

THE THEOLOGY OF SALVATION OF DAVID YONGGI CHO
AND ITS PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO
INDONESIAN CHRISTIAN MINISTERS:
A DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY

BY

SUTRISNA WIDJAJA

GRADUATE SCHOOL
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

1998



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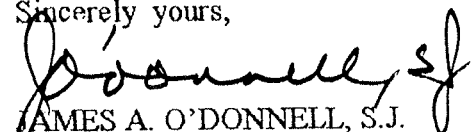
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Dear Fr. Widjaja,

It gives me pleasure to inform you that you successfully defended your thesis on August 20, 1998 for the degree of Master of Arts, major in Pastoral Studies.

A notation to this effect has been entered on your record.

Sincerely yours,


JAMES A. O'DONNELL, S.J.
Assistant Dean

GRADE: VERY GOOD

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21 August 1998

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Assistant Dean
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DUPLICATE

Dear Fr. O'Donnell:


This is to inform you that Fr. Sutrisna Widjaja successfully defended his thesis entitled "*The Theology of Salvation of David Yonggi Cho and Its Pastoral Challenges to Indonesian Christian Ministers: A Descriptive and Critical Study*" on August 20, 1998.

From the "Grading Sheets" that the three panelists gave, I can conclude that Fr. Widjaja's grade for his thesis (defense) is **Very Good**.

Fr. Widjaja can be granted Master of Arts degree, major in Pastoral Studies.

Thank you for your continuous support, I remain

Sincerely yours,


FR. JOSE MARIO C. FRANCISCO, S.J.
Chairperson
Department of Pastoral Studies

Cc: Ms. Thelma-Rojas Ramos – School Registrar
Dr. Jose M. De Mesa – Thesis Adviser
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THESIS/DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Title: The Theology of Salvation of David Yonggi Cho and Its Pastoral Challenges to Indonesian

Christian Ministers : A Descriptive and Critical Study No. of Pages 253

Researcher: Sutrisna Widjaja

Adviser: Jose M. de Mesa, Ph.D. Year: 1998

Subject Area: Theology / Pastoral Studies Degree Conferred: M.A.

Statement of the Problem

Main Problem:

What context of theology of salvation is David Yonggi Cho trying to address ?
How does Cho develop his theology of salvation to be relevant to his context ?

Sub-Problems :

What pastoral values, attitudes, and direction can be followed from Cho's theology of salvation to become better ministers of the kingdom of God in the present context of Indonesia ?
What are the weaknesses of Cho's theology of salvation ?

Procedure

To arrive at some understanding of Cho's theology of salvation and its pastoral challenges to Indonesian Christian ministers, the following three-step basic procedure is employed : (1) to see the context, (2) to review the theology, and (3) to draw some pastoral challenges. The first two steps are the descriptive part of this study. The last is the critical part.

Treatment of Data

First, the study will explore the context of Korea and Cho's own life as the bases of Cho's theology of salvation. Secondly, his theology of salvation will be explained in four structural elements : basic theological and anthropological principle, Christological mediation, the message and life style of the church, and eschatological fulfillment. Finally, the critical part of this study will draw some pastoral challenges from Cho's theology of salvation.

Findings

Cho is trying to address a context of Korea after the Second World War and the Korean war. His theology of salvation is also based on his personal experiences of poverty and sickness. Out of the Korean context and his own life experiences, Cho develops a theology of salvation which is based on the faith of a good God who provides, heals, and is always present through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit in the church. Cho's theology of salvation is a valuable example to offer some pastoral challenges which is rooted in the context and in contemporary experiences, faithful to the Christian Tradition, and geared towards a holistic understanding of salvation.

Conclusions

First, Cho's soteriology was addressed to a context of people who were poor, sick, and desperate. Secondly, Cho developed his soteriology based on the faith of a good God who provides, heals, and is always present. Thirdly, Cho's soteriology offered the pastoral challenges of solidarity, fidelity, and desire to seek wholeness. Finally, some of the missing elements are a critical dialogue with culture and popular religiosity, a desire to develop a theology which is for a multicultural and multireligious society, and a respectful dialogue and cooperation with other religions and beliefs. There should be also a strong awareness for the social, political, economical, ecological and cultural aspects of salvation and its interrelationships.

Recommendations

Indonesian Christians ministers are recommended (1) to live in solidarity with the suffering people, (2) to seek the truth with a community, (3) to include other disciplines of study and praxis, and (4) to go into concrete actions with faith in God.

Prepared by:



Sutrisna Widjaja

The Theology of Salvation of David Yonggi Cho and Its Pastoral Challenges to Indonesian Christian Ministers : A Descriptive and Critical Study

<i>Review of Related Literature</i>	1. The different models of theology of salvation are the result of the dialogue and encounter between two main sources : contemporary experiences of salvation and the experience of salvation in Jesus Christ.	2. All are aware of the importance to have a holistic understanding of salvation.			
	3. Salvation is a theological human experience.	4. Salvation is being mediated by Jesus Christ.	5. Christians experience salvation in the church.	6. Salvation is a process towards eschatological fulfillment.	

<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	A. What context of theology of salvation is Cho trying to address ?	B. How does Cho develop his theology of salvation to be relevant to his context ?	
	C. What pastoral challenges (values, attitudes, and direction) can be followed to become better ministers of the kingdom of God in the present context of Indonesia ?		D. What are the weaknesses of Cho's Theology of salvation ?

INDONESIAN CONTEXT	The Context of Cho's Theology of Salvation		Cho's Theology of Salvation			
	KOREAN CONTEXT	CHO'S LIFE CONTEXT	Basic Theological and Anthropological Principle	Christological Mediation	The Message and Life Style of the Church	Eschatological Fulfillment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Poor</i> ▪ <i>Sick</i> ▪ <i>Desperate</i> ▪ <i>Christians as minority</i> ▪ multicultural ▪ multireligious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Poor</i> ▪ <i>Sick</i> ▪ <i>Desperate</i> ▪ <i>Christians as minority</i> ▪ economic prog. ▪ Shamanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Poor</i> ▪ <i>Sick</i> ▪ <i>Desperate</i> ▪ Relationship to the Holy Spirit ▪ Yoido and Cell System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ God provides ▪ God heals ▪ God is present ▪ Human beings created by God ▪ Human beings are corrupted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JC reveals God as our Father ▪ We are born again in JC to be freed from sin, prosperous, and healed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Church of the Holy Spirit ▪ Church of blessings ▪ Lay-people- and cell-system- church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JC's first coming to rapture the church ▪ Eternal new heaven and earth ▪ Present reality of the kingdom

<i>Pastoral Challenges</i>	A. To be Rooted in the Context and in Contemporary Experiences	B. To be Faithful to the Christian Tradition	C. To be Geared towards a Holistic Understanding of Salvation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ solidarity and identification with people who suffer ▪ the challenge to be in dialogue with the present Asian crisis, other religions, and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to see the world as God sees it ▪ a theology that leads to prayer, worship, and praxis of the community ▪ the challenge to pave the way to real experiences of salvation ▪ the challenge to reconsider the way of life ▪ the challenge to promote cooperation with people of other faiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cho's soteriology is limited to personal and religious aspects of salvation ▪ the challenge to address the complete problems of suffering of Indonesians ▪ no human salvation without God
<i>Conclusions</i>	A. Cho's soteriology was addressed to a context of people who are poor, sick, and desperate.	B. Cho developed his soteriology based on the faith of a good God who provides, heals, and is always present through Jesus Christ, the church, and towards the eschatological fulfillment of an eternal new heaven and earth	D. Some missing elements are awareness of social, political, economical, ecological, multireligious, and multicultural aspects of salvation.
	C. Cho's soteriology offered the pastoral challenges of solidarity, fidelity, and desire to seek wholeness		

<i>Recommendations</i>	1. To live in solidarity with the suffering people.	2. To seek the truth with a community.	3. To include other disciplines and praxis 4. To go into concrete actions with faith in God
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September 04, 1998

Pastor Ferry Sutrisna Widjaja
Jalan Tera 14
Bandung 40111, Indonesia

Dear Brother Ferry Sutrisna Widjaja:

GREETINGS FROM SEOUL!

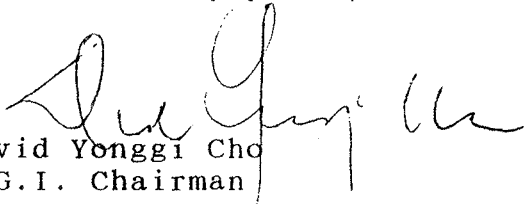
I was surprised receiving your doctoral thesis. But I was deeply moved reading your letter to me.

I love who^msoever that loves Jesus. It seems that you love our Lord Jesus deeply, so I love you too.

May God richly bless your ministry and expand your experiences of the communion with the Holy Spirit.

Once again thank you for the precious book

I am sincerely yours,


David Yonggi Cho
C.G.I. Chairman

THE THEOLOGY OF SALVATION OF DAVID YONGGI CHO
AND ITS PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO
INDONESIAN CHRISTIAN MINISTERS :
A DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Ateneo de Manila University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sutrisna Widjaja

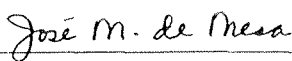
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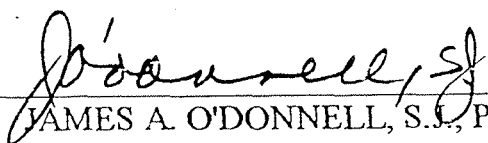
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submitted by Sutrisna Widjaja has been examined and is recommended for Oral
Defense.


JOSE MARIO C. FRANCISCO, S.J., Ph.D.
Chairman


JOSE M. DE MESA, Ph.D.
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JAMES A. O'DONNELL, S.J., Ph.D.
Assistant Dean
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Comprehensive Examination Passed : 7 and 14 February 1998

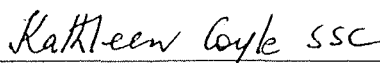
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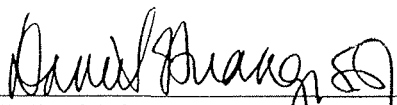
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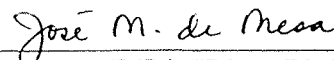
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Grade : Very Good

Date : 20 August 1998

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I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to God and to many people who accompany me in my pilgrimage.

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And a special reverence to Rev. David Yonggi Cho for being an inspiration to be closer to God in the service for others by being rooted in the context and in contemporary experiences, being faithful to the Christian Tradition, and journeying towards a holistic understanding of salvation.

And to God for accepting me as I am, for letting me to journey to the edge and through the forest, to delve into loneliness, to fall and to wake up, to run and to fight, to be vulnerable, and to experience friendship and love. I thank God for teaching me how to belong to, how to be faithful, how to accept others as they are, how to understand friendship and love, how not to feel alone, how to be in awe and humility, and how to take concrete actions with faith in Him to bring His message of salvation.

Manila, 25 August 1998

Stanislaus Ferry Sutrisna Widjaja

"For long as I can remember, I've been searching for some reason why we're here - what are we doing here, who are we ? If this is a chance to find out even just a little part of that answer, I think it's worth a human life, don't you ?"

"Small moves Ellie, small moves. . . ." (*Contact*)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

One of the basic needs of human beings is to experience "salvation" in its deepest reality within their own contexts. For many Indonesians, it is *selamat*.¹ For many Filipinos, it can be *ginhawa*.² For Koreans, it may be *pulee*.³ Whatever the notions used by different cultures, salvation is connected to an experience of total well-being in contrast to the experience of suffering in its all aspects.

¹ Janice B. Dixon explores the meaning of the Hebrew *shalom*, the Arabic *salam*, and the Indonesian *selamat* to form a theological bridge between Christianity and Indonesian Muslims in understanding the concept of salvation. See Janice B. Dixon, "Shalom-Salam-Selamat : A Theological Bridge," *Stulos Theological Journal*, Volume 1, Number 1 (May 1993) : 17-30.

² Jose M. de Mesa proposes the Filipino concept of *ginhawa* for the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ. See Jose M. de Mesa, "The 'Ginhawa' Which Jesus Brings," in *In Solidarity with Culture : Studies in Theological Re-rooting*, Maryhill Studies 4 (Quezon City : Maryhill School of Theology, 1991) : 75-101.

³ See Jose M. de Mesa, *Following the Way of the Disciples : A Guidebook for Doing Christology in a Cultural Context*, (Quezon City : EAPI Pastoral Resources, 1996), 99-103.

Christianity, like other religions, also claims itself as a religion of salvation. Christians believe that Jesus came to bring salvation. Jesus is acknowledged as the "Savior of Human Beings". The name "Jesus" itself means "God who saves" (Mt 1:21).⁴ What is the understanding of this salvation in Jesus Christ? How can this salvation in Jesus Christ be experienced? For whom is salvation? From and for what are we saved? This theological reflection of the meaning of salvation is called "soteriology."

Thomas Marsh in "Soteriology Today" notices that "soteriology seems to be both a pervasive, influential theme in current theology and at the same time to lack formal discussion."⁵ Dermot A. Lane shows the task of contemporary soteriology as retrieving "the experience of Jesus as Saviour in a way that addresses the needs of women and men at the end of the second millenium. What does it mean to say in the late twentieth century that Jesus saves? Is it possible to talk meaningfully about salvation today?"⁶

⁴Mt 1:21 : "She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins." Unless referred to other translation, hereafter all biblical quotations are taken from *The New Jerusalem Bible* (London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985).

⁵Thomas Marsh, "Soteriology Today," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, Vol.XLVI No.3 (1979:3) : 145.

⁶Dermot A. Lane, "The Saviour of the World," *Priests and People* (April 1997) : 133-134.

Background of the Study

The seed of this study on theology of salvation was planted in 1990 when I came across David Yonggi Cho's book *Successful Home Cell Groups*.⁷ Since then, I wanted to learn more about Yonggi Cho and his church. I am interested to know "the secret" of this church's growth. I have bought and read almost all of Cho's books in Indonesian and English. I have attended three of his conferences : in November 1994 (Surabaya, Indonesia), October 1997 (Seoul, Korea), and November 1997 (Manila, Philippines).

David Yonggi Cho⁸ was born in 1936 in Pusan, the second largest city in South Korea. He is the co-founder and the senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) in Seoul, Korea. C. Peter Wagner, a well-known professor of church growth at the Fuller Theological Seminary, USA, considers the YFGC as "the largest church in the world."⁹ It means "the largest single congregation in church history."¹⁰

⁷ David Yonggi Cho, *Successful Home Cell Groups*, written with Harold Hostetler (Seoul : Church Growth International, 1981).

⁸ In 1992, Yonggi Cho changed his Christian name from Paul to David. His family name is Cho. He chose to combine his first and second given Korean names into one - Yonggi. Throughout the thesis, I do not follow a consistent way of writing the names of Koreans. I simply follow how the different names are written by themselves or by other writers.

⁹ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church*, rev. ed., (Ventura, California : Regal Books, 1984), 104.

¹⁰ Karen Hurston, *Growing the World's Largest Church*, with a foreword by

In 1958, Yonggi Cho started a church using a discarded military tent. There were only 5 members then. Now, after 30 years, it has more than 700 thousand members.¹¹ Cho's influence goes beyond the boundary of Korea, especially among the evangelicals and pentecostals¹² in many parts of the world including Indonesia.¹³

In the beginning, many people, including myself, surmised that "the secret" of the YFGC's growth was in its home cell system. I learned, then, that the

Yonggi Cho (Springfield, Missouri : Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 12. In terms of total number of memberships (with many congregations / parishes), there are other churches even in South Korea itself, which have more members than the YFGC, such as the Presbyterian Tonghap Church, the Presbyterian Haptong Church, the Methodist Church, and the Roman Catholic Church. See Herlianto, *Teologi Sukses : Antara Allah dan Mamon*, 4th printing (Jakarta : BPK Gunung Mulia, 1996), 26.

¹¹ The number has exceeded 1,000,000 if we count the members of his satellite churches throughout Korea and the world.

¹² Evangelicals are Christians who stress the supreme authority of the bible, justification through faith, personal conversion, and atonement through Christ's death. Pentecostals are those who pay attention to the importance of the baptism in the Spirit and special gifts like healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. See Gerard O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (New York : Paulist Press, 1991). For a more detailed characteristics, see David L. Smith, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology : Tracing Trends & Discerning Directions in Today's Theological Landscape* (Wheaton, Illinois : BridgePoint, 1992). Smith sees the YFGC as the "most noteworthy" Pentecostal church in Asia (Smith, 49). Cho visits many countries regularly, including Indonesia and the Philippines.

¹³ See Herlianto, *Teologi Sukses*, 10.

secret behind his accomplishment was much deeper and broader. I noticed that Cho developed "a theology of salvation" which became the foundation of his church, a life-transforming doctrine for many people, and the underlying principle of his ministry. There is a clear connection between Cho's experience, his soteriology, and his pastoral praxis. Cho's experience of sickness led him to know God as God Who heals and to preach healing in his ministry. His experience of poverty taught him to encounter God as God who provides and to teach material blessings to his people. Out of his experience of desperation, Cho learnt to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord and to preach Jesus' cross as the way of salvation. Cho once told Karen Hurston, "Throughout my ministry, I have always struggled to preach the full meaning of the redemption of Jesus Christ. I want to give people hope, faith, and solutions to their problems. It is my purpose to preach the Lord Jesus Christ and His total work of redemption."¹⁴

As a Christian minister, I want to know how Cho develops his theology of salvation as a way of giving hope, faith, and solutions to many people. I am convinced that my life and ministry should be based on a holistic theology of salvation. I notice that Cho's soteriology can offer some pastoral challenges to be

¹⁴ Hurston, 140-141. Cho's primary two teachings are "the threefold blessings of salvation (spiritual, material, and physical) and "the fivefols message of the Gospel" (salvation in Jesus Christ, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, prosperity and blessing, and hope of Jesus' second coming).

better ministers of the kingdom of God in Indonesia at present. I have even adopted some insights from his soteriology in my own life and ministry. From Cho, I learned how to address the needs of people who are poor, sick, and desperate in a concrete way. Cho has also taught me how to develop an intimate communion with the Holy Spirit in prayer and ministry. Cho encourages me to develop communities in which people experience God who is a good God through the love and concrete support of one another.

Allow me to situate this study in the context of Indonesia, especially in the present crisis. I cannot help but do so. The crisis is too serious for any Indonesian Christian minister to remain unconcerned and indifferent. The financial crisis in (South East) Asia that started in July 1997 has caused a wider and more serious problem in Indonesia. It is no longer merely an economic issue. It has triggered a socio-political crisis which affects many aspects of Indonesian life. At present, Indonesia has more than 202 million population with 88 % Muslims. Its width is 5,300 km with more than 17,000 islands. There are at least 300 hundred different ethnic groups and languages.

Many Indonesians are "angry and hungry." They are angry with the fact that they have been too late in understanding that the so-called "development" had not benefited the majority of the people who are still poor, marginalized, and oppressed. They are angry after realizing that they were too late to do something to alter the situation.

Unity and harmony among people with different ethnic groups, races, religions, political affiliations, and backgrounds have systematically been disturbed and harmed. For instance, there are more than 200 Christian churches attacked, destroyed, or burned in the last three years. Lately the 3 % Chinese population is being blamed for controlling 70 % of the economy. There are still riots in many places with the Chinese and the Christians as the targets. Many people believe that these issues are not purely cultural or interreligious problems. There are reports that some elements of the military are involved.

They are hungry even for basic necessities for our lives. More and more people lose their jobs and earnings. Basic commodities have become very expensive and scarce. Crony capitalism has been widely practiced and supported by the government. Nature and environment are being destroyed by irresponsible commercial agricultural, timber, and mining industries. Farm lands have become dry and infertile because of the choice of the highly chemical-dependent variety of rice and crops.

On 21 May 1998, Soeharto resigned as president of Indonesia and was replaced by B.J. Habibie. A new hope for a new society arises. These days, Indonesians are expecting major political, economical, and legal reform. The role of the strong 400,000 military personnel will be reviewed. Many believe that the military is still too much in control over Indonesia. There is a need of major changes in the political structure in Indonesia including a new law on elections and

political parties. The legal reform will include the abolishment of the Anti-Subversive Law and the release of political prisoners and internships. East Timor's issue of referendum and human rights' violation also comes to the surface again.

The Indonesian economy is still shrinking. Inflation is getting higher and higher. Per-capita income has dropped from US \$ 1,200 to US \$ 300, stock market capitalization from US \$ 118 billion to US \$ 17 billion, and the Indonesian currency from 2,450 rupiah to the US dollar in July 1997 to a low of 17,000 rupiah in January 1998. The US \$ 43 billion IMF bail-out package including its bitter medicines is not working well.

Even with the new government, people see that corruption, collusion, and nepotism are still rampant. A new political freedom, economic justice, and a just legal system are still to be achieved. Life these days becomes more difficult for more people. Unemployment is getting higher. There are estimated at least 20 million people unemployed. It is also expected that at the end of 1998, 80 million people will be below poverty line which is defined as to earn \$ 3.70 a month.

Religious and cultural pluralism are being questioned with the ongoing social unrest in many places which often puts the Chinese and Christians as the scape goats. The last shocking issue is the mass rape of Chinese women in several cities, especially in Jakarta in May 1998.¹⁵

¹⁵One shocking example is from the three-day riots in Jakarta on 13-15 May 1998. The Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights reported that at least 1,188 people had died, 40 large shopping centers, 4,083 shops and 1,026

The crisis in Indonesia is not yet over. This crisis can last for another two to five years. More and more people are losing their patience, hope, and faith. No lasting solution is in sight. In a way, we have to start again to build a country of people based on the belief in the one God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice.¹⁶

In this setting, Indonesian Christian ministers are challenged to answer some questions like : What contribution can Christian ministers bring to people in crisis ? How can Christian ministers address this situation as well as the different needs of the people ? In what way can Christian ministers offer hope, faith, and solutions for a more meaningful life to people in a context of cultural and religious pluralism ?

These questions are, of course, not easily answered, even by this proposed study. The theology of salvation of Yonggi Cho is, however, an example of how

private houses had been attacked, burned, or looted. Seth Mydans reported that during these three-day riots in Jakarta, there was an organized campaign of assaults, gang rapes, and killings of Chinese women. More than one hundred Chinese women from the age ten to fiftyfive were raped. Some of the rapists said, "You must be raped because you are Chinese and non-Muslim." Many were killed or committed suicide afterwards. There are reports that some elements of the armed forces have been involved. See Seth Mydans, "Jakarta Groups Documented Mass Rapes of Chinese," *International Herald Tribune*, 11 June 1998.

¹⁶The state ideology of Indonesia is *Pancasila* or "the five principles" consists of the belief in the one God, humanity that is just and civilized, unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the wisdom of representative deliberation, and social justice for all Indonesians.

a Christian minister can bring the message of salvation to people. From such an example, much can be learned. The example need not manifest a perfect fit to challenge Indonesian Christian ministers to be more relevant to the present context of Indonesia.

Statement of the Problem

This thesis will be a descriptive and critical study of the theology of salvation of David Yonggi Cho. In the descriptive part, this study will answer two questions : What context of theology of salvation is Cho trying to address ? How does Cho develop his theology of salvation to be relevant to his context ?

In the critical part, based on Cho's theology of salvation, this study will offer some pastoral challenges for Indonesian Christian ministers. It will answer one question : What pastoral values, attitudes, and direction can be followed to become better ministers of the kingdom of God in the present context of Indonesia ? This part will also indicate some of the weaknesses of Cho's theology of salvation.

Scope and Limitation

This study is limited to the most important English edition and Indonesian translation of Yonggi Cho's works (books, articles, tapes).¹⁷ These constitute his

¹⁷I am able to gather 20 of Cho's books (16 English edition and 4 Indonesian

most significant works for understanding his theology of salvation. Cho writes many of his books and articles in English. In his conferences and talks all over the world, he speaks English fluently.

The study will be based on direct investigation of Chos' works. It will not include any interview nor field research since this study does not deal on how people appreciate Cho's theology of salvation. This study is neither historical nor developmental. Cho is basically developing the same line of thought since the beginning of his ministry.¹⁸

This study is offered to Indonesian Christian ministers, especially during this time of crisis. Many Indonesian Christian ministers are struggling to attend to the concrete needs and situation of the people, while at the same time wanting to be faithful to the call to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Not all people, of course, are open to the message of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Christians are still called to share their experience of salvation with others.

translation), 21 articles, and 4 set audiotaped talks. I am not able to get three titles of his books : *Jesus Christ, the Divine Healer: Holy Spirit*; and *Keys to Victorious Christian Living*. I also understand that no English edition is available for *The Homecell Group Study Bible : Volume II - VII*.

¹⁸"In that three years since 1958-1961, I was completely changed. I was armed with the goodness of God. And from that time until now I have never changed in my faith in the goodness of God . . . for forty years . . ." Cf. David Yonggi Cho, "Prayer," audiotaped talk presented at The 16th Church Growth International Conference, Seoul, 3 October 1997.

Significance and Objective of the Study

Several elements of the theology of salvation being developed by Yonggi Cho are also found in many churches or Christian movements considered as evangelical, pentecostal, or charismatic. Usually, these groups call themselves "born-again Christians." Some of the elements are the personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, simple answers based from the bible for life's problems, joyful praise and worship services, the promise and belief of material blessings, healing and other charismatic gifts, and sometimes including small caring communities.

These elements seem to attract many people, especially those who have many problems in their lives. They want concrete experiences of salvation, such as being healed from sickness, being blessed in their economic needs, being delivered from hopelessness, and being taken care of by others. Even in times of economic progress, these elements remain attractive.

The theology of salvation being developed by Yonggi Cho has influenced many people, not only his members in the Yoido Full Gospel Church. Cho is being invited all over the world. His conferences are attended by people from different denominations. His theology and his homecell system are being followed by many Christian ministers and churches.

There can be a question as to why the theology from an evangelical minister from Korea is being studied as an example for Indonesia ? Is it relevant ? Culturally and economically, Korea is certainly different from Indonesia. Nevertheless, after the Second World War both countries were almost at the same desperate condition. Both countries have been severely hit by the present financial crisis. The crisis is not yet over for them. Unemployment is a very serious problem for both countries.¹⁹ Many people in both countries loose their patience, hope, and faith. Both countries are still striving hard for reform in all aspects of the society.

At least three parallels to Cho's theology of salvation can be gleaned in the Indonesian situation.²⁰ First, Cho develops a theology of salvation for people who

¹⁹ In South Korea, according to the national statistics office in Seoul, 7,000 people are loosing their jobs each day. It is reported that 25 people commit suicide each day. See Reuters, "No End in Sight for Asia's Suffering," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 6 July 1998. Similar or even worse situation happens in Indonesia with its 200 million population. South Korea's population is 45 million.

²⁰ Karen Hurston considers five parallels between the YFGC and America to offer the YFGC as an example for America. First, Cho began this church in a city in ruins after three years of war. Secondly, the YFGC started in the midst of broken families and societal upheaval following the Korean war. Thirdly, even from the beginning Cho preached to the poor the startling message that God would make their lives better, here and now in this life. Fourthly, Cho's challenge was to mobilize lay people who were already working long hours and coping with urban pressures. Finally, the YFGC began and flourished in the midst of Eastern religions and animism - which include many expressions of the occult. These five challenges of the YFGC in Korea have its parallels in the American situation. See Hurston, 14-15. Hurston's parallels help me to see some parallels to Indonesian situation.

are poor, sick, hopeless, and destitute.²¹ In Indonesia, there are also many people who are poor and suffering. Many lose their patience and hope because of the prolonged crisis.

Secondly, Cho's theology of salvation is still attractive to people who are busy earning and who are coping with life's challenges and problems. In Indonesia, it is a challenge to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to people who are desperate coping with the present crisis.

Thirdly, Cho offers his theology of salvation in a country wherein Christians are still minority in number in the midst of other religions and beliefs. In Indonesia, Christians constitute only 9.6 % of the 202 million population.

These parallels strongly indicate that Cho's theology of salvation is a valuable "example" for Indonesia. Indonesian Christian ministers can learn from Cho how to attend and address the concrete needs and situation of the people, while at the same time continue to witness and to proclaim that Jesus Christ has come that we may have an abundant life (cf. Jn 10:10).

It is the objective of this study to provide an example of how Indonesian Christian ministers can develop a theology of salvation which is rooted in the context and in contemporary experiences of the people, faithful to the Christian

²¹ Korea was a country in ruins after the three years of the Korean war (1950-1953) preceeded by thirty-five years of Japanese occupation (1910-1945).

Tradition, and geared towards a holistic understanding of salvation. It is hoped that the study can offer some pastoral challenges to Indonesian Christian ministers to be better ministers of the kingdom of God in Indonesia at present.

Clarification of Terms

Theology of Salvation : the faith-reflection of the meaning of salvation in and through Jesus Christ. It is also known as "soteriology" or the doctrine of Christian understanding of salvation. It includes answers to : What salvation is being brought by faith in Jesus Christ ? In what respect ? From what are we saved ? For what are we set free ? What are the means to experience salvation ? How can we experience salvation ? Theology of salvation or soteriology has four structural elements : basic theological and anthropological principle, Christological mediation, the message and life style of the church, and eschatological fulfillment.²²

²² We can utilise the four constant structures of the fundamental Christian experience from Schillebeeckx. See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report on the Books Jesus & Christ*, translated by John Bowden (London : SCM Press, 1980), 51-52; and *Christ : The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, translated by John Bowden (New York : Crossroad, 1981), 631-644. Lode L. Wostyn uses the same four elements to present the tensions which are manifest between Christianity and New Age Movement's convictions. See Lode L. Wostyn, *A New Church for a New Age : A Study of the Challenges Posed to the Church by the New Age Movement* (Quezon City : Claretian Publications, 1997), 109-123.

Pastoral Challenges : values, attitudes, and direction in following Jesus Christ in order to be better ministers of the kingdom of God in the world. Pastoral challenges should necessarily lead to concrete pastoral practices, programs, and activities. The term "pastoral" is not limited to activities of pastors, all the more of ordained pastors. It is "pastoral" indicating the relationship to Jesus Christ as the *Pastor Bonus* or the Good Shepherd (cf. Jn 10:1-18).

Christian Ministers : Christians who are responding to the call from God to discover, to serve, and to proclaim the kingdom of God in the world. The term "minister" is not limited to ordained ministers or officially institutionalized ministers. It is applicable to all Christians who are willing to live and to serve the kingdom of God in the world publicly on behalf of a Christian community.²³

Methodology

After a review of related literature in CHAPTER II, to arrive at some understanding of Cho's theology of salvation and its pastoral challenges for Indonesian Christian ministers, the following three-step basic methodology will be employed : (1) to see the context, (2) to review the theology, and (3) to draw some

²³ Cf. Thomas Franklin O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (New York : Paulist Press, 1993), 142.

pastoral challenges.²⁴ The first two steps are the descriptive part of this study. The last is the critical part.

First is to see the context. In CHAPTER III, I will explore the context of Cho's theology of salvation. There are two important aspects of this context : the context of Korea and Cho's own life experiences. The context of Korea will include a brief introduction to Korea; Korea affected by invasions, wars, and division; Korea in times of economic progress, and the Korean religious context. The context of Cho's life will cover his short biography, his experience of poverty and suffering, his process of conversion, the Yoido Full Gospel Church and its growth, and a brief introduction to his works.

Second is to review the theology. CHAPTER IV will be a description of the four structural elements of Cho's theology of salvation : his basic theological and anthropological principle, Christological mediation, the message and life style of the church, and eschatological fulfillment. These four elements from Schillebeeckx are the formative principles of any Christian theology. By utilising these four formative principles, one can explore a complete review of Cho's soteriology.

²⁴ It is similar to the well-known formula "See-Judge-Act" of Cardijn who proposed it for the Young Christian Workers. It is also in the same spirit with the method of doing theology proposed by the Latin American Theologians. For instance, Lode L. Wostyn has been using this three-step of doing theology in some of his books. See Lode L. Wostyn, *Doing Ecclesiology : Church and Mission Today* (Quezon City : Claretian Publications, 1990).

Third is to draw some pastoral challenges from a critical study of Cho's theology of salvation. Cho's soteriology is the underlying principle of his praxis as a Christian minister. A critical analysis of Cho's soteriology from a pastoral point of view will serve as a bridge between theology and pastoral praxis. CHAPTER V offers three pastoral challenges for Indonesian Christian ministers to be better ministers of the kingdom of God in the Indonesian context at present. The three pastoral challenges are : to be rooted in the context and in contemporary experiences, to be faithful to the Christian Tradition, and to be geared towards a holistic understanding of salvation.

In this chapter, this study will make use of the works of Stephen B. Bevans, Robert J. Schreiter, and Edward Schillebeeckx among others as frame works for a critical analysis of Cho's theology of salvation. With these frame works, one can expect to have a comprehensive pastoral analysis of Cho's soteriology.

Finally, this study will end with some conclusions and recommendations in CHAPTER VI. The conclusions will be based on the objective of this study. The recommendations are further suggestions to implement the pastoral challenges in conclusions.