

The Revised Correlational Method of Don Browning and Edward Farley: A Comparative Essay on the Interpretation of Situation

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【Abstract】

Don S. Browning and Edward Farley commonly observe that confessional theology committed to traditional doctrines demonstrates limitations in critical interpretation of theology. They call it lacuna-the absence of practical theology without theological interpretation of situation. Browning is an important figure in hermeneutics of practice who believes theology as a practical discipline will benefit theology and the churches. Farley is another distinguished, and more 'conservative' theologian focuses on ministerial practice in the practical hermeneutics including the pastoral leadership and church education. He emphasized an analytic perspective over experience and situation. He essentializes theological reflection in interpreting the complex practice of the day. Different from Browning, Farley does not reject the importance of the past text. Both of them, however, commonly turn their attention to the importance of the interpretation of 'situationality' much more than to that of the Scripture. Their efforts to engage in bidirectional dialogues between theology and culture accomplished an important progress in practical theology. Regardless of whether they have tools for hermeneutics of situation or not, however, confessional theologians also have performed meaningful practices and practical hermeneutics as an essential part of their faith. Practical theology may continue to proceed on its open tracks for practice and theory out of its unique foundation as a practical discipline with a more specific concern about the widespread human sufferings.

Key words: Don Browning, Edward Farley, practical theology,
hermeneutics of situation, confessional theology

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I. Introduction

Renowned theologians Don Browning and Edward Farley have commonly pursued a new methodology for practical theology. They commonly acknowledged an apparent limitation of the traditional theology in maneuvering contemporary human experience and diversified life situations. Browning was a practical and pastoral theologian; until his recent death in 2010, his contribution to the moral and ethical vision of practical and pastoral theology had been profound. He also had a fundamental influence on the foundation of the International Academy of Practical Theology. Browning made an effort to “give an additional form and elaboration to trends” for practical theology. He believes that “viewing theology as a practical discipline ... leads to discoveries that will benefit theology, the churches, and theological education.”¹⁾

Farley is another notable theologian in contrast who has had a close connection to the church community and its ministerial practice including the pastoral leadership and church education. With an emphasis of an analytic perspective over experience and situation, he also proposes theological reflection in interpreting the complex praxis of the day. According to Browning,²⁾ Farley was one of the scholars who had widened the scope of theology in the 1980s in order to present a unique way of theological interpretation of human-life situations and practices.³⁾ Farley’s primary focus in practical theology

1) Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1995), ix.

2) Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, ix.

3) About the history of practical theological studies, see Browning's article “The

is on the creation of “theological interpretation of situations,” which he calls “what does not yet exist” in theology.⁴⁾ He is concerned about church education “at all levels” when the practical theology fails to ‘thematize’ the situations.⁵⁾

It would be an interesting critical study to compare their ideas about practical theology of these two important figures with different backgrounds. They basically share the revised correlational method in practical theology and commonly agree on the importance of the moral theology. The revised correlational method seeks “truth, meaning, and value wherever it may be found, whether in religious tradition or popular culture.”⁶⁾ However, Browning’s practical

Revival of Practical Theology,” *Christian Century* (February 1984): 134. In this article, Browning deals with issues of practice and care through Farley's provocative book, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1983) and his own, *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World* (San Francisco, CA.: Harper & Row, 1983). He sees the Farley's effort as “a call for the rebirth of practical theology” beyond so-called the “clerical Paradigm,” which expands practical theology into a “more critical and philosophical, more public, and more related to an analysis of the various situations and context of theology.” This includes the crucial use of social science including psychology, sociology, and anthropology for critical appropriation and examination without giving up theological standpoint. Browning puts an emphasis on ethics for a public debate beyond the church ministry; he introduces Schleiermacher’s *Brief Outline of Theological Study* (1811), John Westerhoff’s *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society* (New York: Seabury, 1983), Evelyn & James Whitehead's *Method in Ministry* (New York: Seabury, 1980), his own *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1983) and etc. in order to provide rationale for the rebirth of practical theology.

- 4) Edward Farley, “Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology,” in *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, eds. L. S. Mudge & J. N. Polling (Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2009), 1.
- 5) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 11.
- 6) Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 104.

philosophical background makes his theology theoretically more fundamental and practically distant from church ministry than the Farley's theology founded on congregational experience.

Unfortunately, both of them have criticized confessional theology as the applicationist who keeps a fixed view over popular culture with minimum dialogical correlation between theological norms and culture. Theologically speaking, both of them keep more liberal than evangelical theological perspectives in general; in this respect, Browning is more radical than Farley in repudiating evangelical confessionalism. They deserve criticism for both the lack of attention to sufferings and overall indifference to the confessional theology in practice; fundamentally, they seem to consider confessionalism as an hamper in practical theological thinking.

Although their criticism over confessional theology is still pending, considering many traditional theologians' active engagement with reality, their contributions and significance of their works in practical theology, especially on the use of social science in pastoral theology, cannot be simply discounted. Both of them actively engage psychological and other social scientific insights in practical theological hermeneutics either overtly or covertly. Browning employs a mutually critical correlation between theology and psychology, which paves a revised correlational path since Paul Tillich's one-way correlational method, that is, questions in practice (culture, philosophy or science) and answers from theology.

II. Body

1. Critique of the Theory-to-Practice Model

Both Browning and Farley agree that the traditional theology such as Karl Barth and its “theory-to-practice” method has hindered a proper interpretation of the situation. Barth’s focus on the revelation, according to them, made him widely overlook the importance of a human’s role in practice. Browning seems to be more radical than Farley in criticizing the traditional method of theory-to-practice: practical theology in Barth only means the application of the Revelation of God in the Scripture to life, theory-to-practice, but “it is partially, if not significantly, wrong.”⁷⁾

To be practical, Browning asserts, theology should be practical from the first; therefore, the traditional assumption that theory is separate from practice must be discarded. He replaces the traditional theory-to-practice method with the method of “present theory-laden practice to a retrieval of normative theory-laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices.”⁸⁾ Pointing out an inherent problem of confession-oriented religious communities, he declares that “a purely confessional view of pastoral theology will no longer serve” ministers and pastoral psychotherapists because the system, in nature, is totally immobilized in pluralistic contexts or cultures.⁹⁾

7) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 5.

8) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 7.

9) Don S. Browning, “Pastoral Theology in a Pluralistic Age,” in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, eds. J. Woodward & S. Pattison (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 94.

Farley also criticizes the traditional attitude of the ‘idolatrous use of the past text’ without theological interpretation of situations. When the past text has been the only object of interpretation among the traditional theological circle, there has been no theological inquiry or ‘thematization’ of situations:

In the theory-to-practice, authoritative-text-(applied)-to-life paradigm, there is high awareness of the text, its meaning and content, and low awareness of the meaning and content of the situation.¹⁰⁾

Farley called the state of theory-to-practice that lacks interpretation of the situation ‘the lacuna’-the absence-of practical theology.¹¹⁾ Interpretation is not only toward the past text of the Scriptures, he insists, but also toward current experience and situations that also evoke “the reflective activity of the believer.”¹²⁾ He does not basically repudiate the importance of the past text, but he esteems and turns his attention to the importance of the interpretation of ‘situationality’ as much as that of the Scriptures.

2. Foundation of the Practical Theological Thoughts

Hans Gadamer’s practical philosophy, especially “the relation of [practical] understanding and morality” is “extremely important for [Browning’s] reconceptualization of practical theology.”¹³⁾ Denying the

10) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 10.

11) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 11.

12) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 9.

13) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 38.

possibility of pure objectivity or self-emptying along with Dilthey and Husserl, Gadamer claims that understanding is practical in that it is a process “like a dialogue or conversation” that is full of preoccupations.¹⁴⁾

Application from theory to practice is not any more a part of the conclusion; instead, it is a “co-determiner” of the understanding that is “a moral conversation shaped throughout by practical concerns about application that emerge from our current situation.”¹⁵⁾ In Richard Burnstein’s understanding of Gadamer, “understanding, interpretation, and application are not distinct but intimately related.”¹⁶⁾ Browning extends the Gadamer’s notion to theology so that the traditional model of the theory-to-practice understanding in theology comes to be broken down. Then, the practice-theory-practice model comes to receive a principal focus with a thorough and fundamental practicality of human understanding.

On the other hand, Farley’s hermeneutics of situationality comes from his retrospective reflection of the history of pastoral theology and of the challenges of praxis to contemporary theology. He does not make serious references to scholars in order to support his practical ideas, but he is constantly engaged in dialogues with his own church experience and theology in order to reconstruct a fundamental practical perspective in theology. His focus on situationality has largely to do with the liberation and political theology that “calls for a hermeneutics of present-day-situationality.”¹⁷⁾

14) Don S. Browning, *Reviving Christian Humanism: The New Conversation on Spirituality, Theology, and Psychology* (Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2010), 14.

15) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 39.

16) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 39.

17) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 25-26.

Even though Farley does not clearly identify his theoretical background, psychology, especially psychoanalysis, seems to have influenced his understanding of the complexity of situation. Concerned with the four tasks of reading situations, for example, he requires a deeper investigation of the past institutional repressions to see the present condition and of multiple layers of situational genre, not a single situation. Especially connected with the second task, Farley pays attention to the past repression that has not been properly “thematized” in understanding of situation up to the present.

Farley emphasizes the importance of the understanding of power structure surrounding the experience of individual’s and community’s event. In his understanding of situation, power is always a significant part of it,¹⁸⁾ of which insights might have come from psychology. In *Good and Evil*, Farley elaborates the vision of social repression, borrowing the idea from Freud. According to Freud, forming a society claims the price from its human members: that is, neurosis.¹⁹⁾ Farley certainly has been informed by Freud in this respect and enhanced the idea when he understands the stratified layers of individual and institutional repression in the past in an effort to illuminate their present structures.

3. Vision of the Interpretation of Situation

Browning and Farley may agree with each other to the nature of comprehensiveness of practical theology that is encompassing the

18) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 12.

19) Edward Farley, *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1990), 58.

multiplicity of the secular perspectives in common human experience. Envisioning a thorough practical theology “from its very heart” in the whole body of theology,²⁰⁾ Browning characterizes a *fundamental practical theology* as “the larger and more encompassing theology.”²¹⁾ According to Browning, fundamental practical theology is the most inclusive understanding of all the theology that fits the nature of practical human thought. Browning positions “four submovements of *descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and strategic practical theology*” under the title of the fundamental practical theology.²²⁾

20) Farley, *Good and Evil*, 7.

21) Farley, *Good and Evil*, 8.

22) Under the title of the fundamental practical theology, he puts four submovements: *Descriptive theology* has to describe the “theory-laden religious and cultural practice,” and to “analyze the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround practices.” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 47). “Practical theology describes practices in order to discern the conflicting cultural and religious meanings that guide our action” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 48), and practical theology has interests in “the full contextual meaning of the practical questions engendered by these practices” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 48); *Historical theology* seeks the implication of the traditional texts “that are already part of our effective history...for our praxis” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 49). As “the heart of the hermeneutical process,” the historical theology puts “the questions emerging from theory-laden practices to the central texts and moments of the Christian faith” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 49); *Systematic theology* “tries to gain as comprehensive a view of the present as possible [and] tries to examine the large, encompassing themes of our present practices and the vision latent in them” in order to “investigate general themes of the gospel that respond to the general questions that characterize the situations of the present” (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 51); *Strategic practical theology* is the “crown of theology,” because a practical theology is not limited in the care of the church and congregation but expanded to the care of the society and the world with the strategic structures of the care. Strategic practical theology deals with the church’s care of the wider society and the world (Browning, *Practical Theology*, 55-57).

Browning criticizes the distinction of theological divisions such as the concept of theology “made up of the Bible, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology” shown in one of Farley’s 1983 articles.²³⁾ To Browning, theology as a whole is a fundamental practical theology rooted in practical thinking that even encompasses “theoretical and technical thinking.”²⁴⁾ Affected by David Tracy’s definition of practical theology as “the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian faith with the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation,”²⁵⁾ Browning adopts this definition of fundamental practical theology, so he considers the theology as “the most inclusive understanding of theology.”²⁶⁾

Browning employs Tracy’s revisionist’s view of theology as “a mutually critical dialogue between interpretations of the Christian message and interpretations of contemporary cultural experiences and practices.”²⁷⁾ Beyond the Tillich’s simple correlation of existential questions from cultural experience and answers from Christian messages, the critical and mutual conversation becomes the focus of the revised correlational method in the fundamental practical theology. Browning prefers a ‘bi-directional’ and critical dialogue rather than a ‘mono-directional’ theory-to-practice model shown in Barth, Tillich, and Lindbeck’s confessional theology. The awareness of multiplicity

23) Farley, *Good and Evil*, 8.

24) Farley, *Good and Evil*, 8.

25) David Tracy, “Foundations of Practical Theology,” in *Practical Theology*, eds. Don S. Browning & Francis Schussler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 76. Quoted in Browning, *Practical Theology*, 47.

26) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 47.

27) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 46.

and plurality of modern society has led Browning to the liberal-revisionist practical theology, and he proclaims the futility and fatal limitations of confessional theology in contemporary society and culture.²⁸⁾

On the other hand, from a slightly different angle, Farley calls for the comprehensiveness of practical theology when it has to deal with a thick layer of praxis. He consistently argues for an operation of theological perspective in all of his situational tasks and tries to embrace ecclesiastical leadership throughout the study of practical theology,²⁹⁾ he envisions that “practical theology [to] be comprehensive to embrace various regions of praxis and to treat them in their relations to each other.”³⁰⁾

Farley’s fundamental mode of practical theology is deeply associated with the “mode of the believer’s reflective activity.”³¹⁾ The scope of practical theology evidently embraces clerical and ecclesial activities, but his envisioning of practical theology is not restricted within the church boundary. He makes contemporary experiences as a source of theological data; he rationalizes that an everyday experience of average people has the theological purpose and significance. His

28) The mutually critical vision in his fundamental practical theology does not necessarily mean that Browning preemptively excludes theological priority in favor of social scientific theories. Most recently, right before his death in 2010, he announces with Bonnie Miller-McLemore that they do not let the “prominent human-science perspectives” simply judge religions because these theories have an entirely different view of religious traditions from their own. Don S. Browning & Bonnie J. Miler-McLemore, eds., *Children and Childhood in American Religions* (New Brunswick, NJ.: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 4.

29) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 7.

30) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 7.

31) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 15.

remarks are correspondently resounded by Katherine Tanner, theologian in Chicago University; she has made an effort to close the gap between academic theology and everyday's cultural life.³²⁾

Interpreting situationality is a theological hermeneutics, according to Farley. This is clearly illustrated in his four tasks of theological interpretation of situation: the first task is "identifying the situation and describing its distinctive and constituent features." However, it is not a simple task because "a situation is not like a basket of fruit." It is not a simple compilation of linear facts or incidents. Reading the situation does involve the task of identification and discernment of how discrete genres of situation are constituted in the whole context. To Farley, "reading the situation" is "an act of serious and even theological self-criticism."³³⁾

The second task is the interpretation of situation in light of the past repression. According to Farley, "tradition does hand on the revelatory past-events and narratives that correct, illumine, inspire,"³⁴⁾ which implies the necessity of a wider perspective of practical theology by thematizing the hidden institutional structure of the past. The third task is "to correct the abstraction committed by the focus on a single situation," that is, to acknowledge that "situations occur within situations."³⁵⁾ This task encourages to face the complexity of the situation and to widen the perspective to see the surroundings.

Finally, the fourth task is the theological discernment of the

32) Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1997), 69-70.

33) Farley, "Interpreting Situations," 12.

34) Farley, "Interpreting Situations," 13.

35) Farley, "Interpreting Situations," 13.

multiple demand of situation. At this stage, “faith interprets situations and their demands as always containing this element of corruption and redemption,” which is “at the heart of a theological hermeneutics of situations.”³⁶⁾ Farley’s central thought throughout these tasks is the “theological perspective and criticism” of “corruption and redemption” in the human life.³⁷⁾ With this traditional theological perspective, he helps look critically at human beings who are stirring according to “their idolatries, their absolutized self-interests, their ethnocentrism, their participations in structures of power.”³⁸⁾

4. Hermeneutics for Practice and Care

Farley’s argument for “self-conscious, self-critical, and disciplined” hermeneutics of situations seems to meet the demands of the liberation theology that Rebecca Chopp proposes. To a certain extent, Farley tries to overcome with the critical self-reflection of the believers the limitations of liberalism by rejecting the tendency of privatization of religious faith. With the critically self-reflective attitude, he considers how to deal with the limitations of confessional neo-orthodoxy by expanding the scope of theology beyond interests of the self.³⁹⁾ Furthermore, through the self-critical reflection, his argument seems to repudiate Chopp’s radical claim that “the method of correlation was born...to continue Christianity by protecting the individual and

36) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 13-14.

37) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 14.

38) Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 14.

39) Rebecca S. Chopp, “Practical Theology and Liberation,” in *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, eds. L. S. Mudge & J. N. Polling (Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2009), 127.

securing the individual by privatizing Christianity.”⁴⁰⁾

However, Farley’s argument is not thorough enough in terms of the care of suffering people. He also fails to see the concrete issue of misogyny both of the tradition and of “the modern clerical paradigm [that] excluded women as actors and subjects.”⁴¹⁾ As long as pastoral theology actively takes the liberational intent as “pastoral care for the suffering,”⁴²⁾ both Farley and Browning unfortunately have ignored the blind side of the revised correlational method.

Browning proposes a wider scope of a fundamental practical theology that traditional theology has not seen, and in an overall sense, he pursues through the practical theology “social and individual transformation.”⁴³⁾ However, he is not free from the faults of liberal-revisionist model from the Chopp’s point of view. First of all, the philosophical background of fundamental practical theology tends to generalize the concept of practical thinking both as “the center of human thinking” and as fitting to the nature of “human thought.”⁴⁴⁾

Chopp would ask who is the “human” that Browning mentions: if his idea of common ‘human’ experience were about “the small minority of the world’s population who control the wealth and resources in history,” which is usually represented by the White male in the West, he should make a mistake to overlook the desperate needs of “the large majority of global residents who control neither their

40) Chopp, “Practical Theology and Liberation,” 129.

41) Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, “Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology,” in *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, eds. B. J. Miller-McLemore & B. L. Gill-Austern (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 1999), 88.

42) Miller-McLemore, “Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology,” 91.

43) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 36.

44) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 8.

victimization nor their survival.”⁴⁵⁾

Secondly, when Browning mentions, for example, that “the fuller task of pastoral theology is to give philosophical expression to the norms for the human life cycle explicitly found in the major themes of the Judeo-Christian tradition,”⁴⁶⁾ Chopp would not fail to point out the blind spot of the liberalists’ or revisionists’ focus on the cognitive crisis, not on the real suffering. Because theory is only temporarily necessary for material priority in liberation theology, Chopp says that “the point of religion is identical for liberals and revisionists [with] the question of the nonbeliever or the question of the crisis of cognitive claims.”⁴⁷⁾

However, Chopp’s criticism against liberal-revisionist theologians and the revised correlational method may face a problem due to its own simplicity of perspective; liberation theology is not free from the ‘ideological’ reductionism that judges all academic activities based only on the liberational cause and its concreteness. Its commitment to the cause of liberation and wellbeing of people may blindly approve unethical actions that Browning seriously opposes.

Far from the cognitive insulation, Browning puts a strong emphasis on the communication of Christian traditional values with the secular and pluralistic society through “religio-ethical considerations.”⁴⁸⁾ Farley also suggests that practical theology has to take a “scholarly discipline” or a mode of “theological science” for a pedagogical purpose even though his “fundamental mode” in practical theology is

45) Chopp, “Practical Theology,” 128.

46) Browning, “Pastoral Theology,” 95.

47) Chopp, “Practical Theology,” 127.

48) Browning, “Pastoral Theology,” 92.

the believer's reflective activity. Therefore, Chopp's argument that the revised correlational method was produced "to continue Christianity by protecting the individual and securing the individual by privatizing Christianity" may be seriously challenged by these two major practical theologians, considering the nature of their self-critical or self-conscious practical theology.⁴⁹⁾

Last but not least, these theologians' sweeping reduction of confessional theology as lacking hermeneutics of experience must be eventually scrutinized. Rather than having no principles for interpretation of experience, many traditional theologians were forced to focus more on establishing and keeping appropriate, if not always pragmatic, faith systems of the time, surrounded by diverse challenges inside and outside the church.

A theologian and reformer John Calvin, for example, sustained a practical purpose throughout his theology to help believers in real life when he noticed cognitive addiction of some Scholastic school in the Middle Ages. He was fundamentally practical and pastoral with his theology, not without practical hermeneutics of the day, distancing himself from the unrealistic argumentation of the Scholasticism. Nature and human reason, for example, were important standards by which Calvin judged issues of his time such as young girls' oath of nuns, marriage of young girls, monogamy, family, love, sexuality, and economy and interests etc.

Confessional theologians committed more to traditional doctrines than to practice seem to demonstrate limitations in critical process of interpretation of theology on the surface. However, it does not

49) Chopp, "Practical Theology," 129.

necessarily mean that they lack theological interpretation of situations. Although the past text is the indispensable object of interpretation in theology, they still have theological inquiry or thematization of situation in their own way as is seen with Calvin. Further study about hermeneutics of situation for pastoral care is yet to come by pastoral and practical theologians from within confessional theology.

III. Conclusion

The voice for appropriate attention to the more specific experience of sufferings of the marginalized people such as misogyny seems to be still legitimate in practical theology. Browning aims at “social and individual transformation,”⁵⁰⁾ but he is yet to consider the structural bias against the marginalized people including women for the purpose of the theological transformation. From the Chopp’s perspective, Browning lacks a thorough vision of transformation through the fundamental practical theology.

Farley’s argument for practical theology challenges the plain attitude of confessional theology for an active hermeneutics of contemporary experience. He should also have considered the shortcoming aspect of “the movement of systematic and constructive theology away from the messiness of human suffering ... and the complications of religious and ministerial practices of transformation.”⁵¹⁾

Browning and Farley have made enormous accomplishments in

50) Browning, *Practical Theology*, 36.

51) Miller-McLemore, “Pastoral Theology,” 93.

practical theology as seen above. Their critique against the traditional method of theology have brought up a paradigmatic change in handling the complicated praxis in the pluralistic age. Their moral and ethical responses to the world with a thorough theological reflection of situations seem to facilitate the critical dialogue between Christian traditional resources and the contemporary culture. This new awareness of the multiplicity of the contemporary situation may also open a more efficient communication of the church with the secular world.

However, as the liberal interpreters in theology (“liberal revisionist theology”) focus more on ‘universal’ theories of practice than on specific human experience, these two theologians seem to be solving cognitive problems in the liberationist’s point of view; they have a limited vision about issues of social and practical transformation. While “abstractions, generalizations, and metatheorizing about practical theology” are just utilized in practical theology like in the traditional way, “the contingent, immediate questions and contexts of suffering and responsive practices” of pastoral theology may be missing.⁵²⁾

In addition, Farley seems to be more friendly to the traditional theology than Browning do, although the former fundamentally wants to dismantle the traditional theological topography as the latter did. No matter what the significance of practice in theology may be, confessional theology must not be simply dismissed as having no hermeneutics of experience or practice. Despite the essential needs of new method and hermeneutics for the contemporary culture, their

52) Miller-McLemore, “Pastoral Theology,” 94.

hidden interpretations of the situation through traditionally effective ministry is further to be explored from the confessional theological point of view.

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【 국문초록 】

Don Browning과 Edward Farley의 개정된 상호 관계적 방법론:
상황의 해석에 관한 비교 연구

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저명한 신학자 Don Browning과 Edward Farley는 1980년대 이후 실천신학의 새로운 방법론을 개척한 선구자들이다. 이들은 전통적인 신학 방법론의 모델인 “이론에서 실천으로”의 한계성을 인정하고, 현대 사회 인간의 경험과 삶의 다양한 상황의 해석을 포괄할 수 있는 새로운 실천신학을 제안하였다. Browning은 근본적인 실천신학의 제안과 더불어 도덕적이고 윤리적인 신학의 시야를 지속적으로 견지하여 왔던 신학자이다. Farley는 특히 오늘날의 복잡한 경험과 실천을 해석하는 신학적 성찰을 강조하였다. 그는 전통적인 신학 방법론에 있어서 실천신학의 부재를 지적하면서 상황의 신학적 해석을 위해 상황을 주제화 할 것을 요청한다. 이 과정에서 이 두 신학자는 “개정된 상호 관계적 방법론”을 사용하여 신학과 문화의 적극적인 상호 대화를 할 것을 주장한다. 이들의 도전은 신앙 고백적 신학을 가진 이들에게도 어떤 도구와 방법론으로 현실의 실천적 경험을 해석할지에 대하여 진지한 신학적 고민을 던져준다고 할 수 있다.

중심단어 : Don Browning, Edward Farley, 실천신학, 상황의 해석, 신앙 고백적 신학