

Asian solidarity

David Suh defines Korean *Minjung* theology as “a political and cultural theology in response to Korean people’s struggle for human rights, freedom and democracy against the military dictatorships.” That struggle aptly describes a tumultuous period in his own life, when martial law was imposed in 1980 and some university faculty faced harsh punishment from the government. Dr. Suh lost his position at Ewha Womans University and was imprisoned, accused by the government of agitating students to protest against the government. During the four years he was prevented from teaching, he served as pastor to a small congregation and conducted research on *Minjung* theology.

Dr. Suh places *Minjung*’s Christian theology in the context of the “Asia for Asians” economic, social and cultural movements of the second half of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, an “Asianization” movement within the United Board led to a new chapter in its history. Asianization catalyzed fundamental changes in the structure of the United Board, including, most



prominently, equitable representation of Asians on the board of trustees and the opening of its Hong Kong office in 2001.

Dr. Suh, who moved to Hong Kong to become the United Board’s Vice President for Programs in 2001, helped bring Asianization alive through new programs. Some of his inspiration came from the impressive changes he saw among the leaders of Asian Christian higher education institutions. “They were eager to enhance their respective schools’ dynamic Christian identity and academic excellence, as well as Asian solidarity through mutual support and exchanges.” This led to the creation of the Asian University Leadership Program and the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies, two United Board programs that continue to promote sharing of ideas and strengths through inter-Asian contacts and exchanges.

David Kwang-sung Suh
United Board Trustee (2000-2001)
United Board Vice President for Programs
(2001-2006)