

PASTOR KYU-OH CHUNG: INTEGRATING FAITH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN KOREAN PROTESTANTISM

**Dr. MIN-SOO KANG¹, Dr. JEONG-IN PARK², Dr. IN-SEOK SEO³, Dr. KANG-HYUN KIM⁴, SOO-YOUNG JEONG⁵, Dr. HO-WOOG KIM⁶,
Dr. MOO-JIN JEONG⁷ & Dr. JUN-KI CHUNG⁸**

^{1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8} Researcher at Institute for Pietatis Theologia, Kwangshin University, South Korea.

Corresponding author E-mail: Junkichung@gmail.com

²: Adjunct Professor of Counseling Psychology, Department of Counseling Psychology, Gwangju Women's University, South Korea.

⁵: Doctoral student, Department of Multicultural Education, Kunsan National University, South Korea.

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2025.6135>

ABSTRACT

This paper critically explores the life and influence of Pastor Kyu-Oh Chung, a seminal figure in Korean Presbyterianism, who embodied Reformed theology through his ministry, leadership, academic contributions, and socio-political engagement, with a particular focus on his advocacy for justice within the broader socio-political context of Korea. Chung's 92-year journey (1914–2006) is assessed across five dimensions i.e., as a lay leader, pastor, influential religious figure, academic administrator, and family head. His influence went far beyond simply reviving congregations with powerful sermons; it also included his pivotal role in influencing the direction of theological education, particularly as the first president of Kwangshin University, where he established the foundation for a new generation of scholars and leaders. This study aims to address the lack of research on Chung's impact, focusing on the Japanese colonial period, the Korean War, and the subsequent military dictatorship era.

Keywords: Korean Presbyterian Church, Kwangshin University, Kyu-Oh Chung, Reformed theology, socio-political engagement

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This research employs an interdisciplinary framework to evaluate the life and legacy of Pastor Kyu-Oh Chung (1914–2006), implementing theological, hermeneutic phenomenological, coaching psychological, and educational perspectives. Reformed theology serves as the foundation for theological inquiry, while critical theoretical perspectives inform the hermeneutic phenomenological dimension. Coaching psychology blends the methodologies of Marshall Goldsmith (2007) and John Whitmore (2009), whereas educational analysis utilizes John Hattie's Visible Learning (2008). This comprehensive approach enables a thorough analysis of Pastor Chung's life, focusing on the interplay between his personal experiences, theological convictions, and faith. Pastor Chung's ministry was heavily influenced by Protestant Reformed theology, which served as the fundamental framework for his worldview (Chung, 2009; Chung, 2015; Chung & Kim, 2017). His theological views had a big impact on his relationships, spiritual leadership, and decision-making in both his personal and professional life. As compared to earlier research, which focused mostly on his involvement in the theological controversies of Korean Presbyterianism (Lee, 2016; Jeong, 2022), this study

broadens the focus by examining his wider influence, particularly his political involvement during the Korean War, where he saved numerous lives, and his participation in the Gwangju Democratic Movement in the 1980s

This work seeks to fill this gap by examining his life's social and political dimensions, offering a more comprehensive view of his legacy. Pastor Chung's influence extended far beyond the church, shaping Korean society's spiritual, social, and political spheres. This study examines the intersection of his spiritual views with his social and political actions, thus contributing significantly to comprehending his extensive effect and providing insights into his complex legacy that other studies have mostly overlooked.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this study, it is important to address the role of historical materials in explaining and interpreting the phenomena being explored. Historical materials are vital to understanding the full scope of Pastor Chung's life and legacy. However, readers will encounter repeated or overlapping materials as the same individuals and events are evaluated across different categories. Since these materials offer abundant content depending on the lens through which they are examined, such repetitions should be considered a fundamental element of this research methodology. For example, when Pastor Chung takes on roles such as a pastor, coach, and educator, the same historical materials—individuals, events, time, and place—are used repeatedly. However, since these explanations belong to distinct thematic areas, this overlap is an unavoidable historical phenomenon and an integral part of the analysis.

2.0 EXPLORING THE LIFE OF KYU-OH CHUNG

2.1. Childhood

Kyu-Oh Chung was born on November 14, 1914, in Bangsan-ri, Dado-myeon, Naju County, Jeollanam Province, as the fifth son among five brothers and three sisters born to Hyo-Soon Chung and Nu-dong Kang (Chung, 1984: 34). His grandfather, Nam-Hoon Chung, served as a high-ranking official during the late Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) but, disillusioned by factional political conflicts, retired with his family to the remote countryside of Honam area, where he took up farming and taught classical Chinese to his children. Nam-Hoon made a unique choice by letting his other sons start their own families while keeping only his youngest son, Hyo-Soon Chung, despite the strict Confucian tradition of primogeniture. In his childhood, Chung's family suffered severe poverty due to the reckless squandering of family assets by a relative who mortgaged ancestral farmland to the Honam Bank in Gwangju and defaulted. Despite such hardships, young Kyu-Oh pursued studies and labor with unwavering determination. Inspired by the constant example of his grandfather and elder brothers, who spent their time engrossed in reading, he developed a deep love for books. Due to financial constraints, he could not attend regular schools but completed two years of education at a private academy operated by Bangsan Church. He later transferred to a four-year public elementary school in Panjeon, Dado-myeon, Jeollanam Province, and graduated (Chung, 1984: 35). His attachment to learning was remarkable. Whether during the planting or harvest seasons, Kyu-Oh never stopped reading. He once remarked:

I studied while tending cattle and during transplanting rice seedlings. When sparrows swarmed the fields in autumn, I would drive them off by tugging ropes tied to tin cans while holding a

book in my hands. Whether eating meals, walking, or even going to the restroom, I rarely let go of a book. I studied late into the night under lamplight, frequently splashing cold water on my face to remain alert. I reviewed lecture notes from Waseda University, the Great Compendium of Japanese Thought, legal texts, philosophy, ethics, and Marx's *Das Kapital*. Additionally, I explored theology and Christian literature, meticulously examining works such as Dr. Hyung-Ryong Park's *Evaluation of Theological Problems*. The time when I entered seminary, I could already distinguish between Calvinist orthodoxy and liberal theology (Chung, 1984: 39).

Despite the conclusion of Chung's official education at the primary level, his self-directed learning, attained by unwavering dedication and rigorous study, exceeded that of most university graduates in philosophy or religious studies.

2.2 A Financial Professional

When Chung was 15 years old, he had an experience that significantly influenced his future professional goals. While receiving payment for silkworm cocoons sold in Yeongsanpo, he saw a banker dressed in a sharp navy suit with slicked-back hair, an image that deeply impressed him. Determined to emulate such a figure, Chung decided to enter the financial profession. A high school or vocational school diploma, recommendation from the school principal, specialized training, or passing an eligibility test administered by the province governor were criteria for employment at a financial cooperative at that time. Chung prepared rigorously and passed the competitive exam in 1934, where only 28 were selected from approximately 3,000 applicants.

Chung's first assignment was at the Jinsang Financial Cooperative in Jinsang-myeon, Gwangyang County. Under the supervision of a Japanese manager, Imajima, Chung undertook a year of intense training in numeracy, money handling, and abacus operations. Despite harsh treatment and verbal abuse, Chung displayed patience and perseverance, adhering to a principle he had set for himself: "Apart from matters of faith, endure, obey, and work diligently without complaint" (Chung, 1984: 45). Chung's patience yielded results a year later when Imajima, acknowledging his remarkable abilities, invited him to his residence and conveyed his trust and remorse for his prior treatment. Nevertheless, Imajima stipulated one condition for Chung's future advancement: renouncing his Christian faith, as the Japanese colonial authorities closely scrutinized Christians as potential dissidents. Chung resolutely responded, "I appreciate your trust, but I cannot forsake my faith in Jesus. If my faith becomes a liability to you or the authorities, I am prepared to resign" (Chung, 1984: 48). This steadfast position garnered Imajima's respect. Their professional relationship persisted with mutual trust.

During his tenure at the Jinsang Financial Cooperative, Chung demonstrated integrity and refused any kind of bribes. However, he later recalled using a small amount of office supplies and wristwatches intended as gifts without proper authorization. Overcome with guilt, he repaid the amount in cash to the cooperatives along with a letter of repentance. This act of integrity marked Chung's character as a financial professional who adhered to the highest ethical standards. Chung's meticulous work and exceptional ability were widely recognized, earning him a promotion to attend advanced training for executives. He achieved the highest rank in Jeollanam Province and near-top national performance. Despite his success, Chung

resigned from the financial industry to pursue a greater spiritual calling, as described in later sections.

2.3 A Lay Leader and Seminarian

Chung's foray into Protestantism started under the auspices of his older brother, Gwi-Geum Chung, an engaged member of Bangsan Church, founded by American Southern Presbyterian missionaries. Despite significant resistance from their Confucianist grandfather, Gwi-Geum acquainted his younger brother with the church's Sunday school, cultivating an early affiliation with the Christian religion. Chung was an active member of Kwangdong Central Church while working at the Jinsang Financial Cooperative. He worked as a lay deacon there under Pastor Soon-Bae Kim, an alumnus of Pyongyang Presbyterian Seminary and Soongsil College. Pastor Kim, who was renowned for his generosity and intelligence, truly admired Chung's dedication and gave him theological literature to further his faith. Chung developed a lifelong practice out of his daily dedication to prayer, scripture reading, and music. On August 29, 1939, Chung married a fervent Christian named In-Soon Moon (Kim, 2007).

During his tenure at the Gurye Financial Cooperative, Chung participated in Gurye Town Church (GTC) and held the treasurer position under Pastor Yong-Geun Yang. On September 20, 1940, Pastor Yang and other pastors from the Suncheon Presbytery were falsely accused of being spies and arrested by the Japanese police. Many pastors were imprisoned for around four years, and Pastor Yang was martyred in 1943. Without Pastor Yang, the GTC was cared for by two lay elders. The Sunday school was operated by two lay deacons, Chung and Seong-Tae Kim, who instilled a strong sense of national identity in the children, teaching them, for example, a national folk song: "Bones of Korea, blood of Korea, these bones, this blood, though they die, Korea lives" (Chung, 1984:56). The Japanese police in the Gurye Police Station, alarmed by their activities, subjected Chung and Kim to brutal and violent interrogations. They were repeatedly summoned and harshly questioned, with Japanese detectives threatening them with terrifying words: "We are snakes. We can enter through any hole . . . We know everything . . . Confess everything honestly" (Chung, 1984:56). Using physical force and intimidation to shatter their spirits, the police treated them with extreme harshness. Chung could never forget the brutal questioning techniques used by the Japanese officials, even if the situation did not escalate.

Chung registered at Chosun Theological Seminary (now Hanshin University) in Seoul as he moved from lay leadership to theological studies. However, his conservative Calvinist beliefs ran counter to the liberal theology at the seminary; hence, he and like-minded students petitioned against theological liberalism at the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1947 (Kim, 2007; Kim & Chung, 2021). Despite Chung's expulsion from the school, he got the opportunity to pursue his studies at a recently established conservative Presbyterian institution.

2.4 A Pastor

From 1948 to 1980, Chung served as a pastor in three congregations, achieving remarkable success in each ministry. His first pastoral assignment was at Kwangdong Central Church in Gwangyang County, the place where he had previously served as a lay deacon during his tenure at the Jinsang Financial Cooperative. Notably, Chung was invited to serve as pastor not by the church members but by approximately 20 non-Christian local leaders who admired his integrity

and leadership. This reflects the widespread respect he earned while working in the financial sector (Kim, 2007). Chung assumed the role of a pastor in July 1948 and was ordained by the Suncheon Presbytery in September 1948. At the start of his ministry, the church had about 40 adult members. By the time he left the church in April 1952, attendance had grown to over 150, marking significant numerical and spiritual growth.

The environment in which Chung began his pastoral ministry was fraught with challenges due to the Korean War (1950-1953). His church was near Jiri Mountain, an area under constant military tension. During the day, the police controlled the region, but at night, communist forces, often referred to as “bbalgaengi (red savage) or gongbi (communist bandit),” would descend from the mountain and take control. In this chaotic environment, many locals, fearing for their lives, had no choice but to provide food and supplies to the communist forces. The South Korean military and police, however, viewed this as collaboration with the communists and often executed those suspected of aiding them. Amidst these dire circumstances, Pastor Chung, with a strong sense of moral conviction, intervened to protect those unfairly accused. He argued to the military and police that executing civilians for merely providing basic necessities to survive was unfair. Chung’s persuasive efforts helped save countless lives, as he successfully convinced the authorities not to treat these individuals as communist collaborators. His actions during this period preserved the lives of many innocent people but also strengthened his reputation as a staunch defender of justice (Chung, 1984: 99; Kim, 2007).

In 1952, Chung was reassigned to Goheung-Eup Church, where he served as senior pastor for three years. During this period, he demonstrated exceptional leadership in church governance and undertook the construction of a new 90-pyeong (approx. 297 square meters) stone sanctuary. Reflecting on this achievement, Chung later remarked that the joy of working alongside church members to transport building materials was one of the most rewarding experiences of his life.

Chung's ultimate and most significant pastoral service was in Gwangju Central Church, where he served from 1955 until his retirement in 1980. Under his leadership, the church had remarkable development, establishing itself as one of the premier congregations in South Korea. Chung ascribed this accomplishment to his dedication to disciple-making, fostering all members to engage actively in church service. He facilitated small group worship by establishing cell groups, each consisting of 10 to 15 homes. Chung meticulously crafted the worship instructions to guarantee consistency and spiritual profundity in these assemblies. This method developed a feeling of community and enhanced members' dedication to the church (Kim, 2007). Clarity, logical organization, and practical relevance distinguished Chung's sermons, garnering acclaim for their capacity to inspire and provoke thought among listeners. An observer characterized his preaching as “sermons of life and conviction, articulated with clarity and a command of Scripture and theology” (Jeong, 1994: 149).

Chung's service at all three congregations left a long legacy, notably his stint at Gwangju Central Church, which solidified his position as an exemplary leader throughout the Korean Protestant Church.

2.5 A Leader in the Korean Protestant Church

Chung served as a board member of the General Assembly Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1952–1975), moderator of the General Assembly (1965–1966), president of the Korea-Japan Evangelical Association (1975), chairman and director of the Soongil Academy Foundation (1955–1979, 1989–2005), and president of the Korea Evangelical Literature Association (1975). He was also the founder of the Hermon Retreat Center and played a leading role in numerous initiatives within the Christian community (Kim, 2007).

The establishment of the Korean Seongkyung (Bible) Society remains one of Pastor Chung's most historically significant achievements (Chung, 2015). Adherents of Reformed theology emphasize three essential marks of a true church: the faithful proclamation of God's Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline (Chung, 1998; Kim & Chung, 2013). On January 30, 1993, Pastor Chung initiated the creation of the Korean Seongkyung Society, working in collaboration with various Protestant denominations in South Korea. This effort aimed to produce a Bible translation more precise to the original biblical texts, distinguishing it from the existing translation, *The Holy Bible: Standard New Translation*, published by the Korean Seongseo Society. The Seongkyung Society successfully completed this translation and disseminated it throughout the Protestant denominations in South Korea (Chung, 2015).

The Korea Evangelical Literature Association was established under Chung's leadership to advance the Christian literature movement by publishing group Bible study guides for churches, Bible textbooks for Christian schools such as Soongil Academy, and doctrinal works essential for pastors and lay leaders (Chung, 2015). Initially publishing 5,000 copies of study guides, the association expanded its production to over 10,000 copies annually due to growing demand, transforming it into a nationally acclaimed literature association. The association also acquired Chung's *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* and achieved nine editions by 1982 (Chung, 1994). Soongil Academy, encompassing Soongil Middle and High Schools, originated as a primary and middle school operated by the U.S. Southern Presbyterian Mission Foundation in 1908 but was closed in 1937 for refusing to participate in Japanese Shinto shrine worship (Jeong et al., 2021). After liberation, the Presbyterian Church of Korea's Jeonnam Presbytery established a foundation to manage it, and in 1964, it became the Soongil Academy Foundation. Chung devoted himself as a director and chairman, driven by a desire to instill Christian faith, historical perspectives, and cultural values in young students. Many students later advanced to prestigious universities and institutions, including military and police academies, hence becoming leaders who reflect Christ's character.

The Hermon Retreat Center, located on the slopes of Mt. Mudeung, is a landmark of Christian spiritual culture in Honam area. Chung initially noticed the need for pastors to receive spiritual renewal while working as senior pastor at Gwangju Central Church (Chung, 2004; Seo & Chung, 2021; Rheem & Chung, 2024; Park et al., 2024). Initially established on July 7, 1975, in a small corrugated iron hut at an elevation of 850 meters, the center expanded in 1976 with a 20-pyeong clay-walled worship building (Chung, 1984: 174–175). Though the government's forest preservation policies led to demolition threats, Chung successfully negotiated with Gwangju Mayor Eon-Jong Song, securing over 5,000 pyeong land for the retreat center. The center features a serene environment with meticulously cultivated gardens, an intimate chapel filled with prayer, and a fishpond surrounded by diverse flora and fauna, embodying the beauty of natural world. Over 10,000 visitors annually—pastors, students, missionaries, and

individuals seeking life direction—experience spiritual renewal through retreats and Bible studies.

Pastor Chung's leadership became notably prominent throughout the 1980s, a crucial decade in South Korea's history characterized by profound social and political turmoil, especially the Gwangju Democratization Movement (GDM) of 1980. The movement, which was a powerful uprising against the authoritarian military dictatorship that had taken control of the country, was characterized by brutal repression, violent crackdowns, and widespread civilian resistance. It came to symbolize a collective call for justice, democracy, and human rights amid the widespread violence of an oppressive regime. Drawing on the theological foundations of John Calvin's Reformed tradition and the example of the English Puritans' resistance to unjust rulers, Pastor Chung joined forces with other denominational leaders in Gwangju to organize anti-government protests, openly defying the military government (Calvin, 1960; Chung, 1996; Kim & Chung, 2014). These efforts culminated in the formation of the Gwangju Regional Council of Churches, an interdenominational alliance designed to provide a unified Christian response to the crisis. Rev. Chae-Hyun Kim was elected as the council's first chair, reinforcing the initiative's ecumenical nature. As a co-chair of the Joint Measures Committee, Pastor Chung played a crucial role in challenging the perception that churches were disengaged from the struggles of society. He advocated for converting church buildings into sanctuaries for students and other protesters fleeing military violence, offering them shelter, medical care, and food. Pastor Namju Byun, a close collaborator of Pastor Chung and the minister of Seohyun Church, supported this initiative by providing practical assistance to those in immediate need and reinforcing the church's prophetic mission to uphold truth and justice (Byun, 2024). Pastor Chung and Pastor Byun inspired hope during this tumultuous period and highlighted the vital role of faith communities in advancing democratic values and defending human dignity in the face of systemic oppression (Kim & Chung, 2023, 2024).

Scholars have extensively studied the 1980 GDM and the June Democratic Struggle of 1987. However, they have largely overlooked the role of Protestant leaders during these crucial periods in South Korea's modern history. In this regard, Pastor Chung's contributions remain a significant and underexplored subject, warranting important scholarly attention in future research on GDM.

2.6 An Administrator and Academic Leader

Chung played a key role in transforming Kwangshin University, guiding its progress from a seminary to a fully accredited university. Under his leadership, the seminary gained government accreditation in 1992 and achieved university status in 1997, with Chung assuming the role of its first president. His forward-thinking approach was essential in establishing the institution's infrastructure, including its campus, lecture halls, library, and administrative systems. Chung's influence on Kwangshin University extended to its academic ethos. As a staunch advocate of Reformed theology, he inspired faculty members to delve deeper into the theology. One notable example is Dr. Kwang-Phil Koh, who studied at Princeton, Yale, and Drew universities in the United States but only began an in-depth study of Calvin's theology upon joining Kwangshin University. With Pastor Chung's encouragement, Dr. Koh learned Latin and French to study Calvin's works in their original languages, producing significant publications such as exploring the Institutes of the Christian Religion (2000) and The Logic of

Calvin's Theology (2004). Similarly, Chung supported faculty members like Dr. Bong-Geun Cho, who earned his doctorate from Wales University in England and authored the comprehensive Systematic Theology and Pneumatology Studies (Cho, 2006).

Chung's commitment to academic excellence extended beyond theology. He recognized the importance of church music and established the church music department at Kwangshin University, ensuring it had the resources needed to train professional musicians for ministry. He also guided discussions on the proper use of musical instruments in worship, drawing inspiration from Calvin's concerns about the role of music in worship settings.

2.7 A Family Leader

No matter how successful one may be in public life, a failure to earn the respect and love of one's family signifies a more profound shortcoming. In this regard, Chung was a model family leader, earning the admiration of his wife and children through his unwavering faith and principled life. Although Chung devoted much of his time to ministry, he ensured his family was grounded in daily worship and biblical teachings. Every morning, he gathered his family for devotions, reading scripture and praying that their lives would align with God's Word. He encouraged his children to participate faithfully in church activities, instilling in them the belief that God's Word is alive and powerful. His wife, In-Sun Moon, describes her husband as follows: "My husband is truly worthy of spiritual respect. I am happy as a pastor's wife" (JMC, 1994: 210). Early in their marriage, Chung adopted the pen name "Haewon" (海園), meaning "Sea Garden." When writing letters to his wife, he signed them as "Haewon." In response, his wife affectionately called herself "Sea Weed" (海草), playing in the sea garden. There is a beautiful story here of a man with grand aspirations, using the gifts his God gave him to dedicate himself to his Lord from a vast, deep sea garden, and of a woman who sincerely loves him and wishes to work alongside him.

The three sons and three daughters, who grew up under the influence of their parents, also understand and respect their parents' public roles, evaluating them with warm affection. The eldest son, Professor Dae-hyun Chung, who retired in August 2006 after teaching linguistic philosophy at Ewha Womans University, recalls the pastor's home as an outpost of God's earthly kingdom. He reflects that it was a place for debates on the essence of Christianity and for prayers for the church's unity. It was also a refuge for women abused by their husbands and a temporary home for orphans waiting for placement. He adds that the education his parents gave him instilled a sense of order derived from the unity of faith and life (JMC, 1994: 180-202). The second son, Myeong-Hyun Chung, a professor of missiology, expressed that "my father is the root of my faith. Despite adjusting to a faithless world, he has never doubted God or himself or given up. This is because of my faith, and I am thankful for that" (JMC, 1994: 171). Do-Hyun Chung, a medical doctor, was the third son. The family's education, he remembers, was based primarily on religious teaching rather than academic study. According to him, "My parents primarily concentrated on faith instead of academics" (JMC, 1994: 162). He recalls their family motto, which they used to recite daily after the devotions i.e., "Honor God, love your neighbor, learn diligently, and live righteously" (JMC, 1994: 162). These memories became a part of his soul and served as a guide for living a good life.

Chung's daughters also have very positive assessments of their father. Ji-Ja Chung, the eldest daughter, who graduated with a degree in early childhood education from Ewha Womans University, defines her father as a loving man who, though not outwardly affectionate, was deeply aware of his children's hearts. She experienced this fatherly love most honestly during the nine years she lived in the United States. During one of Chung's official trips to the U.S., she remembers how her father, despite the family's modest economic situation, secretly placed \$100 in her wallet before he left. Chung himself departed with only his plane ticket and nothing else. Reflecting on her father's unwavering faith, she says, "Sometimes I think he was too harsh . . . but in a time of ideological and political change, seeing my father's unchanging faith and attitude, I can only bow my head in respect" (Chung, 1984: 374). The second daughter, Myeong-Ja Chung, a professor of early childhood education, testifies that she inherited her parents' spiritual legacy. She especially admires how her parents entrusted their children to God, waiting in trust and love (JMC, 1994: 24- 32). The third daughter, Seon-Ja Chung, who graduated from Ewha Womans University and became the wife of a judge, remembers a time when she had a heated argument with her father. Chung never suppressed his children during discussions but allowed them to speak freely. When Seon-Ja disagreed with her father, he did not impose his fatherly authority. Even Chung recognized that her daughter was not wrong. Seon-Ja later confessed that, as a result of this, "she gained respect for her father not just as a father but as a human being" (JMC, 1994: 19).

In brief, it is clear that Chung was deeply loved and respected by all members of his family, and his influence, as seen, was profound. His family's testimonials affirm that he succeeded in leaving behind a lasting spiritual heritage.

3.0. EVALUATION

3.1 From a Reformed Theological Perspective

Pastor Kyu-Oh Chung's life from a Reformed theological perspective is indeed a reflection of the Calvinist orthodoxy's basic principles, primarily his major concentration on sola scriptura and the sovereignty of God (Chung, 1991; Chung, 1998; Chung & Kim, 2017). Everything about his ministry and academic work was consistent with the Reform emphasis on the transformative power of the gospel and Christian purity. John Frame (2015) writes that Reformed theology flourishes when it is rigorous in a commitment to Christian fidelity and applies it practically to church and societal engagement. Chung's leadership showed this integration because he steadfastly navigated theological controversies while maintaining the integrity of Calvinist theology. His primary role in establishing the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) highlighted his commitment to safeguarding Reformed spirituality, specifically when liberalizing trends were on the rise in Korean Protestantism. Chung focused on the significance of theological education based on the Reformed tradition during his academic career. This was in accordance with Richard Muller's (2012) assertion that to implement Reformed theology into today's world, it must stay rooted in its historical and confessional basis. As a mentor to academics at Kwangshin University, where he participated in training faculty and actively encouraged an in-depth investigation of Calvin's writings, Chung displayed his dedication to these theological beliefs. He argued that if the church's objective was to defend Christian purity while advancing the church's mission, then excellent theological education was critical.

Nevertheless, the PCK's considerable divisions were worsened by Pastor Chung's unrelenting advocacy for a Reformed theology which was both pure and rigid. The church witnessed an extensive split in 1953, which was mainly caused by doctrinal disputes between conservative and liberal factions. Under the leadership of influential figures like Chung, conservatives criticized modernist theology and firmly maintained the inerrancy of Scripture. At the same time, the liberals advocated for dialogue with modern theologians and ecumenical groups. Chung's leadership in the conservative camp, particularly his promotion of a stricter, conservative interpretation of Reformed theology, intensified the divide within the church.

A split occurred in 1959 over the PCK's potential participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC). Since he believed that joining the WCC would damage the church's doctrinal integrity, specifically due to its adherence to the authority of Scripture, Pastor Chung opposed it (So, 2010). His opposition to ecumenism resulted in the further fragmentation of the Korean Presbyterian community since separate groups were established based on theological differences (Kim & Chung, 2021). These theological divisions were further worsened by the political climate of South Korea in the late 1970s and 1980s. Chung arose as a leader of the Gaehyuk (Reformed) movement during this era, which condemned the PCK leadership for its close affiliation with the military dictatorship. Chung blamed the church leadership for breaching its prophetic role by supporting an authoritarian government that crushed political freedoms. In 1979, the Gaehyuk faction separated itself from the traditional church leadership, urging a return to a more politically independent, religiously pure church (Chung, 1991; Kim, 2005; Jung, 2020). This criticism finally led to another schism.

Although he played a considerable role in those schisms, Pastor Chung witnessed an abrupt shift in his later years. As he learned about the divisions he had contributed to the church, he understood the need for church reconciliation. In an incredible display of humility, Chung called for the unity of the various Presbyterian factions and openly acknowledged his role in the church's disputes. His passionate call for unity and public admittance of guilt indicated a significant turning point in the PCK's history. Pastor Chung played an important role in the 2005 reconciliation between the Hapdong and Gaehyuk groups (Chung, 2009). This reunion was a huge milestone in dealing with the long-standing divisions in Korean Presbyterianism. Rather than enforcing one's own perspectives on others, a spirit of unity emerged by listening to and respecting others' beliefs and opinions. As an invaluable spiritual guide, this way of thinking and acting not only cleared the way for the unification of the Korean church but also has historical importance because it increased the potential of resolving the long-standing regional disputes between Honam and Yeongnam while supporting the reunification of North and South Korea.

3.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenological Evaluation

Hans-Georg Gadamer's conception of the fusion of horizons offers an extensive framework for investigating Chung's potential to combine Reformed theology with the particular socio-historical situations of 20th-century Korea. Gadamer (1975) asserts that understanding is an evolving, interactive process that is molded by an exchange of historical and cultural viewpoints. Each participant, individually or collectively, provides their own opinion. The fusion of horizons is an outcome of integrating these different circumstances, which allows for more in-depth and nuanced knowledge. Chung's potential for navigating this combination is

illustrated by his unwavering commitment to Calvinist principles, which he has adjusted to the chaotic aspects of Korean society. Chung exemplified the basic principles of Reformed theology as an example of resistance during the Japanese colonial period, fighting the political and cultural pressures to give up his faith. This was not just an act of resistance; it was a theological reaction to the oppressive systems and cultural enslavement that Japanese colonial rule enforced. In the face of the dislocation and trauma of colonialism, his resistance was illustrative of his unwavering commitment to maintaining the authenticity of his faith. In addition, Chung's theological steadfastness was once more challenged during the Korean War. His role as an unwavering ethical guide for his community was further underscored by the barbarism and destruction of the war, as well as the ideological split of the Korean peninsula. He fought for peace and justice during times of excessive violence and national trauma. Following the war, under the military dictatorship that rose to power, Chung's theological resistance continued as he vocally opposed the authoritarian rule and promoted social justice, further aligning his faith with the resistance against political oppression and social injustice. His unwavering stance during these turbulent periods was also a testament to his faith and a representation of his broader theological vision, which sought to confront injustice at every level. Paul Ricoeur's narrative identity theory additionally throws light on Chung's legacy and leadership. According to Ricoeur (1984, 2006), identity is not a permanent thing but is rather continuously transformed by a narrative—a story that evolves as a result of decisions, life experiences, and ethical standards. The interaction of prior experiences and anticipated future events develops this narrative identity, which is dynamic. Chung's life was marked by significant change and resiliency as he overcame social and financial barriers to pursue his theological research, intellectual growth, and poverty.

His ethical commitments further shaped Chung's narrative identity in response to the adversities he faced. His resistance to colonial oppression, the brutality of the Korean War, and the subsequent military dictatorship were not isolated actions but rather part of a broader ethical vision. His commitment to justice, truth, and community welfare shaped his identity as a leader. Chung's ability to construct a cohesive life story through narrative identity helps us understand his impact on both an individual and communal level. His life's narrative, combining intellectual commitment, resistance to oppression, and dedication to social justice, became a model for others. By integrating the complexities of his own life into a unified story, Chung not only defined his own identity but also contributed to forming a collective identity within his community, emphasizing resilience, moral integrity, and unwavering commitment to faith.

In short, Gadamer's fusion of horizons and Ricoeur's narrative identity theories offer a framework for understanding how Chung adapted Reformed theology to the socio-political realities of 20th-century Korea. His leadership was shaped by his ethical commitments and personal struggles, which had a lasting impact on Korea's social and theological landscape. Chung's model of nonviolent, faith-based activism may inspire democratic movements around the world, including Myanmar, and offers significant insight into moral decision-making and group action (Lee et al., 2021). His ideas are still used as an instruction manual to advocate peace, justice, and human dignity.

3.3 From Coaching Psychology

The frameworks of coaching psychology, particularly the theories of Marshall Goldsmith and John Whitmore, can be utilized for evaluating Chung's leadership style. Goldsmith (2007) emphasizes the importance of behavioral integrity and interpersonal influence in effective leadership. Chung's life exemplifies these principles, as his ethical conduct and ability to inspire trust were central to his pastoral and administrative success. Whitmore (2009) highlights the significance of goal-setting and empowerment in coaching. Chung's mentorship of faculty at Kwangshin University, encouraging them to pursue advanced theological studies and contribute to the field, reflects his commitment to empowering others. Whitmore's emphasis on developing a culture of autonomy and collaboration is also compatible with his selection to establish small-group worship, as these groups fostered spiritual development and laypeople leadership within the congregation.

Apart from these efforts, Chung's coaching role is further demonstrated by his proactive mentorship of scholars and aspiring leaders. As previously stated, Chung led Kwangshin University to become the hub for Reformed theology in Korea by encouraging Dr. Bong-Geun Cho, an aspiring scholar, and Dr. Kwang-Phil Koh, an exceptional scholar, to serve there. Chung's ambition and commitment to fostering talent continued beyond that. Furthermore, he supported the establishment of the music department at Kwangshin University and acknowledged scholars with expertise in church music, especially Hyung-A Park. This further showed Chung's coaching abilities and strengthened educational environments while also promoting church music. By encouraging others to reach their full potential, promoting teamwork, and making significant contributions to both academic and spiritual life, Chung strengthened his reputation as an outstanding coach.

3.4 From Educational Theory

A solid theoretical framework to evaluate the academic impact of Chung's contributions to education has been provided by John Hattie's *Visible Learning* (2008), especially with respect to his dedication to theological education and the establishment of leadership in his community. As stated by Hattie, two fundamental factors that influence successful learning outcomes are teacher effectiveness and the conciseness of instruction. These pedagogical principles are best demonstrated by Chung's sermons and lectures, which are widely recognized for their systematic structure and theological depth. Chung assisted his followers grow both spiritually and intellectually by employing a systematic approach to doctrinal exposition and scriptural examination. Hattie additionally emphasizes the significance of collaborative learning circumstances as an essential aspect of effective educational models. This concept is strengthened by Chung's innovative way of integrating small-group Bible study sessions and group worship activities into his congregational structure, which promotes mutual education and fosters participation. His small-group methodology served as an educational environment where people could interact with Scripture in a relational and participatory way. Through shared experiences, these gatherings developed a sense of community and solidarity while also promoting a deeper individual spiritual growth. The interpersonal dynamics within these small groups reflect the learning environment described by Hattie, which integrates clarity of instruction with collaborative engagement to promote intellectual mastery and spiritual formation.

Also, in his role as a preacher and educator, Chung made significant contributions to the intellectual and spiritual development of the wider church by creating accessible educational resources tailored to laypeople. He made sure that even people with minimal theological training could interact with the Scriptures in a meaningful way through the development of simple yet detailed teaching materials. An important initiative is Chung's founding of the Seongkyeong Bible Society, which aims to translate the Bible with greater accuracy while maintaining its theological core. Chung aspired to promote a regular, integrative understanding of Scripture and standardize biblical instruction by disseminating these translations among Korean Protestant denominations. This endeavor to guarantee consistency in doctrinal teaching and democratize theological education benefited the Korean Protestant church's overall cohesiveness.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Pastor Chung steadfastly upheld the principles of Reformed theology despite the persistent schism within the Korean Presbyterian Church.

4.2 Pastor Chung played a significant role in advancing social justice and democracy during Korea's tumultuous history, which included Japanese colonialism, the Korean War, and military dictatorship.

4.3 By developing Kwangshin University and cultivating future leaders of Korean Protestantism, Pastor Chung demonstrated leadership in educational coaching and mentoring.

4.4 By releasing educational resources for laypersons, interpreting and sharing the Bible according to its original contents, and setting up a small-group-based, passionate, and constructive faith community, Pastor Chung devised a strategy for revitalizing the church.

4.5 As a pastor and educator, Pastor Chung was one of the busiest public figures in Korean society. He took care of his home despite his busy schedule, and as a result, he earned the love, respect, and support of his entire family. He established a model of a productive head of the household, delivering an invaluable lesson that other public leaders should learn from.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The in-depth analysis of Pastor Kyu-Oh Chung's life reveals his lasting impact on theology, education, and ecclesiastical leadership. Rooted in Reformed theology, Chung's ministry demonstrated a strong commitment to Christian purity while remaining relevant to the cultural and historical contexts he served. His ability to address complex theological, cultural, and political challenges with steadfast faith highlights the transformative capacity of Reformed theology when actively engaged with real-world issues. Chung's legacy as a pastor, academic leader, and family head offers crucial insights for contemporary discussions on social leadership, theological education, and intergenerational faith transmission. Through the use of interdisciplinary perspectives, this study emphasizes the profound influence of Pastor Chung, demonstrating that his life story continues to inspire and guide not only Christian communities but also other faith-based institutions. His narrative is a powerful testament to faith, resilience, and integrity in shaping individual lives and the broader development of church and society.

This research also examines Pastor Chung's influential role during key historical moments, including the Japanese colonial period, the Korean War, and the subsequent era of military dictatorship. Throughout these tumultuous times, Pastor Chung was a steadfast advocate for justice, peace, and the rights of the oppressed, making substantial contributions to Korea's political and social dynamics. His ministry extended beyond ecclesiastical boundaries, providing moral and ethical guidance that shaped public opinion and motivated collective action for societal reform and reconstruction. We believe this study will contribute significantly to ongoing scholarly conversations in religious studies, political theology, and social ethics. Moreover, we are confident that the lessons drawn from Pastor Chung's life and ministry will inspire educators, scholars, and religious practitioners worldwide, prompting further exploration of the intersections between faith, education, and social engagement within the realm of ministry.

REFERENCES

- Byun, N. (2024). *Water Walls on the Left and Right*. Seoul: Qumran Publishing.
- Calvin, J. (1960). *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Cho, B. (2006). *Systematic Theology and Pneumatology Studies*. Gwangju: Gospel Culture Press.
- Chung, J. (1996). *Puritan History*. Seoul: Word of Life Press.
- Chung, J. (1998). *Evangelical Movement*. Gwangju: Gwangshin University Press.
- Chung, J. (2004). *The Spirituality of Desert Fathers*. Seoul: Eunseong Press.
- Chung, J. (2009). *The Historical Significance of the Unity Between the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapdong and Gaehyuk). The Unity Movement of the Korean Presbyterian Church*. Seoul: Saehan Press, 162–175.
- Chung, J. (2015). *The 26-Year History of the Reformed General Assembly*. Gwangju, South Korea: Kwangshin University Press.
- Chung, J., & Kim, H. (2017). *Hwasun Jungbu 110 Years Church History*. Gwangju, South Korea: Simmian Press. Retrieved from <https://www.kidok.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=109941>.
- Chung, K. O. (1984). *By the Grace of God, I Am What I Am*. Seoul: Korean Evangelical Literature Society.
- Chung, K. O. (1991). *A History of Korean Presbyterianism (2 Vols)*. Seoul: Korean Evangelical Literature Society.
- Chung, K. O. (1994). *An Exposition of the Apostles' Creed*. Seoul: Korean Evangelical Literature Society.
- CMC (Chung and Moon's Children). (1994). *The Children of the Parsonage*. Seoul: Hanbul Cultural Publishing.

- Frame, J. (2015). *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and Method*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Goldsmith, M. (2007). *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*. New York: Hyperion Press.
- Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Jeong, K. (1994). *Pastor Jung Kyu-Oh, the Preacher. Children of the Parsonage*. Seoul: Hanbulmunhwa Publishing.
- Jeong, M., Chung, Y., Han, W., Lee, J., Kim, H., & Seo, I. (2021). Political Consciousness of Early Korean Mission Schools (1907–1937). *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, 5(3), 756–769.
- Jeong, Y. (2022). *A Study on the History of Schisms and Unification Movements in the Korean Presbyterian Church*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Baekseok University.
- Jung, H. (2020). 15 Years of the Presbyterian Church Union: Reflecting on the Present and Building the Future. *Kidok News*, October 23, 2020. Retrieved on September 7, 2024 from <https://www.kidok.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=208631>.
- Kim, H., & Chung, J. (2021). A Study of the Emergence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Korea. *Journal of Positive Psychology & Wellbeing*, 5(3), 770–779. Available at <https://www.journalppw.com/index.php/jppw/article/view/573>.
- Kim, K., & Chung, J. (2023). The Public Roles of Early Korean Protestant Christianity and Future Prospects. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 19 (3), 57–72.
- Kim, K., & Chung, J. (2024). Public Theology and Its Application: A Case Study of Goryeoin Ministry in South Korea. *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, 15(1), 57–73.
- Kim, N. (2007). *Hae Won: Rev. Kyu-Oh Chung*. Seoul: Saehan Press.
- Kim, S. (2005). Why did the Hapdong and Gaehyuk (Reformed) denominations split? Retrieved on September 7, 2024 from <https://www.newspower.co.kr/3827>.
- Kim, S., & Chung, J. (2013). *Modern Church History*. Seoul: Gibbeum Madang Press.
- Kim, S., & Chung, J. (2014). *John Milton's Particularism & Universalism*. Seoul: Gibbeum Madang Press.
- Koh, K. (2000). *Exploring the Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Seoul: UBF Press.
- Koh, K. (2004). *The Logic of Calvin's Theology*. Seoul: UBF Press.

- Lee, D. (2016). Theological Conflicts and Division of the Korean Presbyterian Church in the Post- Liberation Era. *Korean Christianity and History*, 44(0), 103–168. https://www.kci.go.kr/kciportal/landing/article.kci?arti_id=ART002090478.
- Lee, J., Bak, C., Jang, J., & Kim, H. (2021). South Korea's Response to the Myanmar Military Coup in 2021. *The Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27 (3), 1243-1250.
- Muller, R. (2012). *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Park, J., Seok, J., & Chung, J. (2024). The Spiritual Fruits of Desert Fathers (2). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 7 (8), 4054-4065.
- Rheem, S., & Chung, J. (2024). The Spiritual Fruits of the Desert Fathers (1). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 7 (3), 1360-1367.
- Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (2006). *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seo, I., & Chung, J. (2021). The Importance of Mount Jiri Mission Site Conservation In South Korea. *NVEO NATURAL VOLATILES & ESSENTIAL OILS*, 8(6), 4965-4977. <https://www.nveo.org/index.php/journal/article/view/4371>.
- So, J. (2010). Causes of Division, WCC Problems, Historical Development. Retrieved on September 7, 2024, from <https://blog.naver.com/kjyoun24/60100306918>.
- Whitmore, J. (2009). *Coaching for Performance*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.