Jo Jeongsan in Context: "Second Founders" in New Religious Movements

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Abstract

Scholars of new religious movements have emphasized the role of "second founders," such as Judge J.F. Rutherford for the Jehovah's Witnesses, Brigham Young for the Mormons, or Deguchi Onisaburo for Oomoto. They systematize and structure movements often created by the "first founders" with a minimal organization only. The paper argues that the model for the sequence first founder/second founder described by these scholars is the relationship between Jesus and Paul of Tarsus at the origins of Christianity. It proposes a comparison between Jesus of Nazareth and Kang Jeungsan, who established the tradition leading to present-day Daesoon Jinrihoe. It then summarizes the biography of Jo Jeongsan, recognized by Daesoon Jinrihoe as its "second founder" within the same tradition, and discusses the analogies between his connection to the "first founder," Kang Jeungsan, and the connection Paul of Tarsus established with Jesus Christ. The paper considers recent scholarship about Paul, often described as the "New Perspective on Pauline Scholarship." Paul never personally met Jesus Christ, except after the latter's death through a spiritual revelation, just as Jo Jeongsan never met Kang Jeungsan, except after his death, when he manifested himself to him in spirit. Nonetheless, Paul was able to decisively shape the largest branch among the followers of Jesus Christ, just as Jo Jeongsan originated the lineage leading to Daesoon Jinrihoe, currently the largest religious order among those recognizing Kang Jeungsan as the incarnated Supreme God.

Keywords: Jeungsanism; Daesoon Jinrihoe; Kang Jeungsan; Jo Jeongsan;
"Second Founders" of Religions;
Paul of Tarsus; New Perspective on Pauline Scholarship

Religions' "Second Founders" in Comparative Perspective

In 1931, Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869–1942) changed the name of the international religious movement of which he was president from "Bible Students" to "Jehovah's Witnesses." It would take several decades before scholars would pay serious attention to the movement. When they did, they emphasized that the theological reasons for the change of name, i.e., insisting that using "Jehovah" as God's name was essential for being saved, were less important than giving members the feeling that Rutherford's was a new, more hierarchical and well-structured organization, with respect to the comparatively unstructured network of believers that his predecessor, Pastor Charles Taze Russell (1858–1916) had founded between 1878 and 1881. Not everybody agreed with the new structure, and several schismatic groups rejected Rutherford's authority. When one looks at the Jehovah's Witnesses from a historical perspective, however, Rutherford's role appears so crucial that he can be called the "second founder" of the religion (Chryssides 2016).

A movement aimed at writing Mormon history beyond mere apologetics, known as "New Mormon History," developed among Mormon historians after World War II, initially through the efforts of Leonard Arrington (1917–1999), and involved non-Mormons as well (Quinn 1992). New Mormon History explored in depth both Joseph Smith (1805–1844), the founder of Mormonism, and its first successor, Brigham Young (1801–1877), who took the Mormons to Utah. While traditional Mormon apologetics emphasized the continuity between Smith and Young, New Mormon History showed how the structure Young built in Utah went well beyond the simple organization Smith had been able to set up in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois (Turner 2012). In this case also, Young emerged as the most successful claimant of Smith's succession, but several others founded competing new religions (Shields 2021). Young's achievement led some scholars to hail him as the "second founder" of Mormonism (Mason 2015).

There are several similar stories in East Asian new religions. One of the most studied by Western scholars concerns Oomoto. There is little doubt that Deguchi Nao (1837–1918), a simple woman from rural Japan, founded the movement based on the revelations she claimed to receive from a divine spirit called Ushitora no Konjin. However, Oomoto became significantly more organized after Nao's daughter, Deguchi Sumiko (1883–1952) married in the year 1900 a man called Ueda Kisaburo (1871–1948). He adopted the name Deguchi Onisaburo, wrote the main texts of the movement, organized it, and led Oomoto to become a large and international new religion. He is honored today as "co-founder" of Oomoto, and could also be seen as a "second founder" (Stalker 2008).

Consciously or not, scholars who studied figures such as Deguchi Onisaburo, Brigham Young, or Judge Rutherford as "second founders," referred at least implicitly to

a category and a model that generated a large international discussion among scholars of early Christianity in the early 20th century. In 1904, German Lutheran theologian William Wrede (1859–1906) published the first edition of Paulus, an influential book on Paul of Tarsus (ca. 5–ca. 65 CE), the man mostly responsible for spreading Christianity to Europe. Wrede argued that Paul was the "second founder" of Christianity and indeed the man who exerted "the stronger influence" on how Christianity was shaped. Wrede did not have much sympathy for Paul. He accused the man known to Christians as Paul the Apostle of having converted the original free and utopian community founded by Jesus into a cold, bureaucratic church (Wrede 1904). This stereotype about Paul dominated liberal Protestant academic scholarship for decades (Barclay 2007, 1). It became almost a truism to claim that, while Jesus wanted to establish a loose community of believers awaiting the imminent end of the world, Paul founded the Christian Church as we now know it.

Wrede's perspective was never accepted by historians writing within an orthodox Protestant or Catholic tradition. In the last decades of the 20th century, liberal scholars who did not write from an apologetic perspective also took exception to it (Barclay 2007, 5–10). Two parallel movements developed from the late 1970s, one called the Third Quest for the Historical Jesus (as two other quests for historically reliable information on Jesus had taken place in the 19th century and in the 1950s-1960s respectively), and the other the New Perspective on Pauline Scholarship, which promoted new studies on Paul of Tarsus. Both labels are not without critics, and it is unclear whether they indicate coherent academic movements. One of the few common conclusions achieved is that, whether Paul had indeed a different attitude from Jesus about what kind of organization Christians should develop, both Jesus and Paul maintained to the end of their life much deeper Jewish roots than was previously believed, and in this, their continuity may lie (Bockmuehl 2007).

These developments notwithstanding, the relationship between Jesus and Paul remains the model for all theories claiming that in several (although not in all) religions, there is not one founder but two (or more), and that the first founder is often a prophet less interested in organization, while the second founder, as sociologists would say, "routinizes" the charisma and builds a more structured organization capable of lasting for centuries if not, as in the case of Christianity, for millennia. Although other cases are also interesting, I believe that the most fruitful parallel for understanding in a perspective of comparative religion the role of Jo Jeongsan (1895–1958), the "second founder" of the tradition leading to Daesoon Jinrihoe, is with Paul of Tarsus, who, as we have seen, is the original model for all discussions about the relationships between a first and a second religious founder.

Kang Jeungsan and Jesus of Nazareth

Discussing second founders implies, to some extent, revisiting the roles of the first founders as well. Both Kang Jeungsan (1871–1909) and Jesus of Nazareth belong to the category of founders of religions believed by their followers to be incarnations of the Supreme God. There are obvious differences between the two; one being that Jesus Christ was executed and Kang was not. There are, however, also significant similarities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Jesus of Nazareth and Kang Jeungsan

Jesus of Nazareth	Kang Jeungsan
Regarded by followers as incarnation of the Supreme God	Regarded by followers as incarnation of the Supreme God
Recognized as precursor the leader of a previous religious movement, John the Baptist, who was executed	Recognized as precursor the leader of a previous religious movement, Choi Je-u, who was executed
Did not write down his teachings.	Did not write down his teachings (except for the short esoteric booklet Hyeonmu-gyeong)
Main teachings were collected in a sacred scripture only several decades after his death	Main teachings were collected in a sacred scripture only more than one decade after his death
Different groups produced competing versions of the sacred scriptures	Different groups produced competing versions of the sacred scriptures
Promoted the poor and women	Promoted the poor and women
Lived under a foreign occupation (Roman), yet did not call for revolution—although the occupiers arrested him	Lived under a foreign occupation (Japanese), yet did not call for a revolution—although the occupiers arrested him

(1) Some would argue that a main difference is that his followers understand Kang as the incarnated Supreme God in a "polytheistic" context, where the Supreme God coexist with other gods, while Christians are "monotheist." However, the borders between monotheism and polytheism appear to modern scholars more porous than it was once believed. Paul of Tarsus mentioned in *Colossians* 1:16, "things in heaven and

on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities." The usual Christian interpretation is that "thrones or powers or rulers or authorities" "in heaven" designate different categories of angels, and angels are not gods but (spiritual) creatures of a creator God. However, leading Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988) was just one among several modern scholars arguing that, during the first Christian centuries, whether these beings were angels or lesser gods was far from being clear (Balthasar 1983, 47–50).

(2) We know the story of John the Baptist (d. ca. 28–30 CE) mostly from Christian sources, which emphasize his role as precursor of Jesus Christ. Modern scholars, however, dispute that John ever accepted this role, and suggest that he may have been the leader of a separate religious movement, perhaps a branch of the Jewish sect known as the Essenes (Farnes 2011). In South Korea, some Christian new religious movements, such as the Unification Church (Ross and Wilson 1989) and Providence (Jeong and Jeong 2019), believe that John the Baptist did not in fact support Jesus, causing the latter's mission not to be completely successful.

Kang Jeungsan's precursor, in a position similar to John the Baptist, according to Daesoon Jinrihoe, was Choe Je-u (1824-1864), who in 1860 claimed to have received a revelation as well as a mystical talisman and a mantra from "the Lord of Ninth Heaven," the Supreme God Sangje. He went on to establish a new religion, Donghak (Eastern Learning). Like John the Baptist, Choe Je-u ended up being executed (Kallander 2013).

Daesoon Jinrihoe believes that, to solve the world's problems, Sangje came to Korea and entered the golden statue of Maitreya Buddha in the Geumsan-sa Temple at the Moak-san Mountain, North Jeolla Province. There, Sangje revealed his teachings to Choe. Since, however, Choe was unable to overcome the system of Confucianism and open the new era, Sangje withdrew his mandate from him, and incarnated as Kang Jeungsan. Like the story of John the Baptist narrated by Christians, this is Daesoon Jinrihoe's narrative about Choe Je-u. But the latter still has followers today, in a movement known as Chondogyo, which rejects the narrative of Choe as a mere precursor of Kang Jeungsan. Chondogyo believes that Choe's mission was indeed successful, and he opened the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven (Beirne and Young 2018).

(3) Jesus did not write anything during his lifetime. His teachings were oral, and put in writing by his disciples only several years after his death. Kang Jeungsan only left a short 25-page text, *Hyeonmu-gyeong* (Scripture of the Black Tortoise), written in 1909, of which different branches of his movement have published different versions. The booklet includes talismans commented with short sentences, and additional texts and poems. It also contains several instances of "mirror image writing" (of Chinese characters), somewhat reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's (1452–1519) mirror writing that he used in his private notes for reasons differently interpreted by historians (Aaron and Clouse 1982).

The *Hyeonmu-gyeong* is not a systematic presentation of Kang's teachings, which are mostly found in *The Canonical Scripture*. The latter, which plays the same role as the Gospels for Christians, evolved from texts written by disciples who relied on their memory after Kang's death.

Christians today recognize four canonical Gospels (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*), but it may have taken several centuries before they were selected by the early Christian Church as the only genuine source containing what Jesus had said, while dozens of competing Gospels were discarded. Some of the latter were, however, canonized as scriptures by Gnostic and other religious movements competing with the mainline Christian Church (Ehrman 2003).

Just as it happened with the Gospels, there are different versions of the Jeungsanist scriptures accepted as canonical among different groups (Jorgensen 2018, 363; for a criticism of this text, see however Yoon and Introvigne 2018). For example, Jeung San Do, the second largest movement recognizing Kang Jeungsan as the incarnated Supreme God, has published the English translation of its voluminous holy scripture (Jeung San Do 2016). It is significantly different from Daesoon Jinrihoe's *The Canonical Scripture*, and emphasizes those teachings by Kang Jeungsan that are supposed to support Jeung San Do's current doctrinal position.

(4) Although different versions of Kang's teachings exist, one shared point is that he promoted a "social transformation" where the non-aristocrats, the poor, and the women would be treated fairly in Korean society (Kim 2016, 142–143). This obviously resonates with Jesus' teachings as recorded in the Gospels, teachings that put Jesus in trouble with both the Jewish and the Roman establishments (Crossan and Reed 2004).

(5) The Jesus of the Gospels, like most Jews in his time, was critical of the Roman occupation of Palestine, yet he was very careful not to identify himself with the movements that called for an armed revolution against Rome: "My kingdom is not of this world," he said (*John* 18:36). Kang maintained a similar attitude towards the Japanese occupiers. He asked his followers not to join the armed Donghak uprising, promoted by followers of the executed Choi Je-u (Kallander 2013), predicting, correctly, that the Japanese would intervene, destroy the Donghak movement, and take control of Korea. Later, he made "unfavorable remarks" about the Japanese occupation, but refused to support both the attempts by rebels to raise a "righteous army" against the occupiers and the pro-Japanese Iljinhoe movement. Rather, he tried to reconcile the various factions. Notwithstanding his peaceful attitude, he was persecuted and arrested by the Japanese. It seems it was his detractors, such as Cha Mun-Gyeong, who denounced Kang to the Japanese (Chong 2016), just as Jews hostile to his preaching denounced Jesus to the Romans.

Jo Jeongsan: A Short Biography

Jo Cheol-Je (Jeongsan being his honorific name) was born on December 4, 1895 (lunar calendar), in Hoemun-ri, Chilseo-myeon of Haman-gun, South Gyeongsang Province (present-day Hoemun village, Hoesan-ri, Chilseo-myeon of Haman, South Gyeongsang Province), Korea (non-referenced information in this section comes from oral interviews of members of Daesoon Jinrihoe conducted between 2017 and 2019 and from *The Canonical Scripture [Progress of the Order 2]*, which also includes details about the life of Jo). His grandfather, Jo Yeong-Gyu, was a high state bureaucrat and among those who protested the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905. Shortly thereafter, he died of heartache, an event that left a profound impression upon the 11 year old Jo. Jo Yong-Mo, Jo Jeongsan's father, continued his father's anti-Japanese activities. Reportedly, he set up a gunpowder plant in preparation for an insurgency, which never happened due to the strict Japanese surveillance of the independentists. In 1909, Jo Yong-Mo had to escape with his family to Fengtian Province, Manchuria (currently known as Liuhe County, Jilin Province, China).

They settled in a village prevalently inhabited by ethnic Koreans. Eventually, Jo Yong-Mo became the village leader, and as he grew up Jo Jeongsan helped him in his tasks. In particular, he contributed in collecting money for the cause of Korean independence, in solving a land dispute between local Chinese and Korean residents, and in defending Koreans (including one of his uncles) who had been unjustly accused by the authorities (Cui 2016).

Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan never met. However, according to the latter's disciples, when on April 28, 1909, Kang saw a train passing, which had Jo heading to Manchuria, then aged 15, aboard, he stated: "A man can do anything at the age of 15 if he is able to take his identification tag (hopae) with him." Jo's disciples believe that, by these words, Kang Jeungsan was recognizing him as his successor (Ko 2016).

In 1917, Jo married Ye Jong-Rin. In the same year, his father was arrested and taken to Beijing under the false accusation that he was a member of the Royalist Party, whose program was to restore the Qing dynasty. Eventually, his innocence emerged, and he was released.

In the meantime, Jo Jeongsan's main interests had turned to spirituality. He spent long hours meditating in the mountains. On February 10, 1917, while he was meditating at home, as he later reported, a divine being appeared to him and showed him a paper with an incantation, promising that it would save Korea and the world. The words on the paper read, "侍天主造化定 永世不忘萬事知 至氣今至願爲大降" (Si-cheon-ju-jo-hwa-jeong yeong-se-bul-mang-man-sa-ji ji-gi-geum- jiwon-wi-dae-gang, meaning that "in serving the Lord of Heaven and being unified with the divine order, I wish to never forget and to know everything. May the ultimate energy descend abundantly now"). Jo

identified the being with Kang Jeungsan, and claimed that he appeared again to him later and asked. "Why do you not return to Joseon (Korea)? Go to Taein and look for Me." The indication referred to Taein (currently Taein-myeon, Jeongeup city), in North Jeolla Province.

Due to a storm, Jo and his family landed in Taean of Seosan-gun (currently Taean-gun, South Chungcheong Province). Later, he moved to Anmyeon Island, where about thirty local villagers began to follow him. He reported that Kang Jeungsan asked him, "Go to Wonpyeong, Gimje," i.e., the area where Kang himself had passed away in 1909.

On January 15, 1919, he met Kang Jeungsan's sister Seondol (ca. 1881–1942), who gave him a sealed envelope that Kang had left for his successor, asking Seondol to deliver it to a man born in the Eulmi Year (1895) who would visit her on a January 15 (Ko 2016). He also took care of Kang Jeungsan's mother Kwon (1850–1926) and his daughter Sun-Im (1904–1959). Later, however, Sun-Im left Jo Jeongsan and formed her separate branch.

According to The Canonical Scripture, Seondol informed Jo that, "The Transformation Chest (遁櫃, dun-gwei), which was installed by Sangje in the Copper Valley Clinic, is an agent of re-creation and changes of the universe in which a Degree Number of Heaven and Earth is set. In my opinion, we must find it as soon as possible. What do you think?" (*Progress of the Order* 2:14). The chest had been left by Kang Jeungsan in the Donggok Clinic, in Donggok-ri of Jeonju-gun (present-day Cheongdo-ri, Geumsan-myeon of Gimje City), North Jeolla Province, and the place where he passed away. At the time of the conversation between Seondol and Jo, the artifact was in possession of Cha Gyeong-Seok (1880-1936). Cha was the cousin of Kang's female disciple Goh Pan-Lye (1880–1935, and the founder of Bocheonism, which was at that time the largest among the new religions recognizing Kang as the incarnated Supreme God). Jo recovered the chest from Cha and, according to *The Canonical Scripture* (*Progress of the Order* 2:20), started meditating continuously without eating or sleeping. One day, the chest opened on its own. In the chest, there was a sheet of tiger skin and a painting of a half-bloomed chrysanthemum, and on the inside of it, twenty-four dots of sheep blood were marked, and some symbolic phrases were written.

In September 1921, Jo and the relatives of Kang collected the latter's remains, which had been buried on the mountain behind the Donggok Clinic in a chobin, i.e., a temporary tomb where the body is not buried underground but placed on a rock or log and covered with straw until it disappears. They enshrined them nearby, in the Tongsa-dong Memorial Room. Subsequently, the fate of Kang's remains was the object of legal and other disputes between different groups of his followers (Lee K. 1967). Presently, the branch founded by Kang's daughter, Sun-Im, claims to have buried them at its headquarters.

Jo's followers believe that a "Decree" that he issued in 1923 has a crucial importance

to understand his thought and mission. It offers a numerological interpretation of history. The basis is the idea that a long historical period, a *won* (4,567 years), is divided into three *tong* (each of 1,539 years). In turn, a *tong* is divided in three *hoe* (513 years), each consisting of 27 *jang* (19 years). The *won* considered in the Decree encompasses the time from the mythical Chinese Yellow Emperor to Kang Jeungsan. It shows the progress of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity through a logical sequence through the *hoe* and *tong*, leading to the emergence of Kang Jeungsan at the appropriate time.

Jo was now ready to organize his own religious order, which he incorporated in 1925 as Mugeuk-do. He systematized the teachings of Kang Jeungsan in Four Tenets, Four Cardinal Mottos, Three Essential Attitudes, and Aims. In April 1924, Jo bought land for a temple in Dochang-hyeon, Taein of North Jeolla Province (currently Taein-myeon, Jeongeup, North Jeolla Province), the original location Kang's revelations had indicated to him as his destination in Korea. There, in 1925, he built Yeongdae, a sacred hall where he enshrined Kang Jeungsan as the Supreme God, and the Dosolgung Palace, where other divine beings were enshrined. Yeongdae was a three-story building which appeared two stories high. Dosolgung was a four-story building that appeared three stories high from the outside, just as the present-day Bonjeon of Daesoon Jinrihoe in the Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex, is a four-storied building that outwardly appear to be only three stories high (Introvigne 2017).

From 1925–1926, Jo organized among his disciples a "group of workers" (*Jineopdan*) engaged in land reclamation works, which expanded to include four tidelands in Anmyeon Island and Wonsan Island. Weather conditions, however, allowed only two tidelands to be successfully developed. In 1935, the Japanese seized the lands and handed them over to the Japanese company Aso and to Boryeong's local government. According to *The Canonical Scripture* (*Progress of the Order* 2: 35), Jo kept a small plot in Anmyeon Island and a saltern in Wonsan Island, which helped the poorest among his followers. He claimed the land reclamation work had achieved its aim, and never took action to reclaim what had been confiscated.

Due to both a 1936 edict aimed at disbanding Korean new religious movements, labeled by the Japanese as "pseudo-religions," and the Maintenance of Public Order Act of 1941, Jo was forced to dissolve Mugeuk-do in 1941 (DIRC 2016, 203-205). Jo had continued gathering his followers clandestinely for a while, but he ended up ceasing all public activities and returning to his hometown, Hoemun-ri, where he continued to engage in self-cultivation.

With the defeat of the Japanese and the independence of Korea, religious liberty was restored. In 1948, Jo built a Temple Complex in Bosu-dong of Busan City, South Gyeongsang Province (present-day Bosu-dong, Jung-gu of Busan Metropolitan City). In 1950, he incorporated again his religious movement as Taegeuk-do.

Because of the Korean War, in 1950, several disciples escaped from the North to the South of Korea, and settled in the mountain hills near Bosu-dong. In 1955, with support from the Busan government, they were moved to Gamcheon-dong, Seo-gu, Busan, later nicknamed the Tageukdo village. In April 1957, Jo bought new land for a Temple Complex in Gamcheon-dong and built a Great Hall where Sangje was enshrined in the top floor (Yeongdae). Jo also established the Jeonhakwon school for the children of the war refugees. After Jo's death, Jeonhakwon will become Cheondeok Civic School, and serve the elderly in the community lacking elementary education.

As he had done in the Mugeuk-do period, Jo used Tageuk-do as a tool to define religious practices, rituals, and regulations, continuing the transformation of Kang's rhapsodic teachings into a well-organized system of theory and practice. *The Canonical Scripture* insists on the importance of his self-cultivation based on the Degree Numbers, carried on without sleep from November 21, 1957 to March 3, 1958, which concluded his fifty years of holy work (*Gongbu*).

When the end of this significant time approached, Jo designated Park Han-Gyeong, later known as Park Wudang (1917–1995 according to the lunar calendar, or 1918–1996 according to the solar calendar), as Prime Dojeon in the Gamcheon-dong temple and, according to Daesoon Jinrihoe, indicated him as his successor before he passed away on March 6, 1958. Jo was divinized by his followers as Okhwang Sangje, i.e., as an incarnation of the Jade Emperor of the Chinese tradition.

Park Wudang was born on November 30, 1917, in Banggok-ri, Jangyeon-myeon of Goesan-gun, North Chungcheong Province. He worked as a schoolteacher but was forced into labor during the Japanese colonial period. He joined the movement in 1946. After Jo Jeongsan's death, Taegeuk-do continued as a united religious order under the leadership of Park for ten years. In 1968, however, some executive members at the headquarters disputed Park's authority, and these conflicts led him to leave Busan in 1968 and reorganize the movement in Seoul under the name of Daesoon Jinrihoe in 1969. Headquarters were built at Junggok-dong, Seongdong-gu (present-day Junggok-dong, Gwangjin-gu) of Seoul. The name Taegeuk-do remain with a faction led for a few years by one of Jo Jeongsan's sons, Jo Yongnae (1934–2004), who maintains its headquarters at the Gamcheon-dong Temple Complex, where Jo Jeongsan's remains are also buried. Thanks to Park's effort, Daesoon Jinrihoe experienced a rapid expansion and became the single largest new religion of South Korea (Pokorny 2018, 248).

Jo and Paul

Even when the fact that they lived in very different historical contexts is considered, the similitudes between Paul of Tarsus and Jo Jeongsan are indeed impressive, and it can be argued that they are more relevant than the differences (see Table 2).

Table 2: Paul of Tarsus and Jo Jeongsan

Paul of Tarsus	Jo Jeongsan
Was born in a family seeking freedom of his land from the Romans	Was born in a family seeking freedom of his land from the Japanese
Became involved in the local independence movement	Became involved in the local independence movement
Never met Jesus personally	Never met Kang Jeungsan personally
Received a revelation from Jesus that changed his life	Received a revelation from Kang Jeungsan that changed his life
Encountered the Jesus movement when it was divided and loosely organized	Encountered the Kang Jeungsan movement when it was divided and loosely organized
His role was accepted by those who had been closest to Jesus	His role was accepted by those who had been closest to Kang Jeungsan
Was more interested in the divine role of Jesus than in mundane details about his life	Was more interested in the divine role of Kang Jeungsan than in mundane details about his life
Gave to the Jesus movement solid and long-lasting structures	Gave to Kang Jeungsan's movement solid and long-lasting structures
Defined Jesus message as universal, not limited to Jews	Defined Kang Jeungsan's message as universal, not limited to Koreans
Was opposed and persecuted by the Roman colonial power	Was opposed and persecuted by the Japanese colonial power
Not all Christians accepted him	Not all Jeungsanists accepted him
After he died, further schisms occurred	After he died, further schisms occurred

One problem of this comparison is that, of course, Paul lived two thousand years ago, and Jo Jeongsan died in 1958. Our sources for Paul are less reliable than those about Jo. Most of what we know about Paul comes from apologetic Christian sources. However, the work of the New Perspective School may help us establish some facts, which are in turn relevant for the comparison.

(1) The New Perspective school has dismissed ideas that Paul was not even a Jew as

unfounded, if not anti-Semitic, conspiracy theories. We do not know much about Paul's family, but the most believable hypothesis, based on the Apostle's education and early attitudes, is that it was a traditional Jewish family, unhappy with the Roman domination and looking for opportunities to overthrow it—although prepared to deal with the Romans when it was needed (Bockmuehl 2007). We know more about Jo's family, which was deeply involved in the national Korean anti-Japanese resistance.

(2) Every Christian is taught that Paul was part of the Jewish establishment that persecuted Christians as heretics, until Jesus appeared to him and asked why exactly Paul was engaged in the persecution. Recent scholarship builds on this incident to emphasize the Jewishness of Paul. It claims Paul never believed he had abandoned Judaism, nor the struggle for his land's independence, by embracing Christianity. Only, he had come to believe that Christianity was the best chance for reviving the Jewish national movement. A controversial but influential representative of the New Perspective school, John Dominic Crossan, even wrote that Paul as a Christian became "Rome's most dangerous opponent" (Crossan and Reed 2004, 9).

Similarly, Jo, when he embraced Kang Jeungsan's teachings, did not believe he had abandoned his family's ideals of a Korea freed from the Japanese, but insisted he had learned how to formulate them in a better, more spiritual way.

(3) Paul never met Jesus personally during Jesus's life on earth. Jo never met Kang personally during Kang's life on earth, although according to Daesoon Jinrihoe he came close to meeting him in the train episode.

(4) While Paul's path never crossed that of Jesus before the latter's death, he reported that one famous day, which historians place in 34 CE, while he was traveling to Damascus on his horse, Jesus appeared to him and asked him to work on his behalf. According to Christian scriptures, Jesus appeared endowed with divine power and the experience was so strong that Paul fell from his horse and became temporarily blind. In 1917, Jo also experienced the divine power of Kang Jeungsan, who appeared to him while he was in Manchuria and told him to work on his behalf. Both experiences completely changed the lives of the two men and determined their further course.

(5) Jesus told Paul to seek the Christian community, and Kang Jeungsan told Jo to seek his surviving relatives. It was not obvious that these encounters would be fruitful and that Paul and Jo, who after all had never personally met the founders of their new religions, would be accepted as men who had received a mission from divine revelation. These meetings were not easy. However, eventually Peter, Jesus's closest disciple, and James the Brother of Jesus did accept that Paul's mission was from the Lord, and Kang Jeungsan's mother, daughter, and sister accepted that Jo was the true successor of Kang in the religious orthodoxy.

(6) German Lutheran theologian Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) famously claimed that Paul was utterly uninterested in historical details about the life of Jesus. He

regarded as his main job to define theologically the divine status of Jesus as God and savior (Bultmann 1966). Among the New Perspective scholars, James Dunn has devoted considerable attention to criticizing Bultmann's theory, which in the meantime had been widely accepted (Dunn 1997, 84–85). Obviously, Paul's main focus was on building a theology of Jesus as the Son of God whose incarnation had brought salvation to humanity. However, when Paul started preaching and writing in 34 CE, most of those who had known Jesus were still alive. Paul was keen to insist that it was *that* Jesus of Nazareth they had met who was God incarnated. Jesus' life was important, not as a curiosity but as a way of grounding the Christian message in solid historical reality (Dunn 1997, 188).

Jo Jeongsan saw as his mission to clarify and explain why the Lord of the Ninth Heaven had to incarnate on earth as Kang Jeungsan exactly when and where he did, and how and why he performed the *Cheonji-gongsa* (Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth). However, to do this, Kang Jeungsan had to wander through Korea, gather disciples, talk to them, perform miraculous events, and establish institutions such as the Donggok Clinic. All this was not foreign to the *Cheonji-gongsa*, and its story had to be collected and told while those who had known Kang Jeungsan in its earthly incarnation were still alive.

(7) On one point those who follow the "old perspectives" dating back to the first quest for the historical Jesus in the 19th century and New Perspective scholars agree. The Christian Church as we know it would not exist without Paul. Jesus did appoint twelve apostles, a number based on the traditional division of Israel in twelve tribes, but never created a full-fledged hierarchical structure for his movement. His was a typical early charismatic phase, in needs to be consolidated after him by somebody willing and capable of routinizing Jesus' charisma and solidifying it into well-defined structures.

This somebody was Paul, although some scholars now claim 20th-century academic have dismissed too quickly other early Christian leaders, including Apostle Peter and James the Brother of Jesus. The latter created structures for Christians who had converted from Judaism, while Paul took the Gospel to Gentiles, i.e., to non-Jews. That Paul was phenomenally successful, while only a minority of Jews embraced Christianity, explains why later historians focused mostly on Paul. And, since the geographical scope of his mission was immense, Paul needed to create much more complicated structures.

For reasons of his own, Kang Jeungsan never really created a stable and strong organization. He did not even designate a successor during his lifetime. His was a loosely organized band of followers, which explains the competing claims to succession and leadership after his death. Jo was not the only one who tied to give solid structures to those recognizing Kang Jeungsan as the incarnated Supreme God. His work, however, proved to be the most solid and long-lasting. "Jeongsan played a major role in founding Daesoon thought by assimilating Confucian ideas with the teaching of

Kang Jeungsan, shamanism, and other religious traditions in Korea. Indeed, Jeongsan developed it into a distinctive form of ethics and spirituality in 1925" (Chung 2016, 86). "Jeongsan completed a systematic foundation through realizing the need for creating a new religious group. Jeongsan's work provided a basic form of faith in God Sangje and established a discipline of study and spiritual cultivation" (Lee G. 2005, 266).

(8) All scholarship on Paul has among its main focuses his heated discussion with Peter, which at one stage threatened to destroy the young Christian Church. Paul's converts were mostly Gentiles, i.e., non-Jews. He had proposed to them to become members of a new religion, Christianity, not to become Jews. Peter and others believed that all Christians should honor the Jewish matrix of the movement by submitting to circumcision and Jewish dietary laws. After a long discussion, Peter realized that this would have halted the sustained growth of Christianity among non-Jews, since some of them were hostile to Judaism for political reasons and would never accept to adopt typically Jewish practices. He accepted Paul's point of view, with the result that Christianity, once and for all, was defined as a new religion rather than as a sub-sect of Judaism (Bockmuehl 2007).

Jo Jeongsan also insisted that his religion was not only for Koreans. Kang Jeungsan had reordered and saved the whole universe, not just Korea. On the other hand, Jo's movement maintained several quintessentially Korean distinctive traits. Just as Paul, his successors in Daesoon Jinrihoe would struggle to make it into a truly universal movement, through a process that is still going on today and perhaps has not yet been completed.

(9) When local Jewish leaders tried to kill Paul as an apostate who had betrayed Judaism to join Christianity, the local Roman authorities saved him. He might have been pro-independence, but his family had connections and he had obtained the prized Roman citizenship. It is probable that Romans saw at that time Christianity as a sect of Judaism and an internal problem of the Jews.

When, however, it became clear that Paul was converting Romans by the thousands to a new religion with universal claims, challenging the Empire's official religion of the traditional Roman gods, Imperial authorities became more alarmed. Christianity was persecuted and Paul eventually arrested and executed in Rome at a date around 65 CE.

Another colonial power, Japan, was similarly alarmed by Jo's activities, and dissolved Mugeuk-do after having harassed its devotees in various ways, Although, unlike Paul, Jo was not executed, there is little doubt that the Japanese tried to put a halt to his movement (DIRC 2016, 205).

(10) The authority of Paul as an Apostle speaking in the name of Jesus was not unanimously accepted. A completely alternative view of Christianity, Gnosticism, started developing during his lifetime. A subset of studies about Paul is called Corinthian Studies, and focuses on the seven years he spent mostly in Corinth, in present-

day Greece, from 50 to 57 CE. In that city, there were different factions recognizing alternative leaders as authorized to speak in the name of Jesus, and the original Apostles, who were far away, and were not able to control the situation (Burke and Elliott 2003).

Just as it happened to Christianity, the movement recognizing Kang Jeungsan as the incarnated Supreme God went into an extremely complicated story of divisions and schisms. Some believe it divided into more than 100 religious orders. While Jo is at the origin of the largest order, his role was by no means unchallenged.

(11) Schisms within Christianity became even worse after Paul's death. At least among Gentile (non-Jewish) converts, Paul's authority was widely, although not unanimously, acknowledged. After he died, the late first and the second century CE saw a profusion of new schisms. As mentioned earlier, some years after Jo's death, his followers divided between those who recognized Park Wudang as his successor (Daesoon Jinrihoe), and those who kept the name Tageuk-do and claimed Jo's mantle had been passed to his son Jo Yongnae. Further schisms followed, continuing after Park's death (see Introvigne 2018, 31–33).

Conclusion

We should, once again, note that Paul of Tarsus and Jo Jeongsan lived in very different historical contexts. Some distinction should be made to avoid anachronisms. For example, the Jewish resentment against Roman domination was not expressed through the category of "colonialism," which certainly did not exist at this time. Jewish and Christian rituals were different from those prevailing in Kang Jeungsan's and Jo Jeongsan's Korea, and so on.

Yet, our starting point has been the sequence first founder/second founder as articulated by modern scholars of religion. I argued that the model inspiring these sequences, even when applied to figures of the 19th and 20th centuries, is the relationship between Jesus and Paul, which from the early 20th century had become a frequent theme of discussion and controversy for Western historians of religions.

Rather than comparing Jo Jeongsan to other "second founders," I found it more interesting to look for parallels, while not ignoring the differences, with the original model for all "second founder" theories, Paul of Tarsus. I believe the similarities I identified to be significant.

The question is what we learn about Jo Jeongsan from this parallel. The emic view of religionists tends to emphasize the uniqueness of each religion's sacred history (Pike 1999). Emic perspectives should not be lightly dismissed by scholars. We learn a lot from them, and may identify what in each tradition devotees regard as essential, which may well coincide with what makes a new religion successful (Stark and Finke

2000, 257–258). Yet, etic perspectives by outside scholars may also contribute to understanding a religious tradition. Emic views rarely include comparisons, except to absorb previous religious figures as "precursors" of the founders. Christians assumed in this way John the Baptist into their sacred narrative, and Daesoon Jinrihoe did the same with Choe Je-u. Jesuit Catholic missionary to Asia, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), also found a place in Jeungsanist sacred history leading to the advent of Kang Jeungsan (Chong 2016, 50). In his 1923 "Decree," Jo also mentioned Confucius, Buddha Shakyamuni, and Jesus in his numerological history of the world culminating in the incarnation of Sangje as Kang Jeungsan.

All these, however, are not comparative analysis of a tradition, and are typical of emic narratives where previous religions, when not dismissed, are presented as "preparations" for the revelation of the fullness of truth. Scholars, unlike religionists, use a value-free and theologically neutral comparative method, emphasizing similarities between different traditions and learning from them. In a way, all religions are unique. From another point of view, none is, as they include elements from older traditions and interact with society along patterns that tend to repeat themselves in history.

In the comparison between Jo Jeongsan and Paul of Tarsus, we find a confirmation that many if not most religions proceed from an early charismatic phase associate with the founder to what some have called a post-charismatic period after he or she dies (Miller 1991), and the Jeungsanist tradition leading to Daesoon Jinrihoe is no exception. But "post-charismatic" may not be the right term, since figures such as Paul of Tarsus and Jo Jeongsan (or Deguchi Onisaburo or Brigham Young) are in themselves charismatic, although in a different way from the founders they succeeded.

Jo Jeongsan's trials, tribulations, and successes confirm that second founders are often essentials in systematizing and institutionalizing (which is more than "routinizing") the charisma of the first founder. Without an effective second founder, new religions may decline or disappear. That Daesoon Jinrihoe also had a "third founder," Park Wudang, is a matter deserving further and separate investigation.

Conflict of Interest

Massimo Introvigne has been a Honorary Editor of *JDTREA* since July 2021 but had no role in the decision to publish this article. No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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