

九州大学学術情報リポジトリ
Kyushu University Institutional Repository

Universal Salvation and National Liberation: Tensions in Korea's Early Protestant Experience

Wells, Kenneth M.
The Australian National University

<https://doi.org/10.15017/2198480>

出版情報 : 韓国研究センター年報. 5, pp.9-38, 2005-03-15. Research Center for Korean Studies,
Kyushu University
バージョン :
権利関係 :

Universal Salvation and National Liberation: Tensions in Korea's Early Protestant Experience

Kenneth M. Wells (The Australian National University)

As I see it, there can be no two ideas more mutually contradictory than Christianity, on the one hand, which sets out to promote equality before God and love for one's neighbour, and colonial rule, on the other, which puts other races in chains.

Matsuo Takayoshi⁽¹⁾

Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Jesus Christ⁽²⁾

This paper is about two men, Yun Ch'ihō (1864-1945) and Kim Kyoshin (1901-1945), who struggled with the question of how to relate their new-found faith in an eternal, transcendent Christian God to the specific cultural and political situation of their country at the time. It is also about the way in which the beliefs and actions of these two men are interpreted. It is, further, about the perennial issue of how a transcendent God works, and is served, in the midst of immanent daily life, an issue which in this case arises in the relation of Christians to one of the most powerful forces of their (and perhaps our) time: nationalism.

Evaluation of these two men and the issues which surround them is a very complex exercise, if one wishes to address their every facet, for the introduction to Korea of Protestant Christianity and its growth into an active church community coincided with the decline of the long-lived Chosŏn dynasty into colonial subjection to Japan,

the loss of authority of the traditional Confucian intellectual and moral edifice that underpinned cultural, social, political and economic values and institutions, the oscillation between reform, revolt and reaction from the late nineteenth century, the sharp rise in interest in Western education, medicine, and technology, the debate over the proper roles of men and women, the appearance of ideological schism, and the general issue of modernity. In many cases, the growth of Christianity not only coincided with but also lent impetus to the developments.

I have chosen to single out of this complexity one chief issue that could be considered fundamental to Christian experience in such contexts, namely, the doctrine of Divine Providence. I propose to examine the positions and actions of Yun and Kim in relation both to their understanding of providence and to what might be regarded as the logic of the doctrine itself. It is of course not necessary to subscribe to this doctrine, but it is

surely necessary to understand its place in their worldview. This venture brings me directly up against the vexed question of nationalism, and I think some comment is required on this head.

Nationalism, pronounced an historian several decades ago, is “first and foremost a state of mind.”⁽³⁾ In Korean historiography, this state of mind is manifested in a resolute adherence to the nation as the starting-point of any exploration of Korean history. It might be countered that this nation is implied or even required by the use of the word “Korea,” but this is not my point. What I am referring to is the almost undeviating use of a politically and ethnically defined nation as interpretive framework, evaluative standard, and ultimate meaning, in any exploration of human experience on the peninsula. This nation-state is both first and final cause of Korean history. It follows, then, that all individuals must be examined in terms of how their thoughts, words, and actions register on this teleology of the nation-state. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the treatment of Yun Ch’iho and Kim Kyoshin. The nation-centred approach taken to both Yun and Kim seems to me to have led to quite serious misstatements of both men’s positions. Comparisons may be odious in any case, but hardly more so than when a yardstick is used with which neither parties compared would have been quite comfortable.

This is not, of course, a problem only in Korean historiography: it touches on the relation of the historian to one’s subject in a far more general sense. If historians have responsibilities, surely one of the most important is to interpret the words and deeds of historical figures as far as possible in terms that are consistent with their states of mind at the time. Thus if nationalism is one possible state of mind, the question ought naturally present itself whether other, even quite contrary, states of mind might have existed. What seems to prevent this rather elementary process from taking place in nationalist historiography is the ascription to the “nation” or the

nation-state of a value greater than which no other can exist. The fact that there seem to be no terms other than collaborator or traitor available to describe someone who does not adhere to nationalist values underlines the difficulty of proposing an alternative state of mind to nationalism.

The notion of Divine Providence, however, invites the historian to look in a different way at how historical persons thought and acted. For the doctrine of providence is itself a view of the world that excludes adoption of the nation as the central category of interpretation and meaning. It does not do so by denying the existence or, perhaps, validity of nations, any more than of families, political parties, or individuals. Providence puts God’s purposes at the centre, and nothing is permitted to usurp that position. The chief implication for nations is that they become one among a large number of categories that surround the divine centre, and as such their status as a category or the status of any one nation is entirely relative to the purposes of that divine centre. Does God support the equality of all nations at all times? Does God privilege the “nation” over other categories? Does God even support the concept of a nation or nation-state? Does the political or cultural fate of nations have any relation to God’s purposes for humankind, i.e., does he use them and if so how? There is no self-evident answer to these questions, and the way in which theists (Hindus, Jews, Moslems and Christians) answer them determines the nature of their doctrine of providence.

For Christians, there is another aspect to be considered: the meaning of the new dispensation, that is, the transition from Old to New testaments, from Israel before Christ to the church after Christ. If the purposes of God were formerly revealed through his relation to Israel, are they now revealed through his relation to the church? If the identity of believers was formerly a matter of their membership in Israel, is it now a matter of their membership in the church? Does the nation,

political or cultural, now have any spiritual significance at all? Might loyalty to the nation lead to betrayal of the church and Christ? There is not unanimity on all such questions, but a fair degree of consensus exists on the principle that *if* providence has any special place for nations, it is only with regard to the fate of Israel and thus no other nation can properly consider itself “chosen.” (Christians in some western nations, such as Calvinists in The Netherlands in the 16th century, have identified their nations as such, and the stronger the threat or ambition the stronger this tendency, but it is regarded as a theological aberration. No official Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Orthodox doctrine supports the idea.) In general, however, God's purposes are believed now to be pursued through the church and believers. For the rest, nations may be considered to reap the rewards of their own good or bad behaviour, a position that is liable to very fluid interpretation.

Unless these issues are understood, it is difficult to see how a proper historical study could be made of Yun Ch'iho and Kim Kyoshin, or of any of the Korean Protestants who attempted to view their nation's situation in terms of providence. Certainly, the question has to be raised whether Christianity permits one to give central place to the nation, whatever its situation. And having done so, the historian might even be persuaded to adopt a little more objectivity towards oneself and question whether, apart from merely following the *Zeitgeist*, there is any justification for ascribing the highest value to the nation in any case.

Even if one does not allow this question to arise, one must still recognise that Christianity might be inherently incompatible with nationalism, and that mainstream Christian doctrines of providence certainly are. This might be a reason for a nationalist historian to condemn Christianity, but just as it would be absurd to condemn a socialist for not supporting capitalism, so it is odd to condemn a believer in Divine Providence for not

automatically supporting nationalism. Quite apart from this logical whimsy, there is a tendency to forget that both Judaic and Christian doctrines of providence predate the rise of nationalism (as distinct from national consciousness) by many centuries, and so their compatibility with the latter can hardly be counted upon.

There is, to be sure, a problem here, since many Korean Protestants counted themselves and were counted as nationalists. But this is partly a question of consistency. Were the Christians confused? Here it is vital to ask what view of providence was employed; and the fact that the “good” nationalist Christians appealed exclusively to the Old Testament passages on the nation provides a clue: were they Christians or actually Judaists in this respect? And even on Old Testament terms, do the passages they appealed to actually support nationalism? But it is also in part a result of applying the term nationalist to anyone who worked on behalf of the nation. Yet it is quite normal for Christians (and Buddhists, etc.) to work for and within the boundaries of the communities in which they live without ascribing central or ultimate value to the prevailing definition of that community. They might perform similar outward work from different inner motives; and should circumstances change even a little, those inner motives might require outward acts that actually conflict, for example, with nationalist objectives.

In view of these questions and problems, it is clear that the “meaning” of the lives of Yun Ch'iho and Kim Kyoshin can hardly be explored adequately from a nationalistic perspective alone. What I propose to do, then, is attempt an answer to a simple question: what if instead of judging these men (and Christianity) according to the principles and demands of nationalism, one judges nationalism and the historical choices of these men according to the doctrines they presumed were Christian? At the same time, we must recall that Christianity at this point in Korea primarily concerned individual lives and

the *voluntary* communities which they formed, and hence we must be extremely cautious when considering its relation to an *involuntary* community such as the nation-state not to assume too many correspondences between the logics of the two.

Patriot or Turncoat?

“Did Christianity plant in modern Korea a servile ethos of spontaneously submitting to imperialism? Or did it play the role of restructuring national identity?”⁽⁴⁾ The reason Yang Hyŏnhye raises this question in her recent and very thoughtful work on Yun and Kim is the fact that whereas after a 12-month term in jail in 1942 for his publishing activities Kim spent the two years remaining till his death from typhus working among the poor in Hamhŭng, without implicating himself in the imperialist activities of the Japanese, Yun in the 1940s made a number of speeches on behalf of Japan’s war effort, after himself being interrogated in 1938 and manoeuvred into a “political settlement,” and possibly committed suicide soon after Japan’s surrender in 1945.⁽⁵⁾ It has been common in the treatment of national figures who yielded in some way or other to the intensified pressure exerted on them personally by the Japanese Government-General from the late 1930s to the end of the war, to assume that there must have been something in their positions on nationalism and imperialism beforehand that led them to such tergiversations. Yun Ch’iho has been no exception, and Yang’s work is partly an excavation of his earliest thinking, for the purpose of exposing there the seeds of his later failure as a patriot. I have to admit to reservations about the validity of this approach as a historical method.

Yang is no “straw man,” however, and she has produced a very thorough work that tackles the complexity of the issues on the basis of some very detailed research. Nevertheless, it is hard to escape the impression that the conclusion is implicit in her starting point or in the way

she raises the questions. There is an acceptance that the starting point should unarguably be one’s relation to the nation in the sense required by nationalists; and the question is not whether, from a Christian perspective on the fortunes of nation-states, it is legitimate to judge Yun (and others) according to the nationalist viewpoint, or even whether Yun did simply take sides with Japanese imperialism, but “how an intellectual with such a general will and ethical sense as Yun Ch’iho had, became so discouraged as to destroy himself.” What kind of imperialism could do this to him?⁽⁶⁾ Although Yang disclaims any intention to judge Yun or portray him in a bad light, it is very difficult to see what other impression could be achieved by the terms of her investigation from the outset.

Yang introduces her discussion with a statement that reasonably clearly defines her starting-point: “Probably no other period so clearly distinguishes light from darkness in historical figures as one where national identity has been destroyed and its form is being sought after again.”⁽⁷⁾ In such circumstances, the question is what lies behind triumph and defeat, self-integrity and self-destruction, a question Yang decided to link to “the Christian faith that was passed on to Korea from abroad with an emphasis on human universality.”⁽⁸⁾ Hence, the subject of enquiry is “how Christianity related to the reconstitution of national identity” in a critical historical period.⁽⁹⁾ This involves a tension between Christianity as a universal faith and nationalism as a particular phenomenon in time. It is proper here, I think, to quote Yang at some length, for this is a central concern of my discussion and she states it lucidly.

Although the spheres [of the universal and the particular] are different, the two are connected in some form or other in the arena where a Christian practises one’s faith, because together with one’s belief in a universal God, a Christian must live as a member of a particular nation. When Christianity

and national identity are combined in an undifferentiated way, Christianity ends up uncritically affirming that individual nation as it is. In this case, Christianity's universality is lost and the nation's absolute being alone is emphasised, so that Christianity becomes demoted as an exclusivist national religion that justifies a nation's collective egoism.

On the other hand, if it emphasises only its universality and disregards specific national characteristics, Christianity falls into a subjective history-escaping religion. Thus how one combines national identity with Christianity when one bases the restructuring of national identity on Christianity, is a very important question. That is to say, how Christians can simultaneously establish national identity through Christianity within the concrete historical situation and relativise the national identity that has been restructured according to Christian universalism so as to develop the individual nation in the direction of universal humanity, becomes problematic.

I do not think I have read anywhere a more concise or felicitous statement of the problem. But even while Yang points out that the question is a matter of the tension inherent between temporal and immanent modes of a Christian's life, I would like to step back and question the question. The question itself reserves in advance a special status for the "nation". But if a person becomes a Christian, there occurs a major transformation of one's view of oneself, of others, of life, and of the world *in toto*. Having become a Christian is the singlemost important fact, and all else must be rearranged accordingly.⁽¹⁰⁾ The primary identity is with the new community of believers, or perhaps more primarily with Christ who creates the new community. In Yang's presentation however, "how one combines national identity with Christianity" is

introduced as a self-evidently central issue. If Christianity does not make this its mission, it "falls into a subjective history-escaping religion." This appears to assume that there is no important or legitimate history other than national history; and that Christianity is to be evaluated according to its relation to national identity. The nation is thus given a special ontological status, something that exists there all the time and *is* history, and a category within and for which Christianity is required to work if it is to have any place in history. While it seems as though Christianity is given an active role, in fact there is no room allowed here for the idea that Christianity might have its own historical agenda quite separate from the "nation," and which might perhaps involve the eradication of a nation-centred history and even of nations themselves.

Some western Christian thinkers have in fact simply dismissed nation from the sphere of Christian action as an illegitimate intruder. Part of the reason for this perhaps lies in the experiences of the two world wars and in the mistrust that experience has engendered for nationalism.⁽¹¹⁾ In any case it remains a question why nation should be given this obligatory place in Christian life. It is hardly enough to say that one is born a member of a nation, especially when the idea of the nation itself may legitimately be called into question. One is born into many concrete situations, including into a certain family or no family at all, into wealth or poverty, high or low social status, and so on, and some identities such as educated and uneducated or male and female might be considered more real and consequential than the national. Why should nation be given such Christian prominence?

Yang gives two basic reasons. The first is that national identity in Korea was under dire threat because of the Japanese invasion. Something was seriously wrong with the Korean nation and all who belonged to it who could do something about it were obliged to do so. This

is surely a good reason why the idea of a nation might become important, and why political figures would become deeply involved, and on ordinary perceptions is indisputable. But a Christian position on such matters is seldom ordinary, and there is something a little circular in an argument that assumes the nation is terribly important in the first place. Important for whom and in what sense? If the nation is something for which Christians also must take responsibility, it is conceivable that they will come up with a perspective that many, even the majority of the “nation” will dislike and oppose. One cannot relativise the nation in front of a true nationalist: saying that there is something that takes precedence over the nation does lead inevitably to a different perspective on the nation. It is a little awkward therefore to judge Christians according to whether the “nation” approves of their position on the nation.

This is all very abstract, and it must be said that the issue lies in the details. When the actual historical behaviour of the Japanese in Korea is placed under scrutiny it is clear that there were many things that a Christian position would have to condemn and seek to take action on. But this was also the case at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty and has been the case under successive regimes in the ROK since 1945. That element of Christian engagement is everlasting, and so the issue is not one of whether rulers are of one race or another, and it is hardly necessary—perhaps it is misleading—for Christians to style themselves as patriots, let alone nationalists, in endeavouring to live a life of faith in such situations. What is it about the nation that Christian thinking must be subjected by it to theological and logical juggling in order to assign to and guarantee it pride of place alongside the universal essence of Christianity?

The second reason Yang tenders for giving such Christian importance to the nation is that as Christianity was introduced by westerners a notion of “non-Christian” culture arose. Korean Christians were faced with the

question of what relation their culture, which had developed for thousands of years without knowledge of Christianity or contact with Western cultures, had to so-called Christian civilization. The fact that Christianity spread to other places in either direct or indirect company of Western imperialisms made this question more momentous.⁽¹²⁾ Historically, this is undebatable: European, North American, and Australian missions were imbued with a sense of connection between Christianity, nation, and civilization, and in one way or other some of them encouraged the Korean Christians to think of nation as a basic category for Christian thought and action. Quite apart from the critical political situation in Korea from the latter half of the nineteenth century, the possibility of Christian nationalism was in some measure taught by missionaries,⁽¹³⁾ even if inadvertently, and was learned also through reading Western literature and history. Furthermore, it should be added, Japanese nationalism reinforced Korean nationalism and by basing its presence and policies in Korea on nationalism, Japan made it very difficult indeed for Koreans to respond other than in kind. But the question remains whether this is sufficient reason for contemporary Christians to give nation in Korea such prominence that one’s relation to it determines whether one belongs to “light” or “darkness”.

The Rights of Civilised Nations

In his search for a new understanding of the fortunes of peoples and the foundations of civilization, Yun Ch’iho, who was a politician—an important point to which we must later return—had to grapple with the seemingly endless history of imperialism, invasion, and colonisation. There were few periods of peace in most parts of the globe except when one imperial order was sufficiently strong to maintain a kind of pax. Otherwise power seemed too precariously balanced to allow peace to prevail for long. As far as appearances were concerned, might was right. In May 1890 he took issue with

Carlyle's statement: "one strong thing I find here below: the just thing and the true thing."

There is as much truth in this statement as in the 'inalienable right of man' which men talk about now-a-day. That is, those who have *might* have inalienable right and justice and success, but those who have no might have nothing but wrong, injustice, and failure. This is proved by the dealings of the stronger nation or race with a weaker nation or race. Therefore, one strong thing I find here below: might nothing more.⁽¹⁴⁾

This Yun later found too petulant. It was much more in accord with the emotional sense of being wronged most Koreans felt than his later formulation, in October 1892, in which he applied his idea of Christianity as inwardness and God's work in history as less arbitrary:

We cannot say 'might is right' in the overthrow of one nation or race by another *unless* the conquered is better in morals, religion, and intelligence, therefore more *right* than the conqueror.... But we find the stronger has been almost always better or less corrupted in morals, religion and politics than the weaker.... Thus what seems to be a triumph of might over right is but a triumph of comparative — I do not say absolute — right over comparative wrong.⁽¹⁵⁾

In some ways this reflected the currency of social-darwinism. The Japanese Christian and politician, Uchimura Kanzō, founder of the non-Church movement, mentor of Kim Kyoshin and Ham Sōkhōn, and an influence on Yun Ch'ihō, also faced the idea of applying Spencer's idea of "the survival of the fittest" to international affairs as early as 1881.⁽¹⁶⁾ But like Uchimura — and indeed, Kim Kyoshin — Yun became more concerned to understand international and national fortunes

in relation to providence, the belief that all history and all that happens to us is somehow subject to God's guiding activity.

Yun was troubled over how God's morality could be consistent with the kind of providence that seemed to apply. The notion of a comparative moral superiority in the conquering nations — or at least of some moral or spiritual lapse in a nation that should have known better — was his way of reconciling God's goodness and providence. The moral for Koreans was that they had better learn to be good stewards of the territory over which they were responsible, or lose it.

It followed, then, that certain peoples could exercise better stewardship than others and thereby create something like a Christian civilization. This was Yun's view, and his experiences in North America in the 1890s and his voluminous reading led him to conclude that Europe and North America were Christian civilisations. This viewpoint has been the cause of considerable confusion and some rather exaggerated interpretations of what this implied. Indeed, it has been interpreted as the root cause for Yun's "capitulation" to the Japanese in the 1940s. It is possible that a great deal of the confusion and negative interpretation stems from taking a "national imperative" rather than God's providence as the hermeneutic principle.

Yang Hyōnhye, for example, construes Yun's position as "Calvinistic": progress in commerce means a civilization is saved whereas lack of it attests to its damnation. Therefore the "Christian God that Yun Ch'ihō met in this worldview was not a God who transcended the world and judged it, but a God who upheld the supremacy of the values of industrial civilization within this world."⁽¹⁷⁾ (It is a moot point why it is an advance to adopt a worldview in which God upholds the supremacy of the values of the nation-state.) Yun thus became a champion of imperialism of superior civilisations over inferior civilisations. But his im-

perialism did not follow the self-expansionist logic of European and Japanese Christians, Yang continues. Rather, by absolutising industrial civilization and measuring Korea against these foreign values, Yun portrayed Korea as inferior by definition: a logic of the loss of subjecthood (chuch'e), that is, self-destruction.

I believe this interpretation involves a non sequitur: on this basis, admission that one was a sinner, and always would be till the resurrection, would constitute a loss of subjecthood and self-annihilation. And in fact Yun did not believe Korea always would be inferior; nor did he absolutise European and North American civilisations. He frequently criticised United States culture from the very beginning of his life there, he delivered a speech in the early 1900s to Koreans in which he expressly warned against the idea of North America being taken as the model for Korea,⁽¹⁸⁾ and his diaries become more and more pointed in their antagonism to the idea that Western culture is superior to Korean — a very important point and a clue to his actions in the 1940s. Further, he advocated commerce and industry in the context, not of these being some sort of Calvinistic sign of salvation, but of his perception that Korea needed to strengthen itself and that the ideals of hard work and perseverance which he perceived in North America were vital to Korea's regeneration. He looked forward to a regeneration of Korea through acquisition and application of ideals of stewardship, ideals which Yun believed were at the time most appropriately expressed through commercial and industrial activities. One might say he was following Yang Hyŏnhye's principle of finding a particular form for obedience to universal divine truth that was relevant to the given concrete situation.

I have to agree with Yang, however, that Yun's idea of a Christian civilization was a problem. It is a perennial problem, and I do not claim to know how it can be worked out. The idea of a Christian civilization exercised the mind also of Uchimura Kanzō, who also spent

the formative years of his youth studying and travelling in the USA. He recalled in 1895 how when he set off "to Christendom" in June 1883, he believed that in a place where Christianity had enjoyed "undisputed power and influence for hundreds of years" there would be "Peace and Joy in a measure inconceivable to us of heathen extraction..."⁽¹⁹⁾ Of this notion he was, needless to say, steadily disabused by the crime, brutality and racism he encountered. On the latter he commented, "There never was seen such an anomaly on the face of this earth."⁽²⁰⁾ (Interestingly, he also was troubled by might over right, but took a far less sanguine view of commerce than did Yun: "*Might is Right, and Money is that Might,*" he remarked.⁽²¹⁾) The lesson he drew from his disillusionment with North American civilization, however, was never to "defend Christianity upon its being the religion of Europe and America. An 'external evidence' of this nature is not only weak, but actually vicious in its general effects."⁽²²⁾

Since Uchimura had such a powerful influence on both Yun Ch'ihō and Kim Kyoshin, it is worth considering what Uchimura had to say about providence in relation to nations. On 5 December 1886 he confided to his diary:

"Much impressed by the thought that God's providence must be in my nation.... God does not want our national characters attained by the discipline of twenty centuries to be wholly supplanted by American and European ideas. The beauty of Christianity is that it can sanctify all the peculiar traits which God gave to each nation. A blessed and encouraging thought that J—too is God's nation."⁽²³⁾

Uchimura was more positive than Yun, perhaps, in his choice of expression, but it has to be remembered that Japan was not in the same precarious state as was Korea. But what did the spread of Christianity in Japan foreshadow? "One characteristic of Truth is that it

makes the bad worse and the good better.... We may reasonably expect therefore the worst badness in Christendom."⁽²⁴⁾ He then claims that the good people in America are far superior to the good people in Japan, throughout the centuries, and concludes:

So then, this differencing of good from evil...of sheep on the right hand from goats on the left, — this I consider to be a Christian state, the foretaste of that into which we are all going, the complete separation of the good from the bad. This Earth, though beautiful, was not originally meant as an angel-land. It was meant as a school to prepare us for some other places. This educational value of the Earth must not be lost sight of in our poor attempts to make it what it should be.⁽²⁵⁾

There is in this respect no great difference between Yun's and Uchimura's view of Christian civilization. Though he decried "mammonism," Uchimura was no less susceptible than Yun of equating what they considered essential features of the west with Christianity. "I attribute the progressiveness of Christendom to its Christianity," wrote Uchimura. "Faith, Hope, and Charity...have worked upon it for the past nineteen hundred years, and have made it as we have it now."⁽²⁶⁾

National Independence

Yun's preoccupation with the idea of a Christian civilization derived in part from his neo-Confucian training, which predisposed him to the view that a civilization must be founded on an ideal, and the best civilization on the truest ideal. Again, Confucian training inclined him to the view that knowledge and wisdom are mutually necessary and mutually supportive. "The rise and decline of a nation depends on the wisdom and nature of its people," he wrote.⁽²⁷⁾ So too Uchimura Kanzō: "With us we make no distinctions between moral and intellectual training. School is our church, and we are expected to

bring up our whole beings in it. [As Takayama Hikokuro put it], 'Knowledge is of worth as it enlightens the ways of righteousness.'⁽²⁸⁾ How much contact Yun had with Uchimura by this stage (March 1889), if any, I am not sure, but since Uchimura used this idea against Western concepts of the church, the similarity of their positions presumably reflects their common Confucian background.

Yun, however, had no argument with the church as such, but he certainly viewed it in terms of increasing knowledge. Indeed, he saw in this institution the hope for Korea's independence. "How then, given the present state of our country, can we hope for independence, and...how will we be able to defend ourselves against subsequent evils and preserve our land?" he asked himself. Not by accepting inferiority, at any rate. "Thus the pressing need at present is to increase knowledge and experience, teach morality and cultivate patriotism... There is no other instrument able to educate and renew the people outside the Church of Christ."⁽²⁹⁾

It was not an entirely different kind of education that Yun envisaged the church would provide, although this is often the way in which his and other radical reformers' ideas of the time have been construed. Yun's position was that Confucian moral maxims were reflections of a universal, objective standard; and even in his scorn of the practice of filial piety, that coverer of "a multitude of sins," he was not opposing respect and duty towards parents and elders. What he identified in Christianity as the vital, indispensable element, was God's provision to humans of the power to overcome evil and practice what they already knew was true.⁽³⁰⁾ Again, this is identical to the views of Uchimura and Kim Kyoshin. Like Yun, Uchimura taught that what Christianity offered was not the Tao (Way) so much as the means: "By it alone the law-keeping becomes a possibility. It is the Spirit of the Law."⁽³¹⁾

In the relation between this spirit of the law and

national independence, there is again a convergence between Yun and Uchimura. Alongside Yun's belief that renewal began on a personal level as an inward movement in individuals and worked itself out in structural, national independence from there,⁽³²⁾ we may place Uchimura's statement that "[Christianity] of all religions works from the inside..."⁽³³⁾ There does appear here a difference in perspective, however, which in terms of responses to concrete historical situations could lead to considerable divergence. This difference relates to the question of whether independence is a right. Uchimura chose not to accept money from foreign missions unless the independence of the Japanese Christians was entirely preserved. He viewed independence as a very precious thing. On establishing an independent church, he observed that "A dependent man is the most hapless being in this universe... Independence is the conscious realisation of one's own capabilities; and I believe this to be the beginning of the realisation of many other possibilities in the field of human activity."⁽³⁴⁾

It is doubtful that Yun would have disagreed with this as such. Nor would he have perhaps felt great unease with Uchimura's explanation that "Our [church's] independence was not intended as a revolt against Methodism, but as an expression of our real attachment to our heavenly Master, and of the highest sentiment of our love to our nation."⁽³⁵⁾ Nevertheless, Yun found no reason to seek his church's independence from Methodism nor refuse their money for projects related to the Methodist mission inside Korea. Unlike Uchimura he did not seem to see a danger to national independence in this and might not have entirely agreed, then, with Uchimura's crowning aphorism: "Thought is cosmopolitan....But not so bread."⁽³⁶⁾

At least, not in relation to the church. Yun did think financial dependency was very dangerous for a nation, and it was of course for this reason that he urged his compatriots to devote themselves to industry and

commerce, and to learn from the West on this head — as did An Ch'angho, Cho Mansik and most Christian "nationalists" then and since. And Yun did believe that hard work and honesty were Christian virtues.⁽³⁷⁾ But it was perhaps recognition that the church was universal whereas the nation was not, combined with his particular view of providence, that led Yun to diverge from Uchimura and Kim Kyoshin over the place of national independence in the Christian scheme of things. Yun did not regard national independence as a right guaranteed by God. It was always dependent on stewardship and the overall purposes of God in the world.

Uchimura, however, and very likely Kim Kyoshin followed him here with regard to Korea, stated that "[Japan's] existence as a nation was decreed by Heaven Itself, and its mission to the world and human race was, and is being, distinctly announced."⁽³⁸⁾ Yun didn't regard providence as God's fixing of the inviolability of each nation for all time. In history this was not true in any case, and the fact that God allowed political violation of nations by other nations required an explanation. Yun's explanation was stewardship and the principle of the "right" of comparative good over comparative bad cited above. So instead Yun asked whether God could be blamed if he delivered Korea into the hands of another nation, although he did add that he felt he "must be mad" to wonder whether it would be better to fall under the dominion of England or Japan.⁽³⁹⁾

The root of divergence at this point, then, is a difference of opinion over the implication for national independence of their shared belief in providence. It might also be added that Yun's notoriously critical and even contemptuous attitude towards the behaviour and qualities of his fellow Koreans possibly made it easier for him to accept the possibility of God delivering Korea to imperialism. But his contemplation of this possibility, against the background of his readings of history and the realities of Korea at the time, were certainly an attempt to

understand the issue Christianly: “misgovernment has its own punishment as any other crime,” and “no sin is greater in a nation than weakness.”⁽⁴⁰⁾ In any case, when the Japanese did take over his nation in November 1905, Yun immediately resigned from his political post, refused Japan's offer of appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and decided to devote himself to education and Christian endeavour through the church and YMCA. The church's mission was universal and Christians were obliged to pursue it first, whatever the temporal situation.⁽⁴¹⁾

Kim Kyoshin and Patriotism

Kim Kyoshin was born in 1901, nearly 40 years later than Yun Ch'ihō. His first memories were of the Russo-Japanese war, through which Japan gained control over the peninsula; he was nine when Japan formally annexed Korea. Growing up in Hamhŭng, he was far removed from the centre of events, however, and soon after the March First uprising in 1919 he went to Japan to further his education. He returned to Korea in 1927. Unlike Yun Ch'ihō, he had no personal experience of the transition of Korea from independent to colonial status nor of the frustrations of a Christian politician wrestling with the cause of national independence amidst a divided monarchy and an ineffective succession of reforms, coups and revolts. Kim's only experience of his nation was as a colony under the heavy and exploitative hand of Japan. There were fewer external inhibitions to his sympathy for Koreans. Unlike Yun, who had dedicated himself to a strenuous struggle to preserve Korea's independence for twenty years before Kim's birth, only to see all efforts fail, Kim's world was one in which recovery of national independence was the focus.

The impact of Uchimura Kanzō on Kim, who studied under him for seven years and remained devoted to him till his death, was extraordinary. It was through Uchimura that he and Ham Sōkhōn met and organised

together the non-Church movement in Korea. Uchimura's view of providence as God's affirmation of each nation is very clear in Ham's thought. Ham defined providence as the operation of God's agape (divine love) in history, and believed Christians were duty-bound to share in the embodiment of that agape in their given historical condition. Kim followed much the same understanding. According to Yang Hyōnhye, Kim believed that if he sundered his connection with Korea, or the connection between the Christian faith and Korea, this would prevent the attainment of universal truth in Korea. Colonial Korea was the location for realisation of agape love, and the Bible was the most precious gift he could give to “Chosŏn, the greatest object of my love.”⁽⁴²⁾ Hence the name of his serial publication: Sōngsŏ Chosŏn (Bible Korea).

This identification of the Bible with the nation is not self-explanatory, however. Kim's influence in present-day South Korea, for example, ranges from the conservative, evangelical, politically quietist Student Bible Fellowship which takes “Sōngsŏ Chosŏn” as its motto, to the anti-government activists who value him — or Ham Sōkhōn perhaps more so — for the notion of national responsibility. The argument continues over whether a nationalist and political use of Kim is appropriate.

In 1947 Ham Sōkhōn presented Kim's patriotism as follows.

It is meaningless to take Chosŏn away from Kim Kyoshin.... He loved his country. But that love was not the so-called patriotism that is generally fashionable in the world. He realised that a living Korea was possible only in living people. That is why he could not separate Chosŏn and the Bible and strove to enliven a new Chosŏn within a biblical faith.... He sought to live life truly and love his country truly, and he believed that to live life truly was to love one's country most truly and that a life

lived in faith was a true life. This was his word and his writing, and trying to live this way was his life....

Words which are of use only at one time and have no use when that time has passed are not the Word. (...) These words of his that issue from realisations springing up within himself or from contact with the various events outside him, or that are generated in response to the ebb and flow of the times, though they are dressed up in clothing not unmarked by the limitations of time and space, nevertheless contain meanings which derive from the deep foundation of life and the unchanging truths of faith, and are thus worth chewing over thoroughly and tasting of deeply, and worth using to rescue a society tossed about in the muddy torrent. What is the foundation and what is unchanging?... In a word, faith. Only through faith in the eternal God can one live this life and stand this country on its feet.⁽⁴³⁾

How did Kim's patriotism differ from the normal, "fashionable" patriotism of his time? For one thing, Kim had to wrestle with the particularity and possible exclusiveness of the nation, and in characteristic fashion he attempted to solve this problem through contemplation of the passages in Matthew's Gospel chapter 10: 5-6 where Christ is reported to have ordered his disciples to avoid all Gentiles and Samaritans and preach only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and in Mark 7:27 where Christ initially rebuffs the Greek woman's plea with the words, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." These passages prompted a very revealing commentary (August 1936).

"It is unquestionable that Christianity is a great world religion that aims at the salvation of the whole world," he observed, and therefore these passages presented a severe problem for they appeared to contradict

the "central doctrine of the universality of Jesus' salvation." At a time, he continued, when the whole world had become "like one house," the common interpretation that since the Jews were God's Chosen People he used them as a step to the rest of the world stuck in one's throat. Kim then recalled that on reading an alternative explanation, "that 'it was Jesus' incomparable patriotism that caused him to limit evangelism only to Israel,' we thumped our desks and cried out with delight, because we had discovered someone who had for certain taken a step forward in interpreting a passage so troublesome to understand." However, this interpretation also seemed incomplete and Kim's dissatisfaction was only dispelled when he read Ham Sökhön's exegesis, according to which this was part of Christ's strategy of attacking the Jewish church authorities and the church spirit, "the highest stage of humanism (in'ganjuüi üi ch'oegobu)." For after telling his disciples to go only to the lost sheep of Israel, Jesus had himself crucified by them as the "human bullet" that would destroy this spirit. Kim judged Ham's interpretation a "huge and very creative advance," and urged readers of Söngsö Chosön to reread their Bibles from this non-church perspective.⁽⁴⁴⁾

That Kim was a founder of the non-church movement is of course crucial to the issue of identity. If they have no church, what is the collective identity of Christians? Kim taught that there was only one basis for Christian identity: the Bible. Nor did he want to substitute identity with the non-church movement for identity with the church: "What I have learnt from Uchimura is not non-churchism but the truth of the Bible."⁽⁴⁵⁾ But did Kim, perhaps, substitute race for church. A race and their country, he argued, have a character just as does an individual, and positing the existence of a "Korean soul," Kim avowed that it was his mission to find this soul rather than so-called "Christian believers."⁽⁴⁶⁾ Some Koreans have queried whether Kim took this to the point

of dissipating religious identity before racial identity, since he was prepared to admit any religious or other viewpoint into the national soul: "If it is another Korean, whoever it is, we must be in harmony with that Korean."⁽⁴⁷⁾

In their pursuit of the Korean soul, Kim and Ham Sŏkhŏn laid down a particular providential view of Korean history and geography that affirmed Korean tradition and history and asserted a God-given national mission. Thus the Korean ethical tradition's Chi (knowledge or wisdom), Chŏng (affection) and Ŭi (will) corresponded to the Bible's faith, hope and charity, and it was Korea's destiny to spread these conceptions.⁽⁴⁸⁾ This pursuit involved also idealisation of Confucian prescriptions for the family, specifically the distinct nature and function of male and female whereby Korean women were to be prized for their position in the home as preservers of piety and custom, a model for the world to emulate.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Kim's nation-centred view of providence was pushed into a possibly extreme position by his view of the relation between the Korean churches and the missionaries. If he had learnt the truth of the Bible from Uchimura he had also imbibed his strict refusal to accept any kind of subservient relation to the western missions. Kim's own anti-missionary stance was apparently triggered (or justified) by a not very convincing incident: the Reverend Henry Appenzellar's criticism of a Korean song included in the Methodist hymnary which revealed, Kim alleged, his ignorance of the subtleties of the Korean language.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In 1935 Kim reiterated that "What I desire is to disseminate teaching that will form the power of Christianity in Korea, and to build an eternal, immortal Korea on the basis of biblical truth."⁽⁵¹⁾ "Korea" and the "Bible" were to become identified as Two Persons in One Body; national history was the expression of the race's soul and the key to its development was providence.⁽⁵²⁾ Since all Korean history was

equally under the same divine direction, a complete identification of Christianity and the nation was effected, and so, one might conclude, the danger Yang Hyŏnhye warned of was fulfilled.

But not necessarily with the consequences that Yang describes:

Christianity's universality is lost and the nation's absolute being alone is emphasised, so that Christianity becomes demoted as an exclusivist national religion that justifies a nations' collective egotism.

For the Bible remains the standard and the nation is to achieve its historical fulfilment through conformity to it. What has happened essentially is that Kim Kyoshin has answered the question whether God privileges the "nation" over other categories very firmly in the positive. And to the question how the political or cultural fate of a nation relates to God's purposes for humankind, he replied that a nation has a soul which God saves and establishes for eternity. This position was understood by Yanaihara Tadao in a certain way. Recalling his visit to Korea in August 1940, where he and Kim organised a tour of speaking for him, Yanaihara five years later wrote:

As Nathaniel was called a 'true Israelite,' so Kim Kyoshin was a true Korean. He loved Korea and he loved the Korean race and he loved the Korean language. But his love for his race differed from a narrow exclusivist nationalism. He was a Korean reborn through the Gospel of Christ. His natural Korean virtues of gentleness and diligence and so on were further purified by his faith in Christ. He loved his own people in Christ and made passing on Christ to them his patriotism. Kim gave his precious life not for the shallow Christianity of America, nor the communism of the unbelieving USSR, nor the even more secular nationalism, nor

in fawning on or consorting with the authorities, but to give new life to the Koreans' soul through the non-church gospel faith that they might become a people of freedom, peace and justice.”⁽⁵³⁾

One may legitimately expect that if Kim urged his readers to read the whole Bible from the perspective of the non-church movement's deconstruction of the structure and authority of an organisation so important to the experience and history of Christianity as the church, he might then urge also a similar deconstruction of the structure and authority of the nation-state, a phenomenon several centuries more recent than the birth of the church itself. Given his axiom that all life and activity must be founded on and measured against the Bible, there is no warrant to except any historical entity or experience. His critique of the church was radical: not simply criticism of behaviour of leaders or groups or policies, but dismissal of the entity itself. If it was not only possible but demanded that Christians should live outside and independently of the church — and indeed to undermine its existence — why was it not demanded that Christians view an entity such as the state or nation in similar fashion? There is after all an anarchist core to the non-Church movement's basic tenets (which is partly why Anabaptists and Quakers were politically persecuted in Europe). Why then, other than for tribalist emotions that might be thought incongruous with Christianity, should Kim and his fellows have thumped their desks with delight when patriotism was (mistakenly?) attributed to Jesus? Why is the nation given this special status and exemption?

It does not seem sufficient to say that this is because the nation-state is a political reality. For in a sense much more germane to any Christian concern, the church has been a political and cultural reality for a great deal longer and continues to be so for the vast majority of Christians. It would seem closer to the mark to say

that it is an issue of identity. Uchimura, Kim Kyoshin, and Ham Sökhön, and probably Yun Ch'ihö also, all had a highly developed sense of national identity, to the extent that belonging to a nation was considered inborn and immutable.

But it is precisely here that one might have expected Kim to develop a critique of this sense of identity at least as radical as his critique of Christians making the church a site of identity. The principle was after all that identity with the church was a false identity, and that the church did or could not legitimately mediate God to his people, something which occurred truly only in meditation upon the Bible directly before God. It is something of a puzzle therefore that the nation, or its culture, should nevertheless be given a status denied the church and be regarded as a mediator of God to the *minjok* (race or people). Although the perspective, initially, of a strong and progressive “west” and the missionaries' complicity in the notion that theirs was a Christian civilisation caused new Christians in the “east” to seek elements of God's presence in their own traditions, and thereby affirmed a natural tendency to regard matters in national terms, it is still a puzzle why members of the non-church movement would not see through this construction of the world instead of seeking to enshrine it forever in the will of God.

I suspect part of this problem relates to the habit of making the nation an analogue of the individual, a habit of thought that encouraged Uchimura and Kim, and sometimes Yun, to indulge in analytically dubious notions such as “saving the nation.” At times we do gain from their writings an impression of nations inhabiting the globe like individuals. Certainly, talk of a national soul encourages the analogy with the individual and can only make identity with the nation appear fundamental. This problem is hardly worked out satisfactorily in the writings of Uchimura, Kim or Ham. Uchimura's observation that the most “Christian” nation is that in which the

distinction between light and darkness or good and evil is most pronounced, clearly implies that a Christian nation is a radically divided community. Kim's notion that a "Bible Choson" is even attainable, or that if it were it would be a nation whose "soul" is redeemed, is thus made a nonsense by Uchimura's viewpoint. It is not explained what an "eternal" nation could possibly mean in history, let alone beyond history. One suspects that theology and sociology are being confused. Theologically, salvation concerns the redemption of particular human beings; the question of the impact of a given number of Christians on a nation and so on is a matter of sociology (and perhaps economics and politics).

This problem arises also in Yang's interpretation of Kim Kyoshin's position. Yang claims she detects a rift between Kim and Uchimura's successor, Yanaihara Tadao, precisely over and because of their national identity. While she admits that Yanaihara was very critical of Japan's colonial rule over Korea (and he was sacked from Tokyo University for opposing Japan's war against China), she faults him for counselling Korean non-church members against getting involved in anti-Japanese resistance.⁽⁵⁴⁾ If I understand Yang's construction of Yanaihara's position correctly, however, his point was that Korean believers should not take hostility towards Japan as their starting point, but consider Korea's colonial subjugation as part of providence and consistently take repentance and obedience to God as their starting point. (It might be that Yang is confusing Yanaihara with the Greek teacher in Uchimura's study group, Tsukamoto.) To interpret this only and essentially as a matter of national identity is to fall into the trap laid by making the nation an analogue of the individual, and leads to the quite extreme statement that Kim and Yanaihara were ideologically opposed so that "as a Korean nationalist," Kim was "unable to co-exist with the bourgeois and Christian egalitarianism of the Japanese non-church members represented by Yanaihara."⁽⁵⁵⁾ Yang then cites a letter in which Kim

proclaims common cause with Korean Christians who are being forced to become imperial subjects, but as I shall argue below, this letter has a different and quite unexceptional Christian import when read in full and in context.

If the nation-individual analogue were legitimate for Christian belief (quite apart from the question of its analytical possibility), one imagines the New Testament would have been written from a rather different angle. As it is, while the New Testament speaks of making Christians from all nations, there is no suggestion that a nation may be saved as a single unit, as though there existed a national soul. On the contrary, nations, like families, will be divided by some members becoming believers, as Kim himself pointed out,⁽⁵⁶⁾ and just as at the Second Coming (or Rapture) one spouse will be taken and the other left, so some members of a nation will be taken and others left. Where nation is used in the New Testament, it is used, as in I Peter 2:9, in a sense that transcends (and one might say deconstructs) immanent-historical nations: once one is saved one becomes a member of a new nation, a "holy nation, God's people," and henceforth one is a sojourner only in the world and one's true identity is with the company of believers, fellow-citizens of the Kingdom of God.

If the nation is taken as the starting-point and the view that politics is the highest human activity and political action on behalf of the country is the highest virtue is accepted, of course Christians will be expected to justify themselves according to these criteria. But in terms of a Christian definition of fundamental identity, Yanaihara's advice to Korean believers appears perfectly acceptable. (Of course, if he were complicit in Japanese oppression of Korea, his counsel would certainly be suspect.) A Christian cannot legitimately base one's life and worldview around hatred or any negative perspective towards others. Accounts of people who have done so, such as campaigners against heretics and other Christian groups or rival religions, do not edify; and the harnessing

of these negative emotions to political, military or cultural power, though often practised, is not generally admired as a Christian method. It is not a different question whether it is justifiable to base resistance to a colonial oppressor on nation-based antipathies. Of course it is far easier for one who is not in such a situation to make these remarks, but ease or difficulty is not the fundamental issue. Christianity has its own principles, and it is central to its message that one can only follow them with the aid of supernatural power.

This was central, too, to Yun's, Kim's, and Uchimura's understanding of the Christian faith, and it can be queried whether any of them would have been wholly happy with the nationalistic framework within which their positions and actions have often been viewed. Indeed, when commenting on Kim Kyoshin barely a year after his early death, Yanaihara made an observation that accords perfectly with the central viewpoint of Yun and his associates: "Within four months of Kim's sudden death, the times changed rapidly and Korea met the good fortune of rebirth as a free and independent state. But military and political liberation by a third power does not make a true country. It has to depend on the will of the citizens themselves. If it does not rest on faith, independence does not bring blessings, as in the parable of the householder who drove out one devil only to find seven others take its place. There is no other power able to raise Korea as a nation of righteousness than the Gospel of Christ which Kim Kyoshin taught."⁽⁵⁷⁾

As we shall see later, Kim did not base his decisions in the 1940s only on identity as a Korean nationalist who was impelled thereby to resist the Japanese nation, but also on Christian grounds which would have applied equally had the rulers been Korean. For now, it is sufficient perhaps to refer to Kim's meditations in June 1938 on the "Way of the Cross." Before referring to these, I should mention that he wrote an article exactly four years earlier, titled "Jesus the Materialist," in which he

drew on James 2:14-17 to argue that faith must have material results, must have some concrete historical expression.⁽⁵⁸⁾ His meditations on the way of the cross indicate what he did not mean by this. In these meditations, Kim criticises the tendency for Christians and Christian evangelists to talk about Christianity as a path, not to the cross, but to wealth, health, and material well-being. To this he contrasts the uncompromising words of Jesus in Mark 8:32-38 and Luke 12: 49-53.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In the former, Christ calls Peter "Satan" for urging him to follow worldly conceptions of power and says, "Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels' will save it." If one were to maintain the individual-nation analogy, this would have to be extended into an admonition against Korean Christians expecting material benefits for their nation from Christianity and counsel to deny rather than attempt to "find" their nation. This may be another point at which the analogy proves unworkable, but it also warns us against interpreting Kim too readily as a regular nationalist. For it is problematic to hold up as a paragon of nationalism one whose thinking amounts to a rejection of the secular framework within which the nation-state operates and through which nationalism gains its form and power. It is necessary to delve more deeply into the issue of providence to clarify his, and Yun Ch'ih'o's, relation to nationalism.

Providence: The Old Testament or the New Testament?

"Religious thought is genuine whenever it is universal in its appeal. (Such is not the case with Judaism, which is linked to a racial conception.)"

Simone Weil⁽⁶⁰⁾

If we widen the purview of our enquiry for a moment, we discover that there was a rather general tendency among Korean Christians throughout the colonial experience to draw hope and inspiration from the Old

Testament accounts of the exodus of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt and from the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. This was not a politically naive tendency, and the Japanese saw enough of its point to proscribe at times use of symbolism surrounding Moses and the restoration of Israel's fortunes at different times. While some missionaries thought the Japanese read more into these symbols than was there, accounts by Korean Christians confirm some degree of political intention.⁽⁶¹⁾ There is little reason to believe that this proclivity for Old Testament symbolism did not owe a great deal to Korean hopes for restored political independence.

Among the Korean Protestants residing abroad during this period, it was a common-place to regard the church as the Remnant that would return and rebuild the nation, and pastors were regarded almost as the de facto spokesmen and even political leaders of the Koreans abroad.⁽⁶²⁾ The management and content of the Korean newspapers abroad, such as the *Shinhan Minbo* in San Francisco and *Tongnip Shinmun* in Shanghai, relied a great deal on Korean Protestants, who constantly encouraged this Christian-nation identity, tying the fate of the nation as a political and cultural entity to the fortunes of Christianity in the land and diasporic communities.

This identification with the Old Testament Israel ought to be expected. Christian nationalism, edging towards virtual identity of nation with the religion, is a not uncommon empirical historical reality. It has a long pedigree among western nations, despite the absurdity of several nations each drawing on the chosen nation imagery simultaneously. A crucial source of identity in the creation of the Dutch Republic in the sixteenth century was the fusion of two historical analogies: the Batavian and the Israelite.⁽⁶³⁾ In response to the Spanish attacks, the Netherlands Anthem of Commemoration (*Gedenck-Clanck*) of 1626 includes the following in its closing prayer:

O Lord when all was ill with us you brought us

up into a land wherein we were enriched through trade and commerce...even as you have led the Children of Israel from their Babylonian prison; the waters receded before us and you brought us dry-footed even as the people of yore, with Moses and with Joshua, were brought to their Promised Land. You have...freed us from the yoke of the Moabites even as it was with Deborah and with Barach whose power went before us in the field and that of stout-hearted Gideon who fought against the violence of the Midianites.... Yea, the courageous and faithful David has been a mirror of piety and steadfastness to us and has not deserted us, and a Solomon [has come] whose wisdom and foresight are above all others.⁽⁶⁴⁾

As a young and very much a minority religion in Korea, Christianity was naturally not in a position to command the imagery of the Korean people to this degree. It is perhaps remarkable that the Old Testament was drawn upon to the extent that it was and that early Protestant leaders such as Yun and Kim took up the issue of providence so emphatically. And as in the Dutch case, so in Korea there was some serious effort made to conflate imagery from Korea's religious traditions with central Christian motifs such as the Trinity.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Certainly the precarious state of the nation prompted intense contemplation of the Old Testament, but the use of the Old Testament as the source of an understanding of divine providence had an important impact on the view of their nation among many Korean Christians, including Kim Kyoshin who was encouraged in this by Uchimura's example.

According to his own testimony, Uchimura Kanzō was criticised by fellow-Christians for over-emphasising the place of the Old Testament in the Christian faith. Reading the Old Testament prophets, he claimed, transformed his religious thought. He records that his

reading of Jeremiah led him to the belief that god must have spoken to Japanese people throughout their history through their great men. “The thought was inspiring beyond my power of expression. Patriotism that was quenched somewhat by accepting a faith that was exotic in origin, now returned to me with 100-fold more vigor and impression.... I compared Russia to Babylonia, and the Czar to Nebuchadnezzar, and my country to the helpless Judea to be saved only by owning the God of Righteousness.... Is not Russia of the north our Chaldea?”⁽⁶⁶⁾ The irony of this statement will not be lost on Koreans, but what may be lost is its lesson about the absurdity of this line of thought in itself and its fundamental incongruity with a Christian worldview. “My friends,” wrote Uchimura, “say that my religion is more a form of Judaism than the Christianity of the Gospels. But it is not so. I learnt from Christ and His Apostles how to save my soul, but from the Prophets, how to save my country.” (Uchimura’s italics)⁽⁶⁷⁾ On this view, there is no transition between Old and New testaments, and the new dispensation after Christ wherein God works through a new “nation,” that is the church (or company of believers), either does not apply or, nonsensically, has no relevance to providence.

The obvious problem is that whereas in the Old Testament era only one nation was “Israel,” such a restriction in the era of nation-states is repugnant - as Kim’s reaction to the very idea confirms.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Is then every nation “Israel”? On Uchimura’s showing, Russia certainly wasn’t; and to Koreans, it was hard to see how Japan could possibly qualify. This difficulty does not appear to have worried either Kim or his and Yun’s later critics. But then, it did not worry the Dutch Calvinists either when they were locked in war against Cromwell’s Puritans: to the contrary, when shortly after the war Cromwell proposed an Anglo-Dutch alliance on the basis of their common faith, this perfectly consistent idea was greeted with astonishment.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Kim observed to one of his fellow Korean non-church members that Uchimura was every inch a patriot, and he prided himself in possessing the same quality.⁽⁷⁰⁾ He followed Uchimura in his identification of the nation — but of course his own nation! — with Israel to such a degree and imputed to it such a special place in providence that even one of his closest non-church movement colleagues, Song Tuyong, was moved to observe: “Kim loved the Choson of his ancestors more than Jesus.”⁽⁷¹⁾ It is somewhat surprising that Kim did not subject his own patriotic emotions and instincts to examination in terms of the New Testament dispensation. His writings betray an obsession with race, and on his own principles, this needed biblical justification, not simply the fact of colonial rule.

The use of the Old Testament by Uchimura, Kim, and the Christians in Korea generally, was nothing if it wasn’t selective. Even if we accept their use of the Old Testament as the proper source for understanding providence, the logic of their position remains very shaky. A more consistent use of Old Testament prophetic books concerning Israel could in fact lead to the conclusion that Korean Christians were in error when they refused cooperation with Japan’s political rule and acted as false prophets when they encouraged national resistance. In this regard, I will take the two prophetic books that were appealed to most: Daniel and Jeremiah.

The first thing the Book of Daniel tells the reader is that God delivered Judah into the hands of the Babylonians. In secular terms, the Babylonian empire invaded and annexed Judah. The Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, immediately orders the finest young men of Israel to be taught “the letters and language of the Chaldeans [i.e. the language of Babylon]” and how to “serve in the King’s palace.” Daniel was deemed the best student and was given the Chaldean name of Balteshazzar, while his deputies were given the Chaldean names of Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego,

the names by which they are known to posterity. From the outset, then, we learn that the colonisation of Judah by Babylon was part of God's will, his providential activity in history, and that this hero of Christian patriots in Korea such as Kim Kyoshin was schooled in both the language of the invader and the arts of administration in order to rule over the Israelites as a representative of the invaders.

Some historical vicissitudes later, Judah is subjected to another non-Hebrew empire, that of the Medes and Persians, and Darius the Mede is made King. Under Darius, Daniel is made the senior of the three presidents and pleases the king so well in his implementation of imperial rule that even the Mede officials become jealous. Therefore they plot against Daniel, and it is here that Daniel is used as a model nationalist. But again, a reading of the incident on its own terms suggests that using him this way entirely obfuscates the essential point of the whole drama. The only way the officials can get Daniel off-side with Darius is not by getting him to resist imperial rule over the Israelites but to refuse an order he has to regard as blasphemous: worship of the king as God. It is thus not the nation of Israel that is put at the centre of providence but the exclusive divinity and honour of the one God.

Daniel is trapped by the order, and there follows the famous incident of his deliverance unscathed from the den of lions. There is, certainly, an analogy to be drawn here, about how God will deliver the faithful, which in Old Testament terms could be applied to a whole nation, and this was presumably recognised by Yun Ch'ihō, Kil Sōnju and the majority of Korean Protestants in addition to Kim Kyoshin. However, the reward for Daniel's faithfulness was not the deliverance of Israel in any political sense. The offending law was rescinded, Daniel was restored to his high office in the colonial administration, and imperial rule continued. Daniel, we read, "prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the

Persian." The important point is that Darius was converted to the Israelite religion and made it the official religion of the whole empire. And lest, even in the Old Testament scheme of providence, we be left under any illusion that God's providence could be identified with any particular political order on earth, we read: "for he [is] the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion [shall be even] unto the end."

Yun Ch'ihō's conception of providence does appear close to this reading, since he recognised that being under God's providence was actually a politically (and therefore culturally) very risky matter indeed. Even within the Old Testament, his (and the Japanese non-church leader Yanaihara's) position that the Japanese invasion might be a matter of providence is more genuinely Christian than the common presumption that providence means that God is on one's own nation's side against another or that national independence is an inviolable part of God's purposes. Kim Kyoshin, too, was probably torn between recognition of the biblical warrant for Yun's understanding and his strong race-nation instincts. This might be what lay behind his comments in 1939, cited below. However, neither Kim nor the great majority of Korean Christians considered the establishment of Japanese rule over Korea as an opportunity given by God to convert the Japanese to Christianity and thereby spread it throughout the Japanese empire, a possibility that is explicit in the Book of Daniel. Nor would this idea have been particularly foreign to East Asian tradition, where the Chinese for example prided themselves on "sinifying" both the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Ch'ing empires.

If we turn to the Book of Jeremiah, the question of providence in relation to Korean nationalism becomes acute. Here we read of Jeremiah counselling the Hebrew King Zedekiah to submit to Babylon. But he goes even further and urges the Israelite people to go over to the

Chaldeans and give themselves up, and then they will escape death as a kind of war booty: “Do not listen to [those who counsel resistance]. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this city become a ruin?” he asked (Jeremiah 27:17). It is hardly surprising that Jeremiah was branded a traitor and thrown into prison. Tradition has it that he was eventually executed by being sawn in half. A similar fate awaited Koreans who advised that their compatriots should submit to the yoke of Japan. It is not necessarily the case that these Koreans did so out of altruistic or purely religious motives, but given Yun’s views on providence the question should surely be raised. But what was Jeremiah up against and what was his position?

The Hebrew princes were the political and aristocratic leaders of Israel, who obviously had the most to lose if the Chaldeans took over the country. Jeremiah’s advice naturally provoked outrage from the top military brass also. But who were the priests and the prophets? As a kind of theocracy, the king was advised by men whose office was both religious and political, or perhaps we should say the distinction was erased in their office and duties. They were also the intellectual or educated class. Without getting into too much detail, we can note that the priests had regular and in some cases hereditary positions within the state hierarchy and served as counsel for the rulers on matters extending from ritual to national policy. The prophets’ position was less regular, more free-lance, and in theory less answerable to the ruling class below the king himself.

The priests, other prophets, and the princes all took the natural position of patriotism, and accused Jeremiah of betraying the state. But they went further and accused him of plotting the harm of the ordinary people. This is a very important point. It is, as historians especially should know, the commonest form of rhetoric to which the ruling classes turn whenever their privileges and power are threatened. No rhetorical device is spared

in the effort to form in the minds of the people the strongest possible connection between the transfer of power from one ruling group to another and severe harm to the welfare of the people. The history of political rhetoric in the two Koreas since 1948 is exactly the history of this rhetorical device. But it is also common rhetoric in established democracies, where the “good folk” are treated to the gloomiest predictions of what will happen to them (or their pockets) should the opposition party win the next election. As I write, those British people who favour a single European currency are accused by their political opponents of bringing economic harm upon the “people”.

The power of this rhetoric prevailed in Jeremiah’s time, as it prevails in nationalist movements and historiography today (often, of course, as vice-versa: transfer of power from the colonial authorities to the indigenous leaders will mean great benefit to the people), and so the accusation that he was against the people was taken at face value. The religious and intellectual establishment threw their weight behind the princes’ condemnation. When finally the prophet Hananiah broke the yoke which Jeremiah had placed around his neck as a visual aid to his message that God was putting Israel under Babylonian rule, Jeremiah could only leave history to prove Hananiah false. He wasn’t throwing over the Hebrew people for the Chaldeans: he prophesied also the restoration of political independence. He was condemning the “heroism” and ambition of the princes who were prepared to sacrifice the lives of ordinary people on the altar of their own power. And again, the focus and the only valid point was the centrality of God in all situations of life.

The biblical judgment on this whole affair is that Jeremiah was the true prophet and Hananiah the false. In secular terms we might say that this is because Jeremiah correctly understood “real-politics”: the Babylonian empire did attack and crush the Hebrew state

and those who had resisted them were slaughtered together with a lot of the populace; and in fact a great deal of carnage of the people was subsequently perpetrated by the surviving “patriotic” princes. There are some uncomfortable parallels with the experience of Koreans during and after the colonial period. But it was in Jeremiah's conception a matter of obedience to God's purposes. It is noteworthy that Jeremiah's main ally was Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, whom God rewarded by saving his life when the Babylonians took Jerusalem, “because you trust in me” (Jeremiah 39:18). We should not, however, make too much of a distinction between obedience to God and real-politics, since in this scheme of providence, real-politics was determined by God's purposes.

It is evident that the Old Testament doctrine of providence does not provide a rationale for nationalism, and is only construed as such after nationalism has already been adopted uncritically and only by selective use of the Old Testament imagery. To be fair, it is also a belief in divine justice that justifies religious nationalisms, a sense that nations that put other peoples in chains will receive their just deserts and that Christians have a duty to oppose injustice. And most certainly they do, but this is always the case and not any more so under colonial regimes than under any other oppressive regime. And while it is historically evident that oppressing nations often do not get their come-uppance in any event, for Christians there is no guarantee this will happen in history rather than at the Final Judgment. In short, it is not a nationalist issue.

But this brings us to the New Testament. In order to preserve a unity between the Old and the New Testaments Christian theologians have generally understood the difference between the two eras not as a replacement of one by the other or some sort of rupture but as the fulfilment by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ of the purposes of God pointed to by the

prophets, even if the prophets themselves were not fully aware of this. This understanding is based on Christ's statement, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). In terms of providence, except for some calvinist theologians at certain times, this has been taken to mean that the founding of the church by Christ and his apostles signified the bringing to fruition the idea of Israel, and by extension the idea of providence. Israel was a figure, or prefigurement, of the church to come, and once this purer reality to which Israel pointed had been established, the idea of God choosing to work out his purposes through one or other nation was superseded by his working through the church. It is fairly common in Christian thinking to suppose that God has nevertheless still not “finished” with Israel - and hence the otherwise incomprehensible pressure on their governments by citizens of the United States of America concerning the Israeli state.

A minority of Christian theologians reject the idea that the prophets were also talking about the coming of Christ and his church and prefer to interpret their utterances as only a matter of Israel's literal historical fortunes. In this case, the Old testament form of providence is either more firmly rejected or, paradoxically, more strongly affirmed. But even on the latter terms, it is clear that a nationalistic interpretation of the Old Testament doctrine of providence is fraught with contradictions. As we have seen, both the literal notion of Israel as a political state and the purely racial conception of its make-up are severely relativised in the books of Daniel and Jeremiah, not to speak of the books of Ruth and Job. There is no shame — in fact there is glory — in participating at a high level in the rule over one's own people by another race and state; and there is no hesitation expressed in extending God's favour to non-Jews at the expense of Jews. The overriding consideration in the fortunes of the different states of Israel is the will of God,

not their independence, and the idea that other states can serve this same God is explicit. Moreover, the idea of the salvation of the “nation” is also frequently undermined by the assertion that some Jews will be destroyed and others saved.⁽⁷²⁾ The nation is not an individual.

This is still a far cry from the New Testament, in which the nation hardly arises as a literal category. This does not mean that politics is out of bounds or unimportant to Christianity: far from it. But the motivation, meaning, and focus of political activity is so different as to be potentially quite subversive. The kernel of the New Testament conception of all such issues in the believer’s life is encapsulated in Christ’s startling words: “Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:47-50).

Although Kim Kyoshin was familiar with the even more startling corollary of this principle — “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and

children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26) — and although he taught that the family was the pattern for the nation, he apparently did not question whether one’s race or nation could legitimately possess the status he gave it. The relevant New Testament category is, after all, the Kingdom of God, and the tension of the Christian life is created not by belonging both to a nation and the Kingdom of God but by something quite different: living in the world while not belonging to it. This leads to an entirely different conception of the world than that demanded of nationalism. On New Testament terms the very notion that Christians could feel at home in a “nation” or find common cause with it, or indeed be

popular with the people, is a strange one. Uchimura discovered that “[T]he faith we owned has made us repulsive in the eyes of the world...”⁽⁷³⁾ The reason for this was clear to Uchimura and probably to Kim Kyoshin, but in the end the nationalist viewpoint was, if anything, buttressed by Kim’s version of providence.

But perhaps the non-church ideology of Kim played a part in this too. Having substituted race or nation for church, Kim then adopted an extreme organic view of the nation and endowed it with a soul, as if it were an individual. A fundamental division within this organism was therefore excluded, not simply as something undesirable, but as something impossible: a single soul cannot be half-saved. Hence God was to save this nation and then it, the nation, in some hypostatic union with the divine, would carry out its mission to the world. This conception of things clearly made it extremely difficult for Kim to include in his understanding of providence the persistent New Testament theme of the believer’s enmity with the temporal world (the servant is not greater than the master, and so there is always the possibility that a believer will die at the hands of one’s own people).

Caesar and God

What then of the place of the Kingdom of God in Kim’s relation to nation and empire? Here, it appears that Kim was much more consistently attentive to New Testament teaching and much less in accord with the spirit of his nationalist compatriots. According to Yang, Kim was a premillennialist, but he differed from the influential Korean premillennialist Rev. Kil Sŏnju in terms of emphasis. Whereas Kil placed emphasis on the timing of the Second Coming and on waiting in hope for it, Kim put emphasis on hope as the motivation for action in the present, the reason for striving for the kind of values and society that the Second Coming promised, even though fulfilment of such must await the Second Coming.⁽⁷⁴⁾ This hope is furthered by teaching the “moral truth” that

will establish trust between nations and love between humans, thus revealing the divine hidden in the foundations of history, overthrowing the immoral idea of history that might is right and establishing the divine ordering of history whereby "righteousness overcomes might."⁽⁷⁵⁾

Kim sought a combination of passive and active approaches to historical change. The passive involved realisation of one's own evil and resolve for inner purification; the active involved indictment of evil done to others in solidarity with them, which requires taking upon one's own shoulders the suffering the unrighteousness has caused.⁽⁷⁶⁾ I am not sure whether Yang Hyŏnhye correctly interprets the meaning of this, and so I shall quote the whole of the original from which she takes extracts.

There is one object for non-Church members to resist. That being "declaring [the fact] to those who walk contrary to the truth," the objects of resistance differ according to time and place. Today that which has taken on the role of disobeying the truth before us Christians and that which we must resist, is a very powerful beast. The whole company of believers, whether inside the church or outside it, who would while worshipping Jehovah render what is Caesar's unto Caesar and what is God's unto God alone, are faced with times in which they must join their strength together and fight. It is a situation in which the religion of truth can only be manifested through the blood of martyrs. In such times, we have lost interest in the argument over whether salvation is in the church or outside it.⁽⁷⁷⁾ [May 1937]

Yang follows her version of this with a quotation drawn from Kim's "Chaech'ulpal" (A new departure), written in February 1937: "This is a 'fight that all who worship God must endure in cooperation with each other.'"⁽⁷⁸⁾ The actual wording of the original is "I wonder whether this fight is not perhaps one which all who

worship God must endure in cooperation with each other."⁽⁷⁹⁾ The context is important. Kim was anxious to defend his decision to "halt completely all attacks on and disputes with the churches,"⁽⁸⁰⁾ something which seemed to violate the non-church movement's charter. It is in this piece that Kim asks his readers not to accuse him of going against the great leaders of the faith, particularly Uchimura Kanzō, and he does so not, as Yang suggests, because he saw Korea as a nationalist whereas the Japanese non-church members did not, but because he believed solidarity with the organised Korean churches was demanded by the times. It is true that his style in this piece is rather more dependent on emotional rhetoric than is his wont: the question of the relation of principle to particular is almost swamped in his passion, but it is retrieved at the end: "We don't feel any obligation to inherit Luther's struggle or even Paul's arguments. We simply offer our bodies to the Lord Christ with hearts that hope for peace."⁽⁸¹⁾

In other words, there is little warrant to draw from these particular words evidence of a nationalistic motive behind Kim's decision to join forces with the Christian churches in Korea in their struggle against, as it happens, orders to worship at Shinto shrines. Opposing orders to render unto Caesar what was God's was hardly a contended Christian duty by anyone at the time or since. This puts the issue into the same category as the fate of early Christians under the Romans, and has little to do, except incidentally, with race, let alone nation or nationalism, but rather with human power become, in Christian terms, blasphemous.

No doubt it was convenient for Kim that the human power become blasphemous was Japanese, and given his doctrine of providence, this must have further encouraged him to identify God with his nation. There is little doubt about this, and as we have seen, in this sense he was very much a nationalist. But it is still instructive to look in some detail at Kim's decision to cease publication

of Sōngsǒ Chosǒn in January 1938 in terms of the way in which Kim fails to fit the nationalist mould. Kim announced this decision in a letter to Katayama, a leader of the Japanese non-church movement after Uchimura's death. Upon submitting issue No.108 to the Government-General Police Bureau as required of all publishers in Korea, he was informed that he had to print a pledge as a subject of the empire at the top of the first page. His immediate impulse was not to publish, but "on second thought, in light of the fact that it was the only Bible journal in Chosǒn, I decided to contain myself and print the pledge as ordered."⁽⁸²⁾ Some days later, however, he learned the issue had been denied publication and that further changes were required. This was too much.

We too pray for the emperor in our hearts and as citizens try voluntarily to follow the state laws, but we can't adorn the heads of our publications with these words as the condition of publishing, forced by the oppressive actions of the atrociously faithless government officials. The present officials have no intention of the government-general being for the Koreans, but for dogs and pigs, it seems. In Korea at present, legal publishing is impossible without becoming pigs. To continue publishing Sōngsǒ Chosǒn I must either move to Tokyo or get a friend there to be publisher, but the first is impossible and the second would cause considerable trouble to my friend, so in fact I have decided to suspend publication (or cease altogether if it comes to that).... It might be discourteous of me to go on so long, but I am not suspending Sōngsǒ Chosǒn because I cannot promote anti-war and pro-peace doctrines as I please. If there is any "injury to the public peace" through conflict over political issues, I will voluntarily withdraw from it and exercise caution. But since I cannot tolerate, or dissemble

under, instructions by officials to print certain words and forced flattery, praise, and Biblical testimony for present politics, I have chosen rather to accept an "honourable death." I feel deeply heart-broken that the only Bible journal in Korea is thus hidden from view. But God will lead things forward in some other way even better than before. My Elder Brother, please pray for the Korean peninsula too. I pray for your emperor and the true mission of your country.⁽⁸³⁾

This heart-rending letter was followed two weeks later by another, in response to a missive from Katayama. Kim had changed his mind and reported that the issue was printed with the required amendments and the pledge.

This far have I retreated. And from Brother Yamamoto's New Year message I learned that in order to render under God what is His one must be all the more particular to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. I've resolved as far as possible voluntarily to refrain from outbursts over social and political questions. It's difficult at times, especially when told what to write.

As we enter the new year the attitude of the officials is softening somewhat. If there is no active interference beyond wording, things can probably carry on as they are. I'm grateful for your offer to become publisher. I'm inclined to think that something of the kind might be needed to ensure publication continues if some further clash occurs.

In any case, I intend not to write any articles that might excite the officials unduly, and thankfully regard the fact that I can speak according to the Bible as the greatest freedom. Should it happen that we are forced to praise or give Biblical support to the war, Shinto shrine obeisance, or the present politics of the government-general, we will have to

cease publication or choose some other means such as changing publisher.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Conclusion

On the basis of his letters concerning publication of *Sŏngsŏ Chosŏn*, written as they were at a time when the national stakes were very high, Kim Kyoshin turns out to be far less easily assimilable to the nationalist point of view than is often claimed. As Ham Sŏkhŏn wrote in 1947, Kim's love for his nation was not the kind of patriotism that was fashionable among Koreans. Although his view of providence differed from Yun Ch'ihŏ's, they both firmly believed that a Christianised Korea would secure its independence and they held practically identical positions on the issue of God and Caesar. How then do we account for the two men's contrasting behaviour at the end of their lives?

I am not sure we can get to the bottom of Yun's motives in agreeing to speak on behalf of the Government-General's policies. But there are some factors already alluded to that one might put forward as partial explanation. First, Yun had quite different experiences and memories than Kim, having been active in Korea's national affairs well before the Japanese invasion. He was a political animal, Kim Kyoshin less so. His potential political influence was well known by the Japanese rulers and he was thus subjected to greater political pressures — and temptations — than Kim. It is evident from his letter to Syngman Rhee immediately after the liberation in 1945 that Yun still harboured political ambitions as an old man.

Second, Yun's idea of Providence was bound up closely to the notion and phenomenon of the nation-state and attendant international system. He sought to see God's hand and a Christianly supportable logic in the political vicissitudes that surrounded him and had such concrete consequences for his country. In a sense, Kim was less well placed to work out the relation between faith

and nation than Yun, both because he had no political experience and because of the incipient Manichean streak in the non-church movement's position: it is easy to understand his legacy of political quietism in contemporary South Korea. Thus paradoxically, the fact that Yun had a much better worked out idea of providence and a more practical acquaintance with the political nation than Kim may have led him to act on behalf of Japanese power. Since his return from Japan in 1927, Kim did not ever engage in any overt political activity, whereas Yun was frequently engaged.

Third, Yun undeniably harboured rather dim views about the moral fibre, practical sense, and general national character of his fellow Koreans. He deplored their lack of perseverance in long-term but vital projects and while he came to admire the strength and even tenacity of the people's commitment during the 1919 March First movement and donated funds to the families of those whose men-folk had been imprisoned or killed, he remained impatient to the end with what he believed were unrealistic, politically naive, and counter-productive outbursts that neither had backup nor increased one whit the spiritual and material foundations of independent statehood. In this regard, from time to time Yun compared Koreans unfavourably with the Japanese.

But again, this surely has roots in his pre-annexation experiences of the nation when it was formally independent, and in this regard I am not convinced this quite marks Yun off from Kim. Kim's movement was very much an intellectuals' movement, characterised even by one of its members as a "scholarly association."⁽⁸⁵⁾ And unlike Yun, Kim deplored the 1907 Great Revival legacy as an irrational expression of the common people, and harboured mistrust of the lower classes. He was equally severe on the Koreans' character, attributing the failure of the Korean university movement in the mid-1920s to the fact that "out of 20 million Koreans not a single person had one yen's worth

of sincerity.”⁽⁸⁶⁾ It is instructive to ponder Ham Sökhön’s view of the moral character of his nation in 1947, when Korea was emerging from colonial status towards renewed independence.

What can one expect when our political institutions and our educational institutions are entrusted to animals who know not the principles of life, who have no notion even of what a principle might mean? This is the reason we say that our country has gone mad and that our times are rotten. Unless a person of real integrity stands at the head of the march of history, it is clear that there will be tumult and ruin....

The way of politics and the way of culture are not different; the way of education and the way of religion are not different; and the way of business and the way of morality do not differ one from the other. It is thinking that progress consists in separating them and treating them as different which is the cause of the stagnation of modern (hyönda) civilization. The World War and the USA- USSR stand-off are sicknesses which reveal that civilization has entered a blind alley; so what do we, who talk of building a new nation and being born as the masters of a new age, think we are about using old grain thrown out by others and crawling into burning houses that others are fleeing? There has to be a truly new philosophy of life; there has to be a clear and penetrating view of history; and we have to hold to a lofty human religious faith.⁽⁸⁷⁾

This, *mutatis mutandis*, could easily have come from the pen of Yun. If anything, the expressions carry a deeper contempt and frustration, but the logic is identical.

Finally, it is reasonably clear from his diary that Yun’s growing disillusionment with the attitudes and behaviour of some North American missionaries and his

correlative pride in what he called the “yellow race,” helped incline him towards acceptance of the idea of the solidarity of East Asia that the Japanese were propagating. It may well be that this, far more than any doctrine of providence, was the crucial ingredient in his decision. As we have seen, Kim also felt offended by missionaries, but whereas this prompted Yun to view matters in broader terms of eastern and western cultures, Kim was confirmed in his search for a specifically Korean Christianity.

Whatever the case, for any who wish to judge Yun’s actions in the 1940s and earlier, it is important to state what one’s starting point is. If it be the supreme importance of the nation as a politically independent state, then Yun can only be found wanting — and found wanting most of the time. So too, might Kim, for it was, after all, not until 1938, and then over the question of blasphemy, that he considered direct defiance; and it was not until 1942 that he actually did defy the Government-General, and then not through his own words but by publishing those of another. But if some variety of Christian worldview is the starting point, then it is important to recognise both the doctrines that Yun and Kim employed and the logic of whatever Christian position one employs.

I am inclined to think that Kim (and Uchimura), too, is easily misrepresented in his relation to the nation. The evidence of his own words appears to suggest that Kim did not consistently give such supreme value to his country as often claimed. He certainly did not give much importance to politics as such: it would have been a little contradictory if he had, given his non-church movement’s position on human institutions. Obsessed with race and nation though he was, Kim’s concept of the nation was vague and intangible — a soul —, and hardly a clear idea of a political unit. If Kim had a particular political philosophy, I imagine that given his enamourment with the traditional family system as an ideal pattern for society, it would have been paternalistic and at least

informally hierarchical.

Uchimura had warned against looking inward upon one's own nation, as the only or the proper sphere of one's activity: "[The] world is a unit, and the human race is one great family. This is what I read in my Christian Bible, though Patriotisms, Christian and otherwise, seem to deny this. You cannot make yourself perfect without making others perfect.... In Christianising other peoples you Christianise yourself."⁽⁸⁸⁾ Kim did not appear concerned to "Christianise" other peoples until the whole elusive soul of Korea was saved, but with Uchimura he was aware that if one could not, when required, "hate one's mother and one's father for Christ's sake," one was not a worthy Christian.⁽⁸⁹⁾ As desirable as national freedom was, Kim still regarded speaking "according to the Bible as the greatest freedom."

In this regard, Yun and Kim are in the same camp. After his release from jail in 1915 for nationalist activities, Yun decided not to resist Japan politically since he regarded promoting Christian faith and action as obviously more important than political activity, wherever the latter appeared to obstruct the former. (It should be remembered, however, that Yun was interrogated in 1938 for his involvement in the secret Hŭngŏp Club, an organisation that the Japanese considered seditious.) In both men's Christian worldview, people are born into or later find themselves in all sorts of political contexts and regimes, but the duty of Christians to live a life of faith remains throughout. According to the context, one may be impelled to resist a government, as in the cases of Daniel under Darius and Christians ordered to worship the emperor. But the idea that Christianity is somehow at stake in the question of who rules is very problematic, except, perhaps, when Christians (or others) are directly persecuted, though even here the history of the Christian and other religious traditions suggests that the power of governments in such cases is usually overrated.

From the "fashionable" nationalist perspective, Yun

betrayed the nation. If Yun's decision, under duress, to speak on behalf of the Government-General involved assent to the notion that the Japanese emperor was divine and was due worship, then he betrayed his faith. But if he avoided this assent and chose to yield partially to the pressure in order to continue his Christian work in the church, university, and YMCA, then he was going much less far than Daniel, and in terms of any Christian doctrine of providence or the Kingdom of God he made a legitimate choice. There is here an interesting comparison with Kim Kyoshin. Throughout almost the entire period of Japanese rule over Korea, from 1905 to the early 1940s, Yun refused all pressure to participate in the political structure; then at the very end he joined the Privy Council and was accused of betraying the nation. Throughout almost all his life as a Christian in Korea, from 1927 to the early 1940s, Kim refused to participate in any church structure; then at the very end he openly supported and worked within protestant church institutions and was accused by colleagues of betraying the non-church movement.⁽⁹⁰⁾

We are left uncertain why Yun Ch'ihŏ took his final decision and therefore can only speculate concerning its meaning. But the idea that it was because he identified the industrialising nation of Japan with God's standard of civilisation can only be entertained at all from a steadfastly nationalistic standpoint. From the point of view of Christian history in Korea it was Yun who made the deeper, more crucial contribution at a very critical period for the church and nation, while Kim at best became an important figure among a relatively small group of intellectuals on the margins of Christian growth in Korea. But Kim's meaning, too, has been distorted by the nationalist perspective, and it would be appropriate perhaps to conclude with two excerpts, one from Uchimura Kanzo's diary in November 1927 and the other from Kim Kyoshin's letter to the Japanese non-church member Katayama in March 1943, upon Kim's release from gaol.

I was visited this morning by Kim Chôngsik after a long time. I was happy to see his countenance glowing with just the same lustrous faith as ever. Every time I meet Kim I am reminded of the certainty of the unity of Japan and Korea in Christ.... I am Japanese and he is Korean; we are true brothers in Christ.⁽⁹¹⁾

Among those who have come to Korea calling themselves disciples of Uchimura, I hear there are some Japanese making irresponsible claims that Uchimura's teachings are good for Japan but not appropriate for Korea. Can that really be so? Whenever I met with difficulties over the past year of prison life Uchimura appeared in my dreams to succour me, or instruct me, or lead me on with comfort. Indeed, for the last year I lived all 365 days together with Uchimura. I still haven't been able to discover any reason why the truth which saves his countrymen is inappropriate for Korea!⁽⁹²⁾

Unless these issues are understood, it is difficult to see how a proper historical study could be made of Yun Ch'ihō and Kim Kyoshin, or of any of the Korean Protestants who attempted to view their nation's situation in terms of providence. To the degree that they placed the doctrines of providence, evil, and God's rule at the centre of their interpretations of Korea's colonial subjection to Japan, their positions were incompatible with the dominant nationalist identification of Japan as the exclusive or even principal source of Korea's ills. In this respect the Korean Protestants found themselves in a position both similar and dissimilar to that of the socialists. Neither could ultimately support nationalism as an ideology. On the other hand, when socialists refused to make the nation the central point, this did not threaten their patriotic credentials, since the identification of Japan as the imperial power meant they could by no means work with it (although whether they could work

meaningfully within it was a question that created division). For the Protestants, however, problems of evil and power were not disposable of, as in Leninism and the kind of Confucianism that had informed Korea's intelligentsia, by recourse to cut-and-dried judgments concerning righteous or winning causes. Instead, evil was considered present in all regimes to relative degrees, and rather more so in colonial regimes. But even here there was some doubt, as we shall see. For Yun, who lived under it, the pre-colonial Korean regime was marred in his eyes by a rather high concentration of evil, while for Kim the stresses of colonial rule served equally to expose the seriousness of the evils afflicting the Korean people.

NOTES

- (1) Matsuo Takayoshi, Part One, p.401
- (2) Matthew 22: 21. King James Version
- (3) Hans Kohn. Nationalism: Its meaning and history, rev. ed., Princeton, New Jersey: D. van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1965, p.9
- (4) Yang Hyŏnhye. Yun Ch'ihowa Kim Kyoshin: Kŭndae Chosŏne issŏsŏ minjokchŏk aidentitiwa kidokkyo, Seoul: Hanul, 1994. From the blurb.
- (5) I do not claim to know how Yun died and am not here endorsing the belief that Yun did commit suicide, but reflecting the common viewpoint.
- (6) Yang, p.7
- (7) Yang, p.6
- (8) Yang, p.7
- (9) Yang, p.14
- (10) As we shall see, this was a point Kim Kyoshin made repeatedly in his writings on the essence of the Christian faith.
- (11) See Kenneth M. Wells. New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991, pp. 2-3

- (12) Yang, p.15
- (13) Some church historians, such as Min Kyongbae, have charged Christian missionaries generally with attempting to prevent Korean Christians from becoming interested in nationalism. There is evidence that some missionaries acted thus, but the issue is, again, not properly understood in these terms, since another theological issue was at stake: the separation of the church and the state. It was considered theologically wrong for a church or its affiliated organisations to identify themselves with the state.
- (14) Wells, pp.51-52
- (15) Wells, p.52
- (16) See Uchimura Kanzō. How I Became a Christian: Out of My Diary, Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1895, p.64
- (17) Yang, p.47
- (18) Undated speech, but I estimate between 1903 and 1905, or possibly later after the YMCA had been established.
- (19) Uchimura, p.87
- (20) Uchimura, p.98
- (21) Uchimura, p.100
- (22) Uchimura, p.105
- (23) Uchimura, p.147
- (24) Uchimura, p. 181
- (25) Uchimura, p.187
- (26) Uchimura, p.189
- (27) Wells, p.51
- (28) Uchimura, p.166
- (29) Wells, p.51
- (30) See Wells, pp.53-56
- (31) Uchimura, p.179
- (32) Wells, p. 50
- (33) Uchimura, p. 179
- (34) Uchimura, pp.73-74
- (35) Uchimura, p.67
- (36) Uchimura, p.157
- (37) Wells, p.65
- (38) Uchimura, p.108
- (39) Yun Ch'ihō Diary
- (40) Wells, p.52
- (41) See Yun Ch'ihō's diary entries for 1905-1907
- (42) Yang, p.107
- (43) Ham Sokhon's forward to the 1947 edition of Kim Kyoshin's collected works, reprinted in Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, 1991, vol.1, pp.5-7
- (44) Kim Kyoshin. "Isūrael chōndoe kukhan iyu," August 1936, Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, vol.1, pp.71-73
- (45) Quoted in Min Kyōngbae. "Kim Kyoshin no mukyōkaishugi to 'Chōsenteki' kurisutokyō," in Kan, vol.8, no.2, February 1979, p.24
- (46) Kim Tuhwan. "'Kim Kyoshin no minzoku seishinshiteki isan,'" in Kan, vol.8, no.2, February 1979, pp.56-58
- (47) *ibid*, p.66
- (48) *ibid*, p.61. cf No P'yōnggu. "Naega saengakhanūn Kim sōnsaeng," in Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, supplementary volume, pp69-83.
- (49) *ibid*, pp77ff
- (50) Min Kyōngbae. "Kim Kyoshin no mukyōkaishugi to 'Chōsenteki' kurisutokyō," p.31
- (51) *ibid*, p.25
- (52) *ibid*, p.37; Kim Tuhwan. "Kim Kyoshin no minzoku seishinshiteki isan," p.82
- (53) Yanaihara Tadao, "Kim Kyoshin ssirūl ch'uōkham," in Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, supplementary volume, p116
- (54) Yang, p.154
- (55) Yang, p.155
- (56) "Sipchagaūi kil," in Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip. Seoul: Cheil ch'ulp'ansa, 1991 (7 vols), vol.1, pp.62-65
- (57) Yanaihara Tadao, "Kim Kyoshin ssirūl ch'uōkham," in Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, supplementary volume, p117
- (58) Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, vol.1, pp.65-67
- (59) Kim Kyoshin Chōnjip, vol.1, pp.62-65
- (60) Simone Weil. The Need for Roots, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952, p.89

- (61) Compare, for example, H.H. Underwood's observations of Japanese censorship in his book, Modern Education in Korea (NY 1926), with the books of Christians such as Henry Chung, Hugh Heung-Woo Cynn, and Yim Louise. Some exaggeration by the latter must be allowed for, however.
- (62) Interview with Paik Nakchun (George Paik), 1981. See also the works cited in the above note.
- (63) See Simon Schama. The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age, London: Fontana, 1991, chapter 2
- (64) *ibid*, p.98
- (65) See wells, p.
- (66) Uchimura, pp.127-128
- (67) Uchimura, p.128
- (68) See note 43.
- (69) Simon Schama. The Embarrassment of Riches, p.96. See also pp.104-105.
- (70) No P'yonggu. "Naega saengakhanun Kim sŏnsaeng," in Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, supplementary volume, p.72
- (71) Min Kyŏngbae. "Kim Kyoshin no mukyōkaishugi to 'Chōsenteki' kurisutokyō," in Kan, vol.8, no.2, February 1979, p.36
- (72) Even the idea of a "spiritual" Israel distinct from the historical nation is present in the idea that many Jews are uncircumcised (though physically they are circumcised) and hence do not belong to God.
- (73) Uchimura, p.59
- (74) Yang, p.118-119
- (75) Yang, p.190
- (76) Yang, p.191
- (77) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.1, pp.202-203
- (78) Yang, p.194
- (79) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.2, p.365
- (80) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.2, p.363
- (81) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.2, p.364-365
- (82) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.6, p.531-532
- (83) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.6, p.533-534
- (84) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.6, p.534-535
- (85) Kim Tuhwan. "Kim Kyoshin no minzoku seishin-shiteki isan," p.68
- (86) Min Kyŏngbae. "Kim Kyoshin no mukyōkaishugi to 'Chōsenteki' Kurisutokyō," pp. 32, 34, & 37
- (87) Ham Sŏkhŏn's forward to the 1947 edition of Kim Kyoshin's collected works, reprinted in Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, 1991, vol.1, p.5
- (88) Uchimura, pp.190-191
- (89) See Yang, p.188
- (90) See Min Kyŏngbae, "Kim Kyoshin no mukyōkaishugi to 'Chōsenteki' Kurisutokyō," pp.44-45
- (91) From Uchimura Kanzō's diary, 7 November 1927, quoted in Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, supplementary volume, p.133
- (92) Kim Kyoshin Chŏnjip, vol.6, p. 536