

The Ultimate Slave: The Formation of Colonial Subjectivity Within Global Coloniality: An Historical Perspective

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After Japan annexed Korea in 1910 the colonial policy towards its new colony was not liberation from the West, which had been the cover under which annexation came, but a centralized policy of assimilation. All manner of Korean culture was actively suppressed: Japanese replaced Korean as the national language, Korean history and culture were discredited, and Japanese historical and moral rights were asserted over Korea. Japanese teachers taught Korean students that their emperor resided in Tokyo and that there was no entity known as “Korea.” Korea as a culture and state was facing extinction.¹⁾ It was at this moment that the gospel came to a place of suffering: Korea.

Korean Protestant reformers believed that such calamity had fallen upon Korea due to its moral failure and that it was a judgment from God for the failed stewardship of the nation entrusted to them. Many of the reformers, who were “born-again” converts to Protestantism, drew deeply from an American Protestant vision of civil society and believed that the survival of Korea depended upon a moral, cultural and religious renewal which would strengthen the nation and thereby help it achieve independence. The reformers sought to establish and cultivate a new *ethical nationalism* towards this end. It was a particular kind of nationalism birthed deep within the nineteenth century American Protestant imaginary of civic responsibility, personal morality, education, industry, autonomy, democracy, capitalism and Universal History. The vision of the Korean nation remade in the image of Christian civilization, namely the U.S., was advocated by American missionaries, particularly Henry Appenzeller. The vision was reinterpreted and anchored within Confucian understanding of filial piety, and deployed towards the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonialism.

In the Foreigner’s Cemetery in Seoul, the tombstone of Homer Hulbert reads, “I would rather be buried in Korea than in Westminster Abbey.” There is no doubt in my mind that most missionaries loved God and loved the Korean people and served them to alleviate disease, poverty, social inequality, backwardness and to bring the light of the gospel to the lost. However, their good intention notwithstanding, their understanding of salvation collapsed the difference between Jesus and American culture. Nineteenth century America was spiritually confident in the wake of the Second, or some call it the Third, Great Awakening, and believed that God had chosen the nation to be the City on a Hill; the new Jerusalem. All things American; its culture, politics, economy, and values were “baptized” by

¹⁾ Kenneth Wells, *New God, New Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 79.

evangelicalism, which had achieved a consensus by 1850.²⁾ Many believed that American evangelical civilization was the highest expression of the Divine march of progress in history. Those fortunate enough to be born in the U.S. had a religious and moral responsibility to share the light of Christian civilization with those who were in darkness. Thus, the nineteenth century American Christians: religiously evangelical, culturally Anglo-Saxon, politically democratic, economically capitalistic, set out to spread the light of American Christianity to the ends of the earth. Many believed that, then, Christ would return. They were very effective, especially in Korea which was having a crisis of identity and was looking for new ways to strengthen itself. The strength of the American nation impressed many reformed minded Koreans, and many believed that Christianity was at the center of America's power. Reformers such as Yun Chi-ho and So Jae-pil embraced Christianity and articulated a "theology of reconstruction" of the nation that would remake Korea into a democratic, capitalistic, moral and Christian nation. In short, they sought to remake Korea in the image of the U.S. This move, however, had unintended consequences.

The notions of autonomy, democracy, capitalism and nation-state were and are values that are deeply rooted in the European Enlightenment, and had grown out of self-reflection on the experiences of colonialism. These ideas and values were born out of the racial imagination of the Middle Passage. They were answers to why and how whites were superior over the darker skinned peoples whom they were able to so easily conquer and exploit. Therefore the mechanisms of conquest: Christianity, reason, science, and education became the basis of reimagining themselves as the new Subject within history. This self-understanding constituted a European sense of superiority over other nations and races and drove its colonial expansion through the twentieth century.

For Koreans to have internalized these values and ideas, therefore, was to see themselves through a racialized lens. Once the reformers began to evaluate and critique Korean culture through it, what I will call whiteness, they saw what the missionaries saw in Koreans: dirty, lazy, dependent, morally lax, backwards, uneducated heathens. They were convicted that salvation of the nation rested in

²⁾ Most scholars would say that the mid-19th century (1840s-1850s) was a time when we could say that 70-80% of American churches were evangelical and participating in various voluntary evangelical organizations. The term "consensus" is a contentious one given the vast diversity of those persons called evangelicals, especially given the church splits that were also a part of the story of evangelical congregations at the time. Consider that the Wesleyan Methodist Church (1843), Southern Baptist Convention (1845), the Free Methodist Church (1860), and the Presbyterian Church (1861) all formed during this period of so-called "consensus." All of these splits were over the issue of slavery, but it may have something to say to us about an evangelical consensus. From personal email correspondence with Dr. Douglas Strong (Seattle Pacific University) and David Evans, (Drew University).

their ability to become less Korean and more white, a conviction which was validated and strengthened by the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1905.

So Koreans became white, or almost white, in the name of Jesus. The process of becoming white has not stopped but has become even more pervasive and totalizing. It has become naturalized to the point that Koreans believe when they get plastic surgery to make their eyes look bigger, nose higher, face narrower, learn English, fight for democracy, work for Samsung, travel to Europe, and celebrate their sexual liberation, they are in fact becoming more Korean.

This paper is an incomplete but an honest attempt to answer the question, how did we get here? In an attempt to answer the question, I will begin in the nineteenth century where the Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Americans, and Christians all converged on Korea; then, I will follow the story of Henry Appenzeller who was the first Methodist to land in Korea,³⁾ and then trace the development of ethical nationalism of Yun Chi-ho and other Korean reformers. I will conclude the paper by doing a theological analysis of the question, how did we get here? As a conclusion I will propose a modest constructive theology as a way out.

The Crisis

“Nationalism thrives on crisis,” wrote Andre Schmid. In the nineteenth century, East Asia was in a crisis. The previously closed doors of East Asia were forced open at gunpoint and unequal legal-economic treaties were made: first China, following the Opium War (1839-42), then Japan (1853), and finally Korea (1882). Introduction of the new western capitalistic world order began to upset the two thousand year-old sino-centric regional order and threatened to obliterate the long held self-understanding of various nations within its orbit. Korea faced a crisis of choice: to go the way of the Japanese in reorganizing itself radically through the modern technology of a nation-state and enter Universal History or to continue to hitch its hope to the waning power of China.⁴⁾

³⁾ Appenzeller and Scranton landed in Fusan (Busan) in April 2nd, 1885. Having arrived in Seoul, Appenzeller determined that politically unstable and unsanitary Seoul “wasn’t a place for a civilized woman.” He returned to Japan but came back after six months.

⁴⁾ In the 1880s, the first decade of reform, a handful of *yangbans* (persons of upper class) went to China to examine new military technology, which was the fruit of Li Huang-chang’s “self-strengthening” movement in China in response to the western threat while the progressives looked with hope to America. Missionary schools, especially Pai Chai for boys founded by Appenzeller and Ewah girl’s school founded by Mary Scranton, both inaugurated in 1886, became the most important schools. Upwardly mobile *yangbans’* children were taught at Royal English schools by missionaries, while others looked to Japan as a “shining star of progress.” Some scholars consider the 1880s as the “enlightenment period” in Korea where Korea

The Joseon Dynasty, which had ruled for five centuries, adopted an isolationist policy since the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century. It became known as the “Hermit Kingdom” and was happy to exist within the Sinic universe. However, Korea was not unaware of encroaching Western influence but it was not until the remade Japan forced Korea to sign their first unequal treaty in 1876 that Korea felt the pressure in full. Korea recognized encroaching “modernity” for what it was; to quote Cummings, a “virus that would destroy a unique Korean way in the world and pose for contemporary Koreans a question that absolutely never would have occurred to them before 1876: what does it mean to be Korean?”⁶⁾

It is at this moment of crisis, after Korea had signed its first non-Japanese unequal treaty with the U.S. in 1882,⁷⁾ following a predictable pattern of western colonialism: guns, merchants, and missionaries, that a Presbyterian physician, Dr. Horace N. Allen entered Korea in 1884.⁸⁾ Dr. Allen’s efforts in saving the life of the

took steps towards modernization. However it never matched the scope and comprehensive reform of Meiji Restoration and was constantly thwarted by reactionary elements within society. At best it was a reflection of China’s “self-strengthening movement,” where Eastern learning was the philosophical and political foundation. (See Cumming’s, *Korea’s Place in the Sun* for fuller discussion.)

⁵⁾ William E. Griffis, *A Modern Pioneer in Korea: Life Story of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912) 61.

⁶⁾ Bruce Cumming, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997)

⁷⁾ It is of theological interest to look at the terms of the treaty. From April to May 1882, Korea and the United States negotiated and approved 14 articles which established mutual friendship and defense in case of attack, the ability of Koreans to immigrate to the U.S., most favored nation trade status, extraterritorial rights for American citizens in Korea, and *non-interference with Christian missionaries proselytizing in Korea*. We must ask the question, why is it that in a treaty that has been formulated for national economic and political interest is this proselytizing clause included? What is the relationship between converting persons to the Christian faith and the American national interest? What theology is at work to hold the interest of the nation and evangelism together? What kind of Christology is operative?

⁸⁾ Through his connection to King Gojong and his knowledge of Korea, he became American Legation Secretary in Seoul in 1890. By 1897 he was U.S. minister and consul general. With his close relationship with Gojong and high government officials he arranged for American business firms to build the nation’s first electric and water works, trolley and railway systems. To quote Harrington, “In the legation years it was sometimes difficult to separate the diplomat and the missionary.” (93) He founded Gwanghyewon, the first modern medical facility that later became Severance Hospital and Yonsei Medical School. His influence in the early years of development of modernity in Korea cannot be over emphasized. (See Harrington’s *God, Mammon, and the Japanese* for a full account). We must ask the tough question of this pioneer, what kind of theological imagination allowed

King's nephew after the failed Kapsin coup, which was led by pro-Japanese reformers under the watchful guidance of famous Japanese reformer Fukuzawa Yukichi, opened up the door for further missionary work. The Methodists, not to be outdone by the Presbyterians, sent a cadre of missionaries to the newly opened nation: Henry Gerhard Appenzeller was one of them.

Henry Gerhard Appenzeller

Henry Gerhard Appenzeller was born in 1858 in a small town 20 miles outside of Philadelphia to a German Mennonite mother and a Swiss Reformed father.⁵⁾ However, it was his “born-again” experience in 1876,⁹⁾ “a personal conviction of sin through heart-searching . . . and a soul opened fully to the Holy Spirit’s indwelling . . . [which] resulted in the assurance of faith” that set him on a trajectory to Korea.¹⁰⁾

After the Civil War, the U.S. had entered the Gilded Age (1877-1890) where it experienced unprecedented economic, industrial and technological growth. Politically it celebrated its hundred birthday (1876) and it was on the verge of becoming a superpower. Religiously, it was experiencing the Methodist Age and enjoying an upsurge of revivals.¹⁰⁾

Evangelical Protestants in the Gilded Age believed that God had chosen the United States for a special mission in his providence. Evangelicals believed God sent the pilgrims and Puritans from England in the seventeenth century on an errand to the wilderness of the New World to build a City on a Hill, a Holy Commonwealth.¹¹⁾ In the eighteenth century, they believed God created the United States out of the fires of the Great Awakening (1740- 1770) and the Revolutionary War (1776-1783), to shed the light of democracy and Christianity upon the world. In the nineteenth century, emerging from the Second Great Awakening (1800-1840) and the Civil War, and riding the crest of another Awakening (1880-1900), evangelicals believed God had commissioned the United States to spread her way of life and the Protestant message to the ends of the earth. This vision of Christian civilization fueled the great century (1801-1914) of Protestant missions originating in England and the United States.¹²⁾

Allen to be a diplomat who represented American interests in the land where he came to share the gospel?

⁹⁾ It is a historical irony that Appenzeller’s conversion date and centennial birthday of the U.S. coincided with the beginning of the loss of independence of Korea.

¹⁰⁾ Griffis, 66.

¹⁰⁾ See Nathan Hatch, *Democratization of America*.

¹¹⁾ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956)

¹²⁾ See Robert Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)

As a Methodist, Appenzeller's vision of personal sanctification was coterminous with becoming a civilized individual through conversion. It was central for Appenzeller that internal change began taking on the external trappings of civilization as a mark of sanctification: educated, moral,¹³⁾ industrious, disciplined, hygienic and self-sufficient. He believed that the internal transformation made possible by evangelical conversion was essential for a nation to become fully independent, democratic, capitalistic, and join the march of Christian civilization within History.

Two days after having landed in Korea in 1885, for the second time, Appenzeller almost immediately began teaching young Korean men.¹⁴⁾ It soon became Pai Chai ("Hall for Rearing of Useful Men"), named thus by the king.¹⁵⁾ Appenzeller intended to provide Koreans with the education necessary to modernize the nation. He introduced a western liberal arts education including sciences, mathematics, English language, and humanities. The teachers used *hangeul*, the native script, and replaced Chinese with English. The use of *hangeul* was a political move. It was to conceptually wean his students from the Chinese-dependent identity towards a national one. Pai Chai with its liberal arts curriculum and evangelical atmosphere was to form enlightened Christian citizens able to lead Korea in the modernization of military, economy, government and technology and to be leaders for independence. Consistent with Appenzeller's vision Pai Chai became a hotbed for national reform and the independence movement.

Appenzeller was convinced that a broader dissemination of knowledge was important for transformation of Korea. In 1894, he opened up a bookstore for Christian and foreign literature across from the church,¹⁶⁾ which was intentionally

¹³⁾ Appenzeller condemned smoking, drinking, dancing, gambling, alcohol and cigarettes as demonic expressions. Ryu Dae-young, *Chogi Miguk Sungyosa Yunggu: 1884-1919* (Seoul: Hanguk Giddokyu Yunggusuh, 2001), 111.

¹⁴⁾ Appenzeller's founding of Pai Chai was only one of thousands of schools to come. According to Insoo Sohn, during the period of 1885-1910, a total of 796 schools were established and maintained by Western missionaries. This number alone comprises thirty-five percent of the entire number of schools (2,250) in Korea. The missionaries were very successful not only proselytizing through the institutions but also in establishing the structure of western learning. According to Lee it developed in five major areas: (1) democratic ideology, (2) equal opportunity for education, (3) education for women, (4) curriculum development, and (5) the institutional system of higher education. (See Lee, 89-90)

¹⁵⁾ King Gojong recognizing the need to develop a governmental cadre for dealing with increasing conflict with the West, established government schools in 1883 and the Royal English School in 1886. The American missionaries were invited to teach various subjects, which were conducted in English, in these schools. Lee, 92.

¹⁶⁾ Construction of the first church began on September 9, 1895. The architect was a Japanese and the cost was \$8048.29. It was finally completed in 1898. Griffis, 210-211.

built across from the American Legation. Soon after, obtaining a printing press from Dr. Ohlinger, Appenzeller added a book bindery, “developing the history of a wonderful agent of Christian civilisation and means of diffusion and knowledge and enlightenment of the Korean intellect¹⁷⁾ – the Methodist Printing and Publishing House was birthed on Pai Chai grounds in 1890. *Korean Repository*, which was the most comprehensive Korea-related periodical, was published in English from 1895-1899 under Appenzeller until the Japanese shut it down in 1899. It was reintroduced under the title *Korea Review* in 1902 under the editorial leadership of Homer Hulbert.¹⁸⁾ Even more importantly, it was the printing house for the highly controversial *Tongnip Sinmun* (the “*Independent*” -- 1896-99) which was the first paper published completely in the vernacular. It was a paper run by a Christian triumvirate, So Jae-pil, Yun Chi-ho, and Ok Nam-gung, who through their editorials maintained there was an “intrinsic connection between Christianity, modern education and national revival.”¹⁹⁾ The paper took on an overtly nationalistic stance criticizing the government, Confucian elite, the Japanese and promoted a vision of civil Christianity. This Christian and not-so-subtle political paper drew the ire of every social power base.

After *The Independent* and the Independence Club successfully removed Russia²⁰⁾ from Korean government, the conservatives, with Gojong’s support, dismissed So from his advisory post and removed him as the editor of the *Independent*. After So departed to the U.S., Appenzeller without authorization from the Mission Board, using mission funds, purchased the *Independent’s* press from So and continue publishing it himself until William Scranton, the Methodist superintendant, ordered Appenzeller to cease his editorship of the paper.²¹⁾

Two of his guiding principles were independence and democracy. He believed that independence of a nation was necessary for spiritual and economic development and reasoned that the Protestant faith created American democracy. It was also through this lens that he saw the Japanese as more civilized than Koreans. Griffis reports, “From the start, A. got on well with the Japanese, and this was one secret of his and ever widening influence . . .”²²⁾ For this reason, he initially supported the *Kabo* reform which was instituted by the Japanese following the defeat of the Chinese in Korea in 1894, but with caution. According to Davies:

¹⁷⁾ Griffis, 225.

¹⁸⁾ Ryu, 177.

¹⁹⁾ Wells, 30.

²⁰⁾ Appenzeller’s visit to Russia only confirmed the truth of his vision. “It was to confirm and strengthen his faith in the civilization of those countries founded upon public schools, general education, self-government, free religion and self-control; as against the systems of society, government and church built on arbitrary one-man power, with priests, soldiers and bureaucracy as their instruments. More than ever, he gloried in being an American.” Griffis, 252.

²¹⁾ Davies, 430.

²²⁾ Griffis, 207.

Meiji Japan imitated American government society while rejecting Protestant Christianity. Without personal conversion experiences and without a spiritual life guided by the Bible, Korea, like Japan, would have the form of democracy but lack the spirit of democracy.²³⁾

However, it was for the same reasons he later opposed the Japanese, Chinese, and Russian designs on Korea. He, instead, supported the U.S.-Korea alliance. He not only believed that the U.S. would support Korea's move towards independence but that it also would provide the best example of a Protestant nation.²⁴⁾ The forced progressive shift in 1894 created greater room for Appenzeller's imagination and activities. To the chagrin of the Methodist board and Allen, who by this time had become the Secretary of the American legation, he fully supported the political activities of the Independence Club founded by So Jae-pil in 1896. He encouraged the Pai Chai students to participate and take leadership within the organization. Appenzeller and So nurtured the independent spirit at Pai Chai. So founded and presided over the Mutual Friendship Society, a debating society within Pai Chai, to cultivate such a spirit in its students. Numerous students from this period later took leadership in Korean independence and society, including Rhee Syngman, who later became the first president of the newly found republic.

Appenzeller's vision of a City on a Hill guided and drove him towards working tirelessly in Korea until his untimely death in 1902. Griffis recounts the work of Appenzeller:

preaching in the vernacular, Bible translation, commentary making, the creation of a Christian literature, the governing of Christian churches, the teaching of theology as a science . . . He edited and published both a Christian periodical, *The Korean Christian Advocate*, and also the monthly *Korean Repository*, which was "a journal of civilisation." For years he was president of the Korean Religious Tract Society. He introduced the social features of the best European and American life. As a wise master builder, he laid broad foundations, upon which others should uprear noble structures . . . In the full sense of the word A. was envoy and pioneer of civilization.²⁵⁾

Appenzeller was not American before he was a Christian. It was his conversion experience in 1876 that helped him to reinterpret the unfolding of God's will within western, particularly, American history. He sought to plant and nurture the various principles of American Protestant civilization through formal and moral

²³⁾ Davies, 432.

²⁴⁾ Davies, 425.

²⁵⁾ Griffis, 204.

education, promotion of independence movements, printing concerns, etc. all unfolding within evangelical conviction. He deeply believed that internal and spiritual transformation led to an external and social sanctification, which strengthened the nation to become independent, democratic, and capitalistic. It was this vision and work for Christian civilization at the moment of a deep historical crisis that, according to Appenzeller's design, incited and captured the imagination of young Christian converts and which placed Korea towards a nationalistic and civilizing formulation of Christianity. It is to this story which we now will turn.

The Formation of Ethical Nationalism and Yun Chi-ho

In 1890s So Jae-pil and Yun Chi-ho, two of the most influential independence leaders in Korea, developed an ethico-spiritual critique of Korean society, beliefs and politics based on the basis of their recently found Protestant faith. Korea's material weaknesses were considered as symptoms of moral and spiritual decline, and self-strengthening was reinterpreted as the religious and ethical renewal of the society as an analytic of the Christian faith. This required modern education, training in civic virtues and unity among all classes. The perceived result was the institution of nationalism.

For them and their disciples, history acquired meaning insofar as it was oriented towards the "Kingdom of God," just as individual life had to be directed towards the perfection promised to it through the resurrection. Conversely, all action contrary to truth and holiness would be eternally condemned. The solution to the tension between nationalistic ends and transcendental claims was *ethical nationalism*, a nationalism that would align its modern citizens with the Kingdom of God. It was a brand of nationalism that Appenzeller espoused.

Yun Chi-ho was born to a noble reformed-minded family. After his conversion to Methodism, he went onto study at Vanderbilt and Emory. While he was in the U.S. he observed the relationship between American power and Christianity and came to conclude that the "blessing" of America rested in their moral obedience to God as a nation. He concluded that people were morally accountable for their nation's survival. Invasion was as much the fault of the nation invaded as of the invader, for "no sin is greater in a nation than weakness," and "misgovernment has its own punishment as any other crime." Thus true fitness derived from spiritual health, while falling prey to social and national evolutionary processes was the logical outcome – or judgment – of spiritual stagnation. In Christian terminology, land, freedom and independence were gifts from God, and their retention depended on proper stewardship.²⁶⁾ He applied this principle to evaluation of the Korean context:

²⁶⁾ Kinoshida Takeo, *Quasi-Pardon: Yudong-il and Yun Chi-ho's Case* (Unpublished Paper from Soonsil University, Korea, 2008), 21.

The rise and decline of a nation depends on the wisdom and nature of its people. Our people have for several hundred years been slaves of others, possessing no wisdom or manly character and, suffering for 500 years the oppression of an incomparably bad government, high and low, official and commoner, all seek miserably to preserve their lives through bondage to others. How then, given the present state of our country, can we hope for independence, and even were that attained, how will we be able to defend ourselves against subsequent evils and preserve our land? 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.²⁷⁾

He believed that Confucianism with its interest in filial piety, and with excessive loyalty to kin and the King was a fundamental problem. The failure to see beyond one's immediate family's interest weakened the society and the solution to the problem was to develop civic morality, which Yun referred to as "public virtue," "public responsibility" and "public spirit." He became convinced through his time and observation in the States that Christianity was the root of civic morality. In his journal he wrote: "Christianity is the salvation and hope of Korea."²⁸⁾

After his return to Korea, he tried to apply his new convictions as the local magistrate in ports of Wonsan and Chinampo (1899-1903). He was loved but he became convinced that democracy needed foundations. He believed that first Christianity had to replace Confucianism to generate public spirit at individual and national levels, then, people needed to be educated individually and publically in the principles of the civil society. To this end the Independence Club and *The Independent* were created.

It is in his editorials we can see Yun's reconstructionist "theology" most clearly. As the editor he preached that religion, education and democracy, and hard work, co-operation and honesty, were the only path to self-reliance. A link was posited between God, patriotism and industry on the one hand, and unity, prosperity and strength on the other, while the West was held up as verification. The *Independent* served as the vehicle of an intense campaign for the modernization of the total life of Korea along Western lines. The Western values behind this were said to be Christian insofar as this civilization was "the outcome of sound education." Editorials proposed that it be pursued through three channels: Church, school, and press.²⁹⁾

²⁷⁾ Takeo, 51.

²⁸⁾ Wells, 53.

²⁹⁾ Takeo, 32.

Even after the members of the Independence Club were arrested in 1898 for their role in removing Russian influence on the royal court, Yun refused direct political action against the wishes of its younger members like Rhee Syngman. He believed that without popular support the only winners would be Japan or Russia. Before democracy could be established public conscience had to be transformed; and before that, the “blood of the race has to be changed by a new education, a new government and a new religion.”³⁰⁾ So Jae-pil was of the same opinion. Key leaders such as Yi Sang-jae and Rhee Syngman converted to Christianity while they were in prison. This only confirmed for Yun that conversion was necessary to the formation of new nationalism.

The actual reforms of the Independence Club were limited but the ideas formed and articulated within this period became the foundation for future movements. There was hardly a development in the movement toward independence or nationalism that was not an extension of some principle in ethical nationalism.

After 1905, during a period of heavy-handed persecution, Christian churches and schools became an “underground railroad” of sorts under the cover of foreign missionaries. They provided the plausibility structure for ethical nationalism as communities formed within Protestant ideals. The inflexible opposition by the Japanese Government-General to any political movement among Koreans after 1905 encouraged self-reconstruction Protestants to separate the concepts of “nation” and “state” in order to emphasize the priority of cultural reconstruction over political action. This was not a denial of the nation-state formula: it was meant to establish national culture as the only valid basis of the state and also to argue the meaningfulness of ethical nationalism, especially when political nationalism was blocked. In the 1920s this became the basis of the self-reconstruction Protestants’ call to reconstruct the nation as a “Christian civilization.” Appenzeller’s vision of a City on a Hill had come to a full realization.

How Did we Get Here? The Question Analyzed and a Modest Proposal

The “crisis of identity” came to Korea in the nineteenth century through the gaze of the West towards Asia. This “gaze” was something like God’s creative gaze, backed by theological, technological, economic, and military might; it had power to destroy and create, and destroy and create it did. By 1930 Europe ruled over 84.6 percent of the globe.³¹⁾ And European institutions: Christianity, capitalism, and the nation-state began to constitute a new world order. Every non-western culture was in retreat and European civilization was on a march towards the End of History.³²⁾

³⁰⁾ Wells, 60.

³¹⁾ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 15.

³²⁾ This is to borrow Francis Fukiyama’s phrase from his controversial book, *The End of History and the Last Man*. In the book he argues “liberal democracy may constitute the ‘end pint of mankind’s ideological evolution’ and the ‘final form of

Hegel had said that History begins in the Orient but ends in Europe; he was off by roughly 4800 miles, History ended in the New World: the U.S., after all, was *the* child of European Enlightenment.

In the nineteenth century the U.S. was awakened to itself. It was experiencing unprecedented economic growth and social and cultural development. It was on the cusp of becoming a world power, and it seemed like God was orchestrating all of it. It was a cultural “born-again” experience that “baptized” American culture and its values; upon rising from the baptismal waters, it saw its meaning in history – American culture was the salvific hope for the world. Hegel captures this moment of conception beautifully:

[S]uddenly becoming possessed of light, beholding the bright glimmering of the dawn, the growing light and the flaming glory of the ascending Sun. The boundless forgetfulness of his own individuality in the pure splendor, is his first feeling – the utter astonishment. But from them the individual proceeds to the contemplation of his own inner being, and thereby the advance is made to the perception of the relation between the two. Then inactive contemplation is quitted for activity, by the close of the day, man has erected a building constructed from his own inner Sun; and when in the evening he contemplates this, he esteems it more highly than the original external Sun. For now he stands in conscious relation to his Spirit, and therefore a *free relation* [italics mine]. If we hold this image fast in mind, we shall find it symbolizing the course of History, the great Day’s work of Spirit.³³⁾

This rebirth gave the U.S. insight into the meaning of history, freedom – the ultimate work of the Spirit within time. Once they were awakened it was time for “inactive contemplation is quitted for activity.” The burden of History rested upon their

human government,’ and as such, this development, constitutes the “end of History,” 59-60.

³³⁾ George F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1991), 103. Hegel’s definition of freedom is profound. “That is: The Supreme Law of the Universe is recognized as identical with the dictates of Conscience – becomes a ‘law of liberty.’ Morality – that authority which has the incontestable right to determine men’s actions, which therefore is the only absolutely *free* and unlimited power – is no longer a compulsory enactment, but the free choice of human beings,” p. 341. Perhaps it is this vision of “morality” – the unbound internal authority that liberates the individual to choose without compulsion, is what Yun Chi-ho was drawn to. It is a liberated Spirit of power that draws meaning, and therefore strength, from the self. The meaning of History unfolds within this “Spirit.” Such subjectivity was birthed out of five hundred years of absolute and continuous exercise of power over the bodies of colonial subjects.

shoulders, to set other humanity free, as they were free, and many Christians took up this burden.

When Appenzeller came and beheld Koreans through the lens of Christian America, he was performing this colonial gaze. He saw diseased, dirty, uneducated backwards people who were in chains to oppressive history, government, religion and social systems. They needed Jesus and western culture to liberate them.³⁴⁾

Korean national subjectivity was birthed out of the gaze of the West and maintained and perpetuated by the Koreans internalizing these values (self-colonization, beholding the desire to the direction of the metropole is the function of capitalistic colonialism). Which may explain much of the seemingly odd features within Korean and Korean-American cultures: causeless racism towards blacks, Hispanics, South Asians and even the Chinese,³⁵⁾ the “miraculous” growth of the Korean economy within global capitalism and the explosion of Christianity,³⁶⁾ the education “fever,” the disproportionate representation of Korean students in every top university in the U.S., the success of Korean companies producing consumer technology, the L.A. Riots, and even the tragedy of the Virginia Tech shooting – all become more intelligible when viewed as desires and tensions of colonized subjects trying to live out lives through a borrowed narrative.

Orlando Patterson’s important work, *Slavery and Social Death*, helps us to frame the new subjectivity that is birthed – the “ultimate slave.” Patterson argues

³⁴⁾ What is insidious is that once the plausibility structure is internalized it works at the level of desire. It is normal for the disciplined convert to desire what the discipler desires. And as such, what the convert desires seems native because it is what he or she wants; it becomes naturalized. Once this is established it polices and disciplines all other desires or expressions thereof. It becomes a self-regulating lens through which the individual makes judgment upon the self and culture. The validity of desire is authorized or unauthorized by the internal gaze of the self. (It is like an inmate becoming a prison guard of the self and believing that this is exactly what he wants.) When the values of the missionaries are sufficiently internalized the missionaries are no longer needed. God, Bible and everything else is directly filtered through the internalized plausibility structure of the missionaries.

³⁵⁾ There is an internal reorganizing of hierarchy within East Asia. A nation that is closer to the West in culture, economy, politics, etc. is positioned higher within the hierarchy. It is a racial hierarchy: as the Chinese and Korean became “black” in the eyes of the Japanese, similar judgment is made about the Chinese from Koreans today. They are described as “dirty and uncivilized.” Within the Sinic universe the Japanese were considered to make up the lowest rung; however, within global capitalism, this order is inversed: Japanese are at the top, then Koreans, and the Chinese at the bottom. This perception is changing slowly with the rise of the Chinese economy.

that the ultimate ruler requires an ultimate slave as mediation between the ruler and the ruled, usually in the form of the anomalous person of the eunuch. In various societies eunuchs held high political and administrative roles and enjoyed a degree of wealth and freedom. However, the eunuch's castrated body represented social alienation and lack of subjectivity. Their bodies were emptied of social meaning and became empty signifiers;³⁶⁾ they only meaning they had was derivative, refracted from the meaning and power of their master. In this sense, they were only a "surrogate body-double," it is only the ruler/emperor's body that remains the "substance and the symbolic of body politics." Eunuchs did not have honor either, because honor was only possible within full social acceptance; eunuchs were socially marginalized and despised, they were social nonpersons. They usually became the scapegoats for the errors of the emperor. The seemingly powerful eunuchs experienced double alienation, despised by both the elites and other slaves, because they derived their power only through their intimacy with the emperor.³⁷⁾

Patterson's description of the eunuch, I believe, is an apt description of Asian subjectivity within a racialized global capitalism.³⁸⁾ The Asian body, particularly the

³⁶⁾ This point became clear for me as I was reading James Baldwin's *No One Knows My Name*. James Baldwin reflecting upon what it means to be an American from Europe writes that "[Bessie Smith] helped to reconcile me to being a 'nigger.'" (*Nobody Knows My Name*, 5). It was the cultural "artifact" of blackness, Bessie Smith's tone and cadence, akin, according to Baldwin, like watermelon, which brought Baldwin to memories, experiences, and feeling of being a "nigger." As I read this on a slow Sunday morning I thought about what cultural artifacts can excavate for me such a "feeling" of being an "Asian-American" (which is a non-racial race category)? ("Asian-American" does not have *any* emotional content, especially when compared to the word "nigger." It does not have any emotional content because it signifies nothing). The immediate images that floated to the top were dry-cleaners, Harvard, Yale, studios, Lexus, lawyer; not in any specific order. It occurred to me that there are no "Asian-American" cultural "artifacts," unless you consider Margaret Cho and her failed first Asian-American sitcom, "All American-Girl" an artifact. We produce no music, art, aesthetic; in short, culture, that is particular to us, that makes us "feel" Asian-American. "Asian-American" is an empty signifier.

³⁷⁾ Patterson, over against the normal definition of slavery as persona property, defines it in terms of "natal alienation," social death and dishonor.

³⁸⁾ There is a hierarchical, racialized, distinction within various Asian groups. East Asians and other Sino-centric Asians (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Singaporean, Taiwanese) are given "almost white" white status; however, South and Southeast Asians (Cambodian, Laotian, Indonesian, Filipino/a, Hmong, etc.) are "almost black" in economic, education, and social levels.

Asian group Poverty level

Laotian 67.2%

male body,³⁹⁾ is a castrated one (eunuch). It is androgynous and emptied of sexual potency or desirability. (See Long Duc Dung, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, etc.) It is only desired for either its exoticism (Joan Chen, Bruce Lee) or its utility as a technician in a rational-bureaucratic world. The Asian body is a “pure body” that does not signify anything on its own terms but only finds meaning in its utility in service to the master.¹ Asians are CPAs, lawyers, engineers, and doctors achieving high social and economic positions, earning the title, “almost-white,” “instant-success,” or “model-minority,” while never being fully accepted as equals (social death). As studies have shown, while Asians are disproportionately represented in these professional fields, and yet are grossly under represented in top management positions in the same fields they are paid less for a similar position in comparison to whites.

As a proxy to the “emperor,” Asians are often the scapegoats for the ills of society. From Japanese internment camps during WWII, being blamed for the economic downturn in the 80s highlighted by the murder of Vincent Chan, being the “body-double” for the pent-up frustration of blacks towards whites during the L.A. Riots,⁴⁰⁾ and more recently, Wen Ho Lee, an American citizen and a scientist at Los Alamos being falsely accused of selling secrets to China – these cases highlight only a few examples of Asians being used as scapegoats in history.

Asian bodies are empty signifiers that are given meaning only to the extent that they uphold the dignity and the subjectivity of the master in performing their allotted tasks. Asians are trapped in impotent bodies void of sexuality and creativity and are pushed to the pencil pushing cubicles of modernity. As high power technicians Asians maintain “power through intimacy” and are rewarded with crumbs that fall off the master’s table – Asians are the ultimate slave.

Hmong	65.5
Cambodian	46.9
Vietnamese	33.5
Indonesian	15.2

Vernellia Randall, “Myth versus Fact: Asian Americans and Model Minorities,” University of Dayton. <http://academic.udayton.edu/Race/01race/model02.htm>. 10/01/08.

Vietnam with its Chinese cultural heritage and its location in Southeast presents a unique case.

³⁹⁾ The female Asian body does not fare much better. They are usually hypersexualized, not for their sexual potency but for their exoticism and submissiveness which only fulfills the fantasies of control in western males.

⁴⁰⁾ This is not to say that Koreans were not collaborators in economic violence and exploitation in black communities. Korean Americans are complicit and have made a moral choice for selfish gain over recognizing blacks as those we are called to serve. I want to thank Johnetta Pressly for challenging me on this point.

How did we get here? It began with the missionary gaze that overdetermined the meaning of the Korean bodies. Taken up into the plausibility structure of modernity, the Korean subjects were born again within the racialized imaginary of the colonial global order. This was not the intention of the missionaries, however. The missionaries were convinced that their understanding of “freedom” birthed out of long colonial practices was the central trajectory of the gospel. Koreans, having internalized the message, sought to remake ourselves in light of it. It has caused us to live lives that we do not know how to live. We live lives of spiritual and social disfigurement and hide our shame behind economic and academic “success,” which only binds us tighter to the systematic web of control and oppression.⁴¹⁾ From Silent Exodus where upwards of 90 percent of second generation Korean-Americans leave the church and never come back, to the tragic story of Cho Seung-hee, the gunman of the Virginia Tech massacre; who could not find a different gaze within the Korean church? There is a growing cry for help. The deep colonial wound does not only mark the oppressed, however; it also marks and distorts the existence of the oppressor whose subjectivity has been formed within the logic of colonial violence.

Wendell Berry’s point about the distortion of racism that deeply wounds the whites makes this point clear:

Though I knew that American racism had put blacks and whites into the role of oppressors and oppressed, I had not experienced it as a victory for the oppressor. I knew well that racism had caused pain to black people, but I knew too that it had been a cause of pain to white people – it had been a cause of pain to me – and not just because of guilt. I knew that for white people it had involved loss and spiritual disfigurement. And I knew, from own experience, that *it had involved love* [italics mine].⁴²⁾

The colonial world is a distorted imitation of God’s created order. Beginning in 1492, European people have recreated the world in their image using the name of Jesus. It created a world where darker skinned people and their culture found value only in relation to the standards of “white” culture, beauty, mode of thought,

⁴¹⁾ First generation Korean-American parents have purchased with their lives (social death), the possibility for their children to realize the American dream. In this configuration, the second-generation becomes a messianic figure, who carries in his/her body the salvific hope of their parents and the Korean nation. The horizon of salvation unfolds within academic, social and economic success, and reaches salvation when the second-generation gets into an Ivy, becomes a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer. The first generation sacrifices their lives at the altar of whiteness; however, in a demonic irony, their children, now having become “almost-white,” despise their parents’ non-white existence.

⁴²⁾ Quoted from Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Free to be Bound: Church Beyond the Color Line* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 2008), 22.

economy, politics, culture, and faith: white civilization. Global capitalism is not a postcolonial reality but in fact a more sophisticated version of colonialism. It is much more insidious because it is not visibly racial, gendered, or political but rather that these values are built into the system and this regulates how we relate to each other. (Think about how much things, services and people are worth and the cultural values, aesthetics, and modes of thought they represent. What race is associated with those values?) Violence that determined the inhumanity or the subhumanity of the natives is built into the very foundations of our global society. It replaced Jesus with nation, money, and race as the mediator for creation of communities. And we cannot simply get away with saying we need Jesus because this is not only the condition of the world; in fact, it was the church and its understanding of Jesus that authorized and oversaw the birth of this global order. From Columbus to George W. Bush we continue to violently remake the world in the name of Jesus. However, it is clear that this is not the Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, the Son of Israel but Jesus of Madrid, Bristol, Paris, and Washington, D.C. This Jesus hangs out in the suburbs, shops at Walmart, salutes the flag, and votes in the presidential campaigns. This Jesus is no longer strange to us. He is a domesticated Jesus who simply reflects our values, even the most cherished (even Christian ones): freedom, nation, reason, dedication, hard work, independence, rights, even obedience and sacrifice for example, right back to us. This Jesus ripped Africans from their families and culture and brought them in chains to pick cotton in the New World, gave us the Enlightenment, killed six million Jews, shot Martin Luther King Jr. and keeps the 11th hour on Sunday morning the most segregated hour in the nation, if not the world. Euroamericans no longer control this world but they too become victims of its violent system.

Where and *when*, then, is the hope to be found? The clue lies with Philippians 2:7 – “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, *taking on the form of a slave*.” (NRSV)

Jesus as God-slave enters the colonial world through the back door of the master’s house, so to speak.⁴³⁾ He does not enter it as the master but as the slave. He first takes on the death body of the slave but once having entered it, he also makes his rightful claim as the master, taking on the false master-slave binary into himself since he is both. This scandalous claim as the master is met with resistance and ridicule by slaves because of his slave form, and with violence by the masters who see Jesus as a threat. It is because God as the Master came in the form of the slave he redefines the meaning and the function of both categories. Jesus fundamentally changes the grounds of this social-political-religious reality when Jesus washes the disciples’ feet: Peter protested, “No,” said Peter, ‘you shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.’”(John 13:8) Jesus’ service

⁴³⁾ This imagery and the outline of the theological idea are borrowed from Willie Jennings at Duke Divinity School.

fundamentally disrupts Peter's identity. Peter's identity has to be given to him through the service of the utterly Other; "unless I wash your feet, you have no part in me," Jesus warns. The entrance into the Kingdom community is mediated by someone who represents an entirely new plausibility structure, someone who fundamentally disrupts our self-understanding. It is a traumatic experience but it is in this utter confusion and chaos, when the ownership of our identity is suspended, then and only then, a different identity is given to us – we learn what it means to be a disciple. Our entrance into the Kingdom now has to be given to us in relation to a Resident Alien. Both master *and* slave recognized the weight of his claim; Jesus had to die. It was in his death he took the very tool of colonial creation - violence (the false performance of divine freedom) deep into his body and translated it within his obedience/dependency, and placed it back in its proper place, as a possible condition of being a creature.

It is in this Jesus' strange and foreign body that a possibility for a new community opens up where the wounded body of the master and the wounded body of the slave find reconciliation in service to one another and through the process our identity as the church is given to us.

Time does not heal all wounds, even time rendered in Jesus' body because it is also a wounded time. We may ask, "Lord, why do you not bind up our wounds now?" With a knowing smile, he takes our hands and draws them into his and lets us touch his nail-shaped hole.