

**A Brief Narrative of Yung Suk Kim
and His First Book, *Christ's Body in Corinth***

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Dr. Yung Suk Kim is Assistant Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University, in Richmond, Virginia since 2005. Dr. Kim holds a PhD degree in the area of New Testament studies from Vanderbilt University, and he is the author of *Christ's Body in Corinth* (Fortress, 2008). Dr. Kim enjoys teaching and researching here at Virginia Union University, as he says: "Graduate students I meet in my classroom are mature and ready to risk their comfort zone" and "I am very pleased to communicate with them in a meaningful way – to the manner that we all are humbly and critically challenged and empowered in a new way." Dr. Kim also deeply appreciates the ethos and the spirit of The School of Theology and Virginia Union; he says, "I have freedom to teach and research along with a deep sense of responsibility for students and the institution." Besides, Dr. Kim has a long period of transformative experience as he moved away from his first career of international business as marketing manager to a new business of the gospel – a vocation he considers most serious due to its profound impact on our contemporary lives today. Bringing his personal cultural experiences to the classroom and his research, Dr. Kim asks: "What does it mean to live in this world in relation to each other? How can we do theology in our thoughts, deeds and action, while moving pointedly away from individualism? How can we read biblical stories with each other in a critical context? What are some viable definitions of cross-cultural hermeneutics, if any, by which we can improve the sense of living together in difference?"

One of his earlier attempts to answer this kind of questions is being made in his first book published by Fortress Press in 2008: *Christ's Body in Corinth: The Politics of a Metaphor*. Here is what the book flap says:

Reading as a citizen of an increasingly diverse postcolonial world, Yung Suk Kim protests the scholarly consensus that reads Paul's language of the "body of Christ" in 1 Corinthians as a metaphor for social unity, current in Hellenistic and Roman philosophical and political discourse, in which the integrity of the social body required the vigilant maintenance of group boundaries and the harmony of its members. Kim points out the potential of this reading to promote coercive patterns of enforced unity in the contemporary world. Kim argues instead that in speaking of the church as Christ's body, Paul relies upon the metaphoric language of embodied

vitality and growth, seeking instead to nourish the life-giving practices of a diverse community and to oppose the ideology of a powerful in-group that threatens to "disembody" the Christic body in Corinth. Reading the language of *soma christou* exclusively from a sociological lens fails to comprehend the important christological coordinates of Paul's thought, which nevertheless have clear and urgent social and political implications. Paul's exhortation is a message of particular importance, Kim suggests, for us who seek to discern the true value of difference in the contemporary world.

As shown above, Dr. Kim is very passionate about theological education and human transformation. Dr. Kim seeks to reach out to a far wider audience and to share his embodying insights from the studies of New Testament. Dr. Kim can be reached at youaragood@yahoo.com for speaking engagement. Or, visit www.youaregood.com.

Dr. Kim's research interests are as follows: Biblical hermeneutics with a focus on anthropological and cultural studies, Christian origins, historical Jesus and ethics, Gospels and communities, and Paul's letters and theological interpretation (body metaphor, crucifixion). Dr. Kim currently works on a few book projects including *The Hermeneutics of Transformation*.