

M.P. Joseph, Po Ho Huang, Victor Hsu, eds. *Wrestling with God in Context: Revisiting Theology and Social Vision of Shoki Coe*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 2018. 359 pages. \$68.78. ISBN 9781506445809.

This volume is a tribute to the life and legacy of a Taiwanese theologian, churchman, and public intellectual, Shoki Coe (1914-1988). Most of the contributors in this volume count themselves as his admirers who had never met Coe and a few of them are his friends. They appreciate Coe for coining the term “contextualization” in the early 1970s at a time when third world or majority world theology was conceptually dominated by Western theology. Coe introduced contextualization as a methodology to develop “liberation of theology,” that is liberating theology from Western thought in the name of contextualization of theology. “Liberation of theology” is different from “theology of liberation,” of which the latter stresses liberating the oppressed from the oppressors in the name of social justice. Coe’s methodology of contextualization embraces both conceptual and social liberation. Coe differentiates contextualization and indigenization, of which the latter is past-oriented and narrower, while the former is future-oriented and broader in scope (1973: 240-241). Coe prioritizes the former without separating the two.

It was Coe’s methodology of contextualization that gave birth to the explicit development of many contextual theologies. Contextualization can thus be seen as the “mother of contextual theologies.” Using Coe’s methodology, two Taiwanese theologians C.S Song and Wang Hsien-Chih have developed contextual theologies. Song has developed the *Theology of Transposition* as a way for the reformation of the incarnational missions of the church. Wang Hsien-Chih has developed the *Homeland Theology* in response to China’s colonialism of Taiwanese cultural identity. Moreover, Stephen Bevans (one of the contributors) has developed *Models of Contextual Theology*, which became one of the most widely-read books. Here I just mentioned a few of them, but Coe’s impact goes beyond Taiwan and Asia. This present volume shows such evidence.

The volume is divided into eight parts, beginning with an introduction by M.P. Joseph. Part one then explores the significance of Coe’s coinage of contextualization for developing methodologies in the context of globalization, World Christianity, and postcolonialism. Particularly, Po Ho Hung’s, Dale Irvin’s and Kwok Pui-lan’s articles closely engage with Coe’s methodology and propose some insightful thoughts. In part two, S. Wesley Ariyaratne who met Coe personally in 1972 and Edmund Kee-Fook Chia explore how Coe’s coinage of contextualization plays a crucial role in redefining the mission and wider ecumenism of the church. In part three, Anh Q. Tran and Veli-Matti Karkkainen engage with Coe’s concept of contextualization as a methodology for the church’s hospitable dialogue with the religious other as partner in faith seeking deeper understanding of God, while Stephen Bevans uses Coe’s concept of contextualization as a model for proposing and analyzing Pope Francis as a contextual theologian.

Part four forms the contextual relationship between text and context. A renowned cross-textual exegete Archie Lee and Dhyanchand Carr deal with the contextual reading of the Bible by listening to the voices of the text in its ancient context and in our contemporary contexts. Central to their arguments is how we should read the text cross-textually. Part five then deals with the global and local natures of contextual theologies of the marginalized. Diego Irarrazaval, Dwight Hopkins, and Augustine Musopole bring Coe in dialogue with their global contexts of marginalization for the vision of the marginal liberation. Wati Longchar and Michael Jagessar

engage with Coe from the perspectives of intercultural and indigeneous theology in India and England. Central to Longchar's indigenous theology is a holistic approach to Asian contextual theology that addresses not only the indigenous/tribal human rights, but also their land rights.

Parts six and seven consist of only two articles. In part six, Chen Nan-Jou carefully revisits Coe's classic article "In Search of Renewal in Theological Education" (1973) and his other works and he then reflects their implications of renewing theological education and ecclesial ministry. Crucial to Coe's vision is the question of how seminary and the church should be related. For Coe, "every pattern of theological education lies an implicit image of the ecclesial ministry" (300). If seminary exists for the church, its theological education needs to be evaluated in light of the church. The readers would find Jou's article helpful for further reflections on the relationship between two communities.

In part seven, J. Ben Wei revisits Coe's socio-political involvement in the struggle for Taiwan's self-determination in the context of Japanese and Mainland Chinese occupations. Wei shows how Coe should be seen not only as a creative theologian, who coined the term contextualization, but also as a prophetic witness of public faith who advocates for the social vision of human emancipation. Wei's article reflects the subtitle of this volume: "revisiting the theology and social vision of Coe."

Part eight is the conclusion of the volume. Two theologians—John England and Yeow Choo Lak—who had met Coe personally offer their reflections on his life and legacy. England's reflections focus more on Coe's biographical, educational, and ministerial experiences. According to England, Coe attempted to be fully applied in a "double wrestle with both the texts of Jesus' life-with-others and with the concrete particularities of daily life and struggle and joy (337). He found a double wrestle helpful for rededicating our commitment to following Christ in a public society. On the other hand, Lak's reflections focus more on his personal encounters with Coe as well as Kosuke Koyama and the insights he gained from them for his leadership of the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia. Lak helpfully explores how Coe's theological imaginations in the Chinese and Japanese colonial contexts of Taiwan might be relevant to the theological imaginations of Singapore, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations in the postcolonial contexts of British and Japanese occupations.

While I appreciate the richness of this volume, I have a few critiques. The contents of the volume are too broad. Many of themes are overlapping. Moreover, the themes of engaging the text and context are too little. Only two Asian biblical scholars are seen among 20 contributors. Given the fact that contextualization is less popular among biblical scholars today, a few more biblical scholars should have been invited to engage and expand Coe's methodology of contextualization for a fresh hermeneutics of the Bible and contemporary contexts. Despite its few limitations, the authors are to be congratulated for bringing to our attention the life and legacy of Coe who coined the term "contextualization." Borrowing Koyama's words, contextualization was one of the most ugly words for the English speaking people at a time when the term was first coined by Coe, but it is now becoming one of the most popular words for many theologians who want to develop contextual theology in global contexts in the age of World Christianity.

"Coe and Contextualization" should always be remembered together!

David Thang Moe