Clarion Review

Religion

The Bible and the Principles of Yin and Yang

Franklin Hum Yun
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Biblical commentary usually occurs within a Christian context. In *The Bible and the Principles of Yin and Yang*, Franklin Hum Yun interprets Christian beliefs through the complementary forces of yin and yang and the venerable *I Ching*, also known as the *Book of Changes*.

The first two sections of *The Bible and the Principles of Yin and Yang* are succinct: a memoir of the author's early years in South Korea—where he grew up in a family that honored Confucian traditions—and an essay on yin-and-yang philosophy.

In the third and longest section of the book, Yun comments on several themes of Christianity. He belongs to the American evangelical tradition and believes religious truth is found only in the Bible. Consequently, Yun's narrative centers on the Bible's authority. What is unusual in Yun's approach is that he expounds on Christian beliefs through the imagery of the yin and yang symbols. He provides a comprehensive appendix that explains the symbols, plus the hexagrams and trigrams of the *I Ching*.

It is in this third section that Yun comments on several tenets of Christianity, quoting scripture and interpreting the passages using the hexagrams. For example, in the section on hope, Yun refers to the second verse of Paul's letter to the Romans: "We boast in hope of the glory of God." He then seeks to show a connection to the fifty-fifth hexagram, which symbolizes "Abundance." In the section on faith, Yun's commentary revolves around the twenty-fifth hexagram, "Freedom from Error."

Yun's book is essentially a commentary on the Bible. He addresses two fundamental issues in Christianity: original sin (man's disobedience of God as narrated in Genesis) and man's salvation through the intervention of Jesus Christ (as clarified in the Epistles of St. Paul). In chapter three he effectively explains more than twenty traditional aspects of Christian life: faith, prayer, love, hope, and so on. In each of these sections he quotes the relevant scriptural

passages and then proceeds to examine these Christian truths using hexagrams from the I Ching. His reflections are informative and insightful.

For those Christian readers versed in the *I Ching* and the meanings of the hexagrams, Yun's interpretation of Christian beliefs using these symbols will be well appreciated. The author seems to anticipate readers who are unacquainted with the *I Ching* symbols since there are more than two dozen footnotes in chapter three alone. The appendix, at over eighty pages, adequately serves as a primer on the *I Ching* and some readers might well read it before the main text.

Yun does not attempt to interpret scripture. Instead, he tries to understand Christianity through the Confucian teachings of his youth, and his book reflects that objective. There may be some interesting insights here, but readers without a mature understanding of yin and yang may not appreciate Yun's efforts.

Thomas H. Brennan