, narcissism has “more in common with self-hatred than with self-admiration,” and rejected or ignored love “turns back to the self as hatred.”³⁸

The Challenge of Religious and Cultural Identity Formation

The challenges of narcissism and weaknesses in the self are interconnected and inseparable with the challenge of religious and cultural identity formation, though these challenges are not identical. When people do not have a strong, cohesive self, it is almost impossible to experience any sort of religious and cultural identity formation since that process requires a cohesive, healthy self and the presence and support of communities such as family and community. The challenge of religious and cultural identity formation in contemporary Korean society is directly connected to the problems in the role and function of the family, neighbor, and faith community in the formation of the self and identity, and the heavy burden of forming a coherent identity out of multiple cultural and religious ideals and values which are present in Korean culture.

³⁷ Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 36.

³⁸ Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 31-35.

In exploring the second challenge, it will be helpful to clearly understand the relationship between narcissism and identity confusion and between the self and identity with the help of Don S. Browning, a well-known retired scholar of religion and psychology at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Browning compares and contrasts the similarities and differences of theories of Erik Erikson and Kohut. They share a basic understanding that psychological identities are shaped by histories and cultures in which people grow and live, though they use different terms such as ego (or self)-identity and self.

Narcissism and identity confusion are not identical notions but they are highly convergent.³⁹ There is a considerable overlap between these two clinical and cultural phenomena. A common, key experience of both narcissism and identity confusion is a sense of the “fragmentation” of the self, which indicates the lack of firmness in the self or a non-cohesive self.⁴⁰ Emotional experiences such as emptiness, depression, and hypochondria are frequently common to both.

Kohut is much more strict and pure in his exploration of narcissism and his search for a solution than is Erikson.⁴¹ Kohut rarely mentions cultural and social forces that seriously impact the possible parental failures in their empathic response to their children; the primary cause of the feelings of emptiness, lack of confidence and cohesiveness, and lack of self-esteem in children. He focuses on the therapeutic process in which he explores the deficits of the client’s self formed in early childhood as well as the deficits of the parents’ selves. He strictly employs the method of observation of client’s external behaviors and introspection of the therapist’s own experience to understand and interpret the underlying, deeper meaning of certain behaviors and

³⁹ Don S. Browning and Terry D. Cooper, *Religious Thought and Modern Psychologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 185.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

words. He employs the term, self, rather than identity, which is fundamentally a sociological term from his perspective.

Erikson's approach is broader, and more complex and more comprehensive than Kohut. Browning points out that Erikson's preference in using the concept of identity is large enough to "encompass both the self in its archaic formations" and "the self in its sociological definitions."⁴² Erikson understands identity confusion both as developmental crisis of adolescence and a pathology that requires clinical intervention. The developmental problems in earliest childhood cause weaknesses in the self structure which leads to identity confusion in later stages. Thus, narcissism and identity confusion are interconnected with each other and similar, but not identical.

Erikson is more explicit in claiming social factors for the formation of identity confusion such as rapid social change, frequent dislocation and confusion in families, the pressures on adolescents as well as young adults for "complex synthesis of sexual, vocational, political, and ideological commitments."⁴³ In regard to the struggles of young people in society, Browning interprets that Erikson focuses on the searching for the "kinds of ideologies and worldviews necessary to guide young people" in making the "complex synthesis that identity formation requires."⁴⁴ Browning also points out that Erikson makes it clear that "in a complex society relatively healthy young people can confront trauma and even appear sick" if they are "prematurely forced to make these synthesis, choices, and commitments without workable ideological frameworks to guide them."⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., 187.

⁴³ Ibid., 185.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 186.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 186.

The challenge of identity confusion and formation is not uncommon in different cultures. A retired American pastoral theologian Charles V. Gerkin at Emory, in his book *Prophetic Pastoral Practice: A Christian Vision of Life Together* published in 1991, points out that contemporary American society is struggling with “the fragmentation of norms and boundaries.”⁴⁶ Thus, it is extremely hard to have a clear vision that can be a guide for Americans’ communal life because of serious “confusion” and “controversy” among diverse religious and secular values and beliefs.⁴⁷

A similar problem exists in Korean culture and is, in fact, a more challenging situation than that of the American society. Historically, American culture is built on Judeo-Christian traditions, though it has become more multi-cultural and multi-religious. Korean culture, on the other hand, has accepted and adopted widely diverse, and often conflicting, religious traditions and teachings in its long history. This diversity has often caused conflicts and controversies among its people. In addition, the rapid growth of Christianity and the dominance of Western culture have brought even more competition between the teachings and values of Christianity and those of traditional Korean religions.

Andrew S. Park acknowledges this challenge of cultural and religious identity formation, though he studied mainly the Korean-American situation. He claims that the formation of the self of young Korean-Americans should be accomplished through multiple-layered dynamics: “intrapersonal, intergenerational, interreligious, intercultural, and communal dynamics of relationships.”⁴⁸ Among these layers, Park emphasizes the importance of family as the primary foundation in forming the self: “The virtue of respecting and caring for their parents plays a

⁴⁶ Charles V. Gerkin, *Prophetic Pastoral Practice: A Christian Vision of Life Together* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 29.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁸ Park, “The Formation of Multicultural Religious Identity,” 46.

pivotal role in all aspects of life” and “the practice of filial piety in intergenerational relationships deepens the development of the self.”⁴⁹ Consequently, “anything that disrupts the family unit can lead to psychological distress.”⁵⁰ However, according to Park, the relationship is often challenging because of children’s “vertical relationships with parents,” which make it difficult for the children to experience “intergenerational identity” formation process.⁵¹

Park also claims that the interreligious identity formation process is challenging because of Koreans’ multiple religious backgrounds. In using Marc Mullinax and Hwain Chang Lee’s data analysis, he points out that Christianity as “language” and Confucianism as “grammar” operate in the Korean Christian mind simultaneously as “twin gyroscopes and as dual liturgies.”⁵² In addition to these two religious foundations, he explains the presence and impact of diverse religious tradition in the Korean mind:

Korean-American Christians are Christian in their religious understanding and devotion; they are Confucian in their ethical way of life; they are quite otherworldly or Buddhist in their outlook; they are paradoxical and mystically Taoist in their philosophy of life. All of them are fairly holistic or shamanistic in their cosmic way of thinking. The formation of their self is influenced by these religious heritages.⁵³

Jung Young Lee, the late Korean-American systematic theologian at Drew University, shares a similar viewpoint with Park about the presence of multiple religious backgrounds in the Korean mind and culture, but he emphasizes shamanism as “the foundation of Korean culture” and “a basic building block of Korean civilization,” which “deeply penetrates the ethos and life of the Korean people.”⁵⁴ Lee’s point is that shamanism is the only indigenous religion and cultural value system in Korean culture, while Buddhism (4th Century), Confucianism (14th

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁵¹ Ibid., 36.

⁵² Ibid., 38.

⁵³ Ibid., 40-41.

⁵⁴ Jung Young Lee, *Korean Preaching: An Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 29.

Century), and Christianity (19th Century) were imported religious traditions within Korea's long history and had become important parts of Korean culture.

Lee laments the ignorance, rejection, and even persecution of shamanism in Korean society, especially by Christianity, for its "primitive form of religious expression," which does not fit to well-developed industrial and technological society of Korea.⁵⁵ Despite the hostile response from the Korean society, Lee asserts that shamanism "still lives in the hearts of the Korean people . . . expressed in their lifestyle" and will "never disappear, but will continue to reappear in different forms in contemporary life" for "it is the native religion of the Korean people."⁵⁶ For Lee, the rejection of shamanism by Korean Christians are "rejecting their own culture" and losing "an important part of their identity as Koreans."⁵⁷

Lee also emphasizes the crucial roles of Buddhism and Confucianism in the Korean culture and mind. Buddhism was the official state religion from the 4th to 14th century when Confucianism was adopted as the national religion by a newly established Yi [Lee] dynasty that lasted for almost six hundred years until 1910. Lee evaluates that the role of Buddhism for one thousand years was nurturing Koreans' way of life and refining Korean civilization and arts, which was based upon shamanism. Confucianism, different from other religions, is "more than a religion," which became "the norm of the sociopolitical system."⁵⁸ It dominates throughout the last six hundred years as a political, moral, and social instrument that supported Korean culture and society. Thus, Lee asserts that the ignorance and rejection of shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism by Christianity is denying and losing important pieces of the Korean identity.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 29-30.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.

Dealing with the challenge of religious identity formation, however, is a difficult task. It seems that both Park and Lee focus on the bright side of the co-presence of diverse religious traditions and value the harmony and creative synergism among them in forming the self and identity. Park emphasizes “interreligious identity” of the Korean self, while Lee values “syncretism” of religious traditions in forming the Korean identity. Lee explains:

Korean people are more than Confucians. They are also Buddhists, shamans, or Christians. Many religious traditions are brought together in the life and thoughts of Koreans. Thus, Koreans are basically syncretic . . . Syncretism means harmonizing religious traditions, rather than attempting to blend them. The Korean identity, thus, is not found in any one religious tradition. To be a Korean means to be inclusive of many religions traditions.⁵⁹

It is true that the Korean identity is formed by diverse religious traditions, however, experiencing harmony and developing a cohesive identity without confusion and conflict is not easy. In the English language, people use a hyphen when indicating multiple origins and identities – i.e. Korean-American or Buddhist-Christian. It is possible for Korean-Americans to be both Korean and American when these multiple backgrounds are harmonious and become a cohesive identity. However, they may be either Korean or American, or, worse, neither Korean nor American.

It is crucial to examine religious backgrounds in understanding the self and identity in a particular culture, but there are also limitations and dangers of examining religious backgrounds. Korean psychologists, Uichol Kim and Young-Shin Park, point out that it is often incorrect to automatically assume that people in particular religious tradition will follow and practice the teachings in their daily thoughts and behaviors.⁶⁰ In reality, “very few follow these guidelines

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37-38.

⁶⁰ Kim and Park, “The Scientific Foundation,” 40.

meticulously.”⁶¹ They also point out additional difficulties of using religious texts in understanding the Korean people: 1) the co-existence of multiple religious traditions that mutually influence and “integrated and blended into a synthetic form;” 2) the existence of biases and blind spots; and 3) the significant changes of culture and philosophical and religious ideas not reflected in those texts.⁶² Thus, Kim and Park claim that a particular religious tradition and text can be used as a starting point for understanding indigenous people, but they cannot be the end point.

A good example of bias and blind spots in using religious teaching is the father-son relationship in Confucianism, which was considered a “primary relationship” and “the prototype of all relationships” but turns out “to be secondary.”⁶³ In studying human development in East Asia, Kim and Park found that the primary, foundational relationship is the mother-child relationship, which socialize children with social and linguistic skills until the age of three or four after which the fathers would become more participatory in the formation process.

Religious texts can be properly used when psychologists and researchers “translate them into psychological concepts and theories” and “empirically verify how they influence how people think, feel, and behave.”⁶⁴ For example, in Korean culture, they suggest that the human relationship in the teachings of Confucianism can be translated into “the concept of *jung* [*jeong*],” which is “a functional equivalent of human heartedness that is indigenous and used in everyday language.”⁶⁵ In developing empirical research based on the psychological concept of *jung* [*jeong*], they studied the issue of trust in interpersonal relationships in family.

⁶¹ Ibid., 40.

⁶² Ibid., 40.

⁶³ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 41.

In sum, we cannot properly deal with the challenge of religious and cultural identity without accepting the presence and influence of diverse traditional values and ideals in the self and identity of contemporary Korean Christians. The suppression of the parts of the self and identity mainly formed through Korean traditional religions is not an effective way in developing a firm religious and cultural identity. In addition, the rapid loss and brokenness of family, neighbor, and faith community further complicates the identity formation process.

The Challenge of the Embodiment of Religious Beliefs and Practices

The previous two challenges are also interconnected with the challenge of the unity of religious beliefs and practices. These three challenges are inseparable. Without a firm cultural and religious identity, the embodiment of religious beliefs in daily lives is almost impossible. Korea is a multi-religious society, and Koreans have a tendency of emphasizing and valuing the embodiment of religious practices regardless of the religious tradition to which they belong.

In the 2005 Population Census by the Korea National Statistical Office, there is a striking result in regard to religion, especially the significant changes in the number of Protestants and Catholics in Korean society. The 2005 census reflects the cultural shift and social change of the past ten years (1995-2005). According to the 2005 census, 53.1% of the Korean population indicated that they have religious beliefs: 22.8% Buddhists, 18.3% Protestants, and 10.9% Catholics. The number of Buddhists has decreased about 0.4% from 23.2% in 1995, while the number of Protestants has also decreased about 1.4% from 19.7% in 1995. On the contrary, surprisingly, the number of Catholics has increased from 6.6% in 1995 to 10.9% in 2005 Census data indicating a shift from Protestantism toward Catholicism.

Theologians and sociologists of religion, trying to understand the major reasons for the rapid increase of Catholics in Korean society, have indicated a large number of conversions from Protestantism to Catholicism as a major factor. An article in *Hankook Ilbo* (*The Korea Daily*), “Why I was converted from Protestantism to Catholicism?,” reported research by Jae Young Jung, a sociologist of religion, and Sung Don Cho, a pastoral theologian, at the Graduate School of Practical Theology in Echeon, Korea.⁶⁶ The two scholars hosted a seminar titled, “The Rise of Catholicism that Captured the Heart of Contemporary Koreans,” and presented the research result of in-depth interviews and analysis of data. Researchers have analyzed this data in order to understand why this shift is occurring.

Jung and Cho conducted an in-depth, qualitative research of fourteen women between ages thirty and seventy who converted from Protestantism to Catholicism, as well as documentary interviews of two men in their fifties. The two main questions that were asked were: 1) Why have you left Protestantism? and 2) Why have you been attracted to Catholicism? Their general answer was that they were sick and tired various problems in Protestant churches, while Catholicism looked attractive. The problems of Protestantism are: secularism, materialism – excessive emphasis on numeric growth and offering, loss of holiness as a religion, problems in aggressive evangelism, conflicts with people and communities in different faiths, exclusive and closed characteristic of faith and community, sexual and monetary problems of clergy, tyranny of clerical and lay leadership, hierarchical, vertical relationships in faith communities, and severe conflicts among members in faith communities. On the contrary, they had an image of the Catholic Church and faith as intellectual and rational. They pointed out attractions about

⁶⁶ In a *Hankook Ilbo* (*The Korea Daily*) article titled “Why I was converted from Protestantism to Catholicism?” on November 23, 2006, the correspondent reported the research outcome by Jung and Cho. <http://news.hankooki.com/lpage/culture/200611/h2006112318403584330.htm> (accessed April 3, 2008).

Catholicism in various areas: deeper spirituality – the process of spiritual growth and identity formation, meditation, quietness, richness of rituals and symbols, holiness of priests and nuns, flexibility and tolerance of churches, and gentleness in evangelism. Jung and Cho's research results outlining the specific problems people are having with Protestantism in Korea.

Jung and Cho also make an important claim about the conversion process. Jung reported that most converts have not experienced any serious inner struggle in the conversion process because they did not have a strong religious identity as Protestant Christians. Cho even mentioned that the converts did not have a religious identity at all as Protestants. Another factor is particular family situations. When family members struggle with each other because of religious beliefs, people easily change their religion to Catholicism because of the flexibility and openness of the Catholic Church about traditional rites such as ancestor worship in Korean culture and society. Thus, it seems that the conversion process was not a difficult existential decision and action for many contemporary Koreans but an easily-made personal choice. Jung and Cho conclude that Protestant converts do not have a very strong religious identity as Protestants, perhaps because Protestantism does not have a syncretic relationship to traditional Korean beliefs as well as Catholic beliefs.

Through this research by Jung and Cho, we can summarize the problems of Korean Protestantism in four major areas: 1) lack of firm religious identity, 2) lack of deeper spirituality, 3) problems in leadership, and 4) conflicts in faith community. These four areas are directly related to the challenge of the embodiment of religious beliefs and practices. The presence and active role of community are essential for the formation of the self and religious and cultural identity. The continuous process of interpersonal dynamics and mutual support within a group or community based on trust and intimacy is a necessary condition for the embodiment and practice

of religious beliefs in daily lives. Jung and Cho's research indicates the critical role of community in the active embodiment and formation of religious identity.

Embodiment and practice of religious values require a long-term, dynamic process of formation and transformation of individuals and communities within a group or community, but contemporary Korean society and faith communities are experiencing the loss of community, the lack of relational trust, and problems of dynamic interactions among members of the society and church. Especially difficult issues to overcome are the rigid social structure, and vertical, hierarchical relationships among members which represent huge roadblocks for long-term dynamic interactions. The key elements in developing strong communities in order to form strong religious identities are exactly what Korean society is losing on a broad cultural level. Especially difficult are the rigid social structure and hierarchical relationships.

In Korean Christian communities, these roadblocks become serious problems in interpersonal dynamics and can be summarized in two particular areas: 1) "relational boundaries" and 2) "power dynamics" to borrow an American pastoral theologian, Carrie Doehring's terms.⁶⁷ The relationship between pastors and lay members, between lay leaders and members, and among members is often hierarchical or vertical according to their roles, age, and social status, etc. This causes power inequality and boundary issues in interpersonal dynamics in faith communities.

There are pastors who are relationship addicts who often blur boundaries with their parishioners, though it is dangerous to generalize Korean pastors. These pastors think of their behaviors and relationship patterns as good ways of showing empathy or *jeong*, "empathic

⁶⁷ Carrie Doehring, *Taking Care: Monitoring Power Dynamics and Relational Boundaries in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

feelings of interpersonal communion” or “interpersonal bond of closeness”⁶⁸ for his or her parishioners. Providing empathy or *jeong* for others is good in interpersonal relationships, but that may cause a problem for pastors whose role is different from a friend or family member for those who need support and help. Soo-Young Kwon, a Korean pastoral theologian at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, points out that “the underlying cultural ideal of *jeong* (interpersonal bond of closeness) . . . plays a notable role” in making blurred boundary in pastors’ relationships with their parishioners. It is an example of how some Korean pastors are mishandling relational boundaries.

Doehring emphasizes the balance in relational boundaries, “empathy,” which involves both “being separate from” and “connected with the other person.”⁶⁹ Pastoral caregivers often experience “fusion” or “merger” by “overidentifying with a careseeker,” while the caregiver also experiences emotional distance, or “disengagement” from the careseeker at the opposite extreme. Doehring points out that “anxiety or stress can lead a caregiver either to become too separated from the other person and disengaged emotionally or to become too connected or fused with the other.”⁷⁰ Different people have different tendencies toward either fusion or disconnection influenced by diverse communal and family experiences. Both merger and disengagement frequently occurs in pastor-parishioner relationships in Korean churches, but fusion or merger is more common and dangerous than disengagement. It describes Doehring’s model of how relational boundaries can move either of two extremes and become a problem, and the fusion/merger extreme is more common in a Korean context.

⁶⁸ Soo-Young Kwon, “Codependence and Interdependence: Cross-Cultural Reappraisal of Boundaries and Relationality,” *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 1 (September 2001): 45-49. The concept of *jeong* will be explored in depth in chapter four.

⁶⁹ Doehring, *Practice of Pastoral Care*, 19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

The second major problem for Korean communities in developing interpersonal dynamics is overcoming the hierarchical models that Doehring describes as power dynamics. In close interconnection with relational boundaries, either merger or disengagement, “power dynamics” is another key in pastoral care relationship. Equal relationships exist among friends, partners, siblings, or colleagues, but there exist differences in power in one’s relationship with a pastor, teacher, and parent. There are pastors who use their power and authority in healthy ways in caregiving relationships, but there are also possibilities of misusing their power in providing care for others.

Method and Metaphor

This dissertation employs two interrelated methods in the field of practical theology: Don S. Browning’s practical theological method (“practice – theory – practice”) and David Tracy’s interdisciplinary approach (“mutually critical correlation”). Browning’s model is demonstrated in his book, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (1991). His model goes from practice to theory and then back to practice. Browning begins with a thick description of personal, cultural, and religious practices, which helps us to understand major challenges of the current situation, and to raise questions based on that context. The emerging questions go through a rigorous process of dialogue with traditional and normative texts, followed by a fusion of horizons between those texts and the current practices. The focus returns to practice by establishing norms and concrete strategies of practices in light of analysis and reflections up to that point. Tracy’s interdisciplinary approach assists Browning’s practical theological method by facilitating a critical conversation between the questions and answers of the classic sources with the questions and answers of contemporary experience.

This dissertation began with addressing three major spiritual and psychological challenges and struggles of contemporary Korean Christians: 1) the challenge of narcissism and the formation of the self; 2) the challenge of religious and cultural identity formation; and 3) the challenge of the embodiment of religious beliefs and practices. With these major challenges and struggles in mind, this dissertation will engage in serious psychological (chapter three), anthropological and cultural (chapter four), and theological explorations (chapter five) in the following chapters in order to better understand and acquire valuable insights concerning the current situation. The dissertation will conclude in chapter six by offering strategic responses to the primary issues for making a difference in the lives of Korean Christians and faith communities.

In developing a model of spiritual and psychological development for contemporary Korean Christians and faith communities, I use three major thinkers, Heinz Kohut, Pierre Bourdieu, and John Wesley. Each theorist represents a discipline that connects and complements Fowler's FDT. A commonality among them is that their novel theories surpass the perspectives, thoughts, and models of their predecessors. They tried to overcome a dualistic, sharply-separated, vertical understanding of subject-object dichotomy, and emphasize dynamic, dialectic, and ongoing interactions in the process of human formation and transformation.

In explaining major themes of these three thinkers, I employ Chris R. Schlauch's visual image of a Venn diagram of "intersecting-overlapping" circles, which was originally developed in explaining self psychology's key concepts.⁷¹ The two circles in the visual image are placed not vertically but horizontally with an "intersecting-overlapping" area between them. Those intersecting-overlapping two circles represent two human actors, a human actor and a social

⁷¹ Chris R. Schlauch, "The Intersecting-Overlapping Self: Contemporary Psychoanalysis Reconsiders Religion – Again," *Pastoral Psychology* 42, No. 1 (1993): 30.

structure, or a human actor and God. The intersecting-overlapping area sometimes gets bigger or smaller according to the intensity of dynamic interactions between two entities and the change of situations.

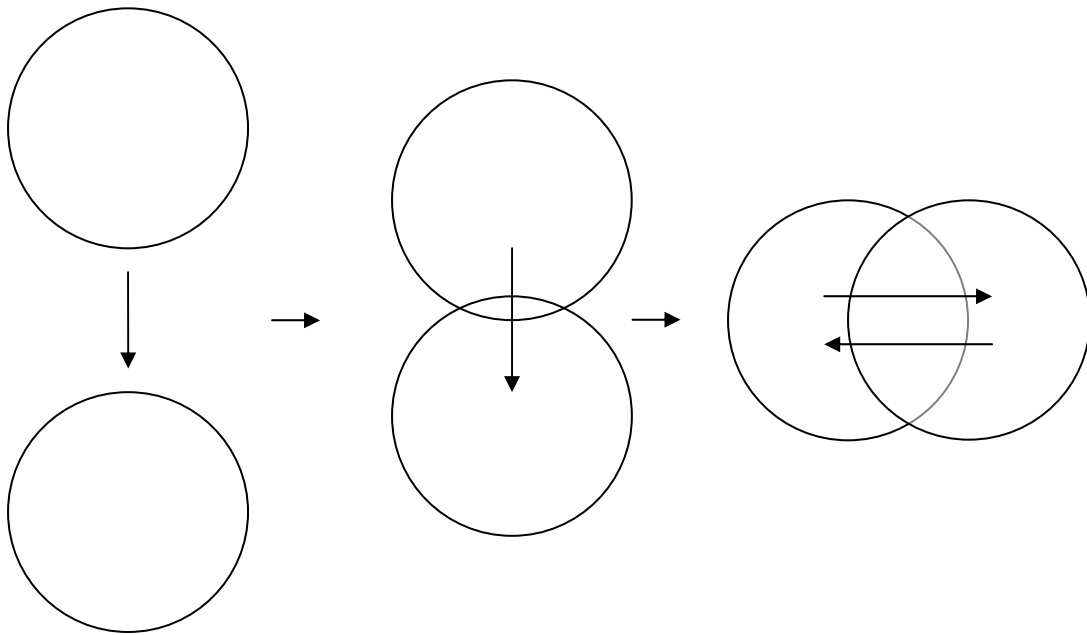


Figure 2. Common Paradigm Shift: Metaphors of Interpersonal Interactions in Psychoanalysis, Anthropology, and Theology
“Intersecting-Overlapping Circles”

In my effort to develop a model of spiritual and psychological development, I have found that this visual image is particularly effective in clarifying the three main components of my theoretical work: 1) my psychological use of the ideal of intersubjectivity in Heinz Kohut’s central notion of *selfobject* and the self–*selfobject* relationship, rather than the traditional subject–object dichotomy, in dealing with narcissistic persons; 2) my anthropological use of Bourdieu’s central concepts of *habitus* and field, and the Korean cultural value of *jeong*; and 3)

my theological use of John Wesley's emphasis on grace and the doctrine of sanctification as a way of understanding the dynamics of spiritual formation through a dynamic, dialectic Divine-human relationship.

This dissertation will provide a new direction for the field of practical theology and its research in the future on religious identity formation, and the embodiment of religious beliefs and practices. It tries to overcome conventionally separated divisions among subfields within the field of practical theology such as pastoral care and counseling, religious education, preaching, worship, spirituality, leadership, and arts of ministry. All of these sub-fields within the canopy of practical theology have a common, penetrating interest and theme – personal and communal formation and transformation of people and community according to the tradition, ideals, and values of the specific religious group through the ongoing, dynamic process of spiritual development.

This dissertation is also an effort to bridge the gap between the church and academy. My research interests on developing a model of spiritual and psychological development, religious identity formation, and the relationship between religious beliefs and practices are crucial issues for the ministry of the church and theological education in the twenty-first century. This dissertation will be theoretically rigorous in developing an effective model while maintaining a practical dimension so that it can provide ideas and insights for concrete strategies for ministry. Even though it includes neither qualitative nor quantitative research outcomes on spiritual and psychological development of Korean Christians, it will provide strategic suggestions and responses for making a difference.

Outline

Chapter two will begin a theoretical exploration for developing a model of Korean spiritual and psychological development by carefully examining James W. Fowler's FDT, looking at its legacy and limitations for Korean context. In order to do in-depth exploration of FDT, I will trace Fowler's family background, early formation process, education, influence of major scholars on his thought, key theoretical foundations, and the birth and growth of FDT over three decades. In the following section, I will provide a brief explanation of the stages in FDT, summary of Mary's case and her search for meaning, self, and identity. Then, I will review the challenges and critiques against FDT from various disciplines, the process of update and revision of FDT by Fowler himself, and the contributions and limitations of FDT for Korean spiritual and psychological development. Overall, FDT shows less attention to the effects of emotion, intrapsychic psychodynamics, interpersonal interactions, and divine grace. Therefore, it benefits from the correction and complement provided by self psychology, practice theory, Korean cultural value of *jeong*, and Wesleyan theology.

Chapter three will explore the necessity of the paradigm shift in the model of divine-human, human-human relationships through the exploration of self psychology's key concepts such as self-*selfobject* relationship and *transmuting internalization* and of Sallie McFague's fresher model of God as Friend and the value of friendship. Kohut's and McFague's newer model of horizontal, mutual, and interconnected divine-human, human-human relationship in community helps to change the fixed image of relationships in the Korean mind and provides the matrix for the formation of the self and life-long spiritual and psychological development. Self psychology and theology explored in this chapter will provide a concrete explanation about the intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamic process of forming the self through the flow of certain psychic enzyme such as empathy, *jeong*, and grace. Then, in the later part of the chapter,

dynamics of narcissism and shame, Kohut's implicit understanding of religion and spirituality, McFague's deeper reflection on the genuine meaning of God and the quality of relationship, and contributions and limitations for Korean spiritual and psychological development will be presented.

Chapter four will confirm the necessity for paradigm shift in the model of interpersonal relationship and expand the discussion of the previous chapter. It will provide a more comprehensive explanation of dialectic human interactions in a larger group or community setting for identity formation and the changes of daily practices, through the key anthropological and cultural concepts such as *communitas*, *habitus*, and *jeong*. This chapter will deal with the second and third major challenges, religious and cultural identity formation and the embodiment of religious beliefs and practices from an anthropological perspective. It will also claim the significance of local and religious communities, and the importance of both ritual and daily practices for the formation and transformation of human actors. Then, I will provide an in-depth exploration about the role of *habitus* and *hexis*, the similarities and differences between anthropological and theological meanings of *habitus*, as well as the Korean cultural emotion of *jeong-han* and the necessity of *jeong* in dealing with the culture-bound emotion. Anthropological and cultural theories can provide a sound explanation about the process of human interactions in the community, but they have limited understanding about the human need, motivation, and desire for gaining more capital. This chapter will also conclude with contributions and limitations for Korean spiritual and psychological development.

Chapter five will complement and correct the limited understanding of human need and motivation for interpersonal dynamics and growth in the community with the deeper cultural meaning of *jeong* and theological notion of grace, which are major sources of power for

continuous spiritual and psychological development for the Korean Christians within the community. This chapter will claim the comprehensiveness of Wesleyan theology in dealing with all three major challenges of Korean spiritual and psychological development in relation to the self, identity formation, and religious beliefs and practices with a firm theological foundation. In addition, this chapter will explore the theological meaning of *jeong* closer to divine grace and sacrificial love, the similarities and differences between *jeong* and grace, the formation and update of Wesley's theology, and the Wesleyan emphasis and meaning of grace in the life-long process of sanctification.

Chapter six will draw connections of contributions and limitations of each theory in order to develop a theological model of Korean spiritual and psychological development, and propose a long-term small group dynamic model as an ideal matrix for the formation of the self, identity, and change of daily practices. The proposed model provides the experiences of egalitarian, intimate dynamics similar to those of family members or friends where participants can grow with the energy of grace and *jeong*. The model is the harmonious combination of group spiritual discipline and psychotherapy. In developing a model and providing strategic suggestions for spiritual and psychological development, I will carefully examine the foundation and mechanisms of similar contemporary encounter groups, group psychotherapy, and Methodist model of the Covenant Discipleship group, and compare and contrast similarities and differences among them. In the following section, I will describe my personal experiences in long-term small group meetings for spiritual and psychological growth during the span of over four years. This dissertation will conclude by claiming the need for a faith community as a foundation for small groups and a bridge between small groups and the wider society. The ultimate goal of spiritual

and psychological development is the interplay of personal growth and communal and social transformation.