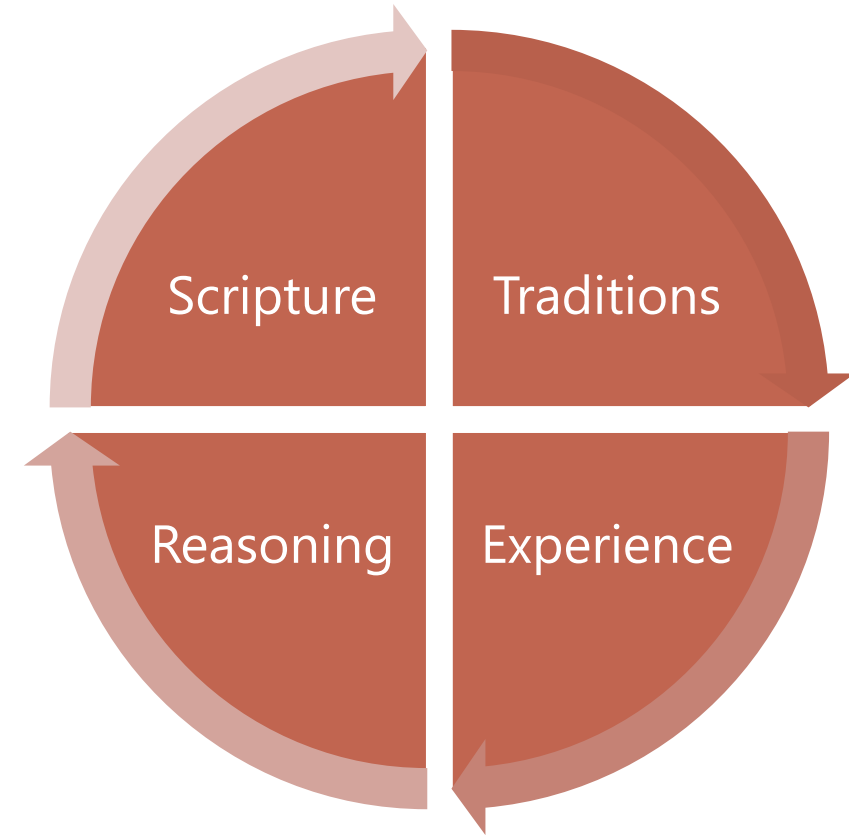


# **Lives Touch Lives: Reading Scripture as God's Life Story in the Southeast Asian Geopolitics**

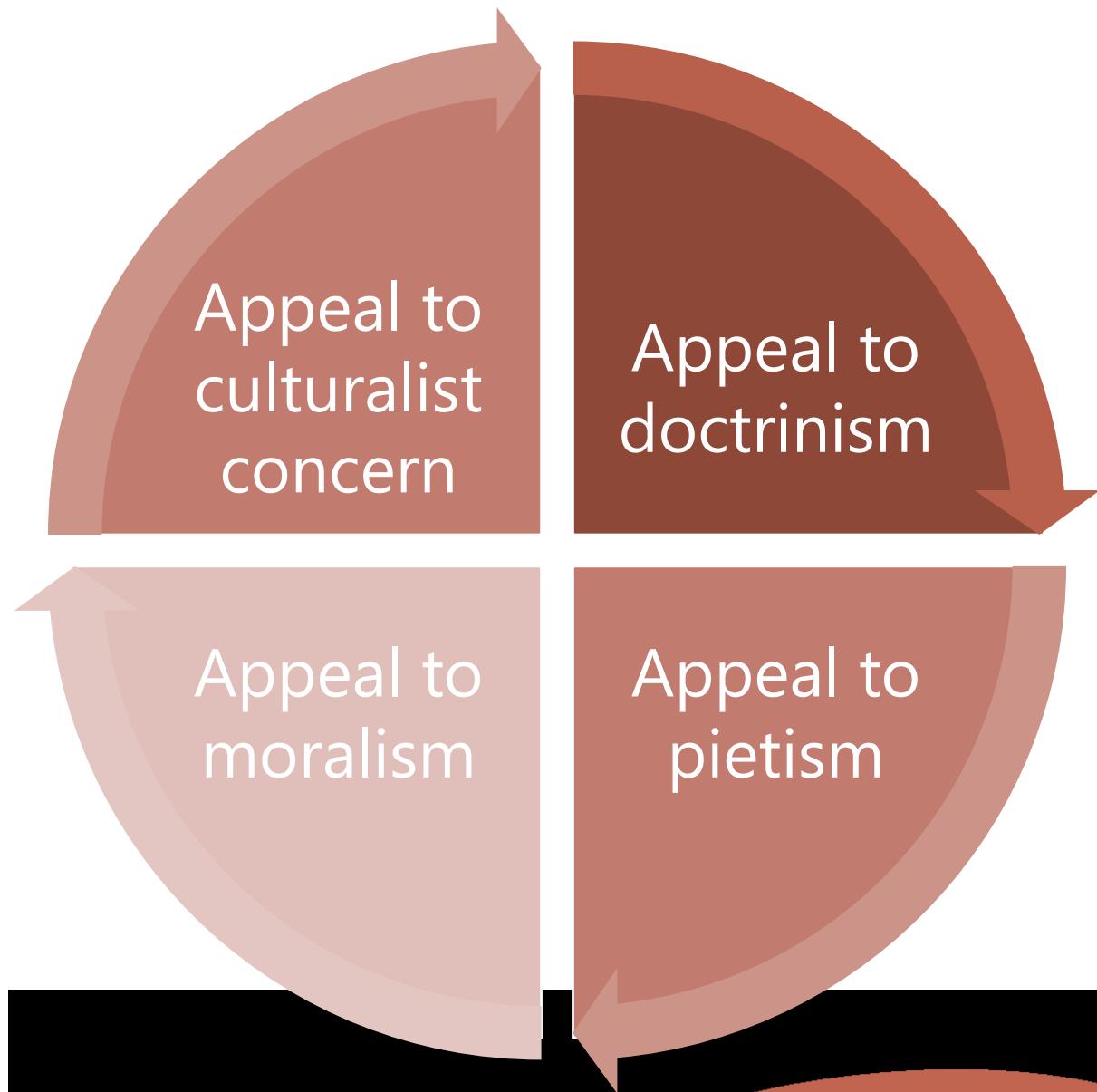
**Lap Yan Kung**

# *1. Sola Scriptura vs Solo Scriptura*

Luther writes, "Therefore, if [Christ] Himself is the price of my redemption, if He Himself became sin and a curse in order to justify and bless me, I am not put off at all by passages of Scripture, even if you were to produce six hundred in support of the righteousness of works and against the righteousness of faith... I have the Author and the Lord of



than believe you.



2. This normative approach to Scripture risks overlooking the significance of human experience in interpreting Scripture, and more critically, suppresses the imaginative narrative power inherent in the biblical text.

3. The relevance of Scripture to public theology lies not primarily in its prescriptive commands or normative rules, but rather in its capacity to evoke and sustain alternative ways of thinking and living. This imaginative potential is cultivated through the dynamic interaction between God's life story and ours.



A. Scripture constitutes the narrative of God's engagement with humanity, with a particular emphasis on the history of Israel from the call of Abraham to the life and ministry of Jesus. Within this unfolding narrative, God progressively reveals his/ her identity and purposes through relational encounters and historical events. Wolfhart Pannenberg considers that all of history is the arena in which God reveals himself/ herself. In this view, God reveals not only propositional knowledge, but

A. Scripture is a divine drama in which the Church discerns and enacts its role.

Playwright: God

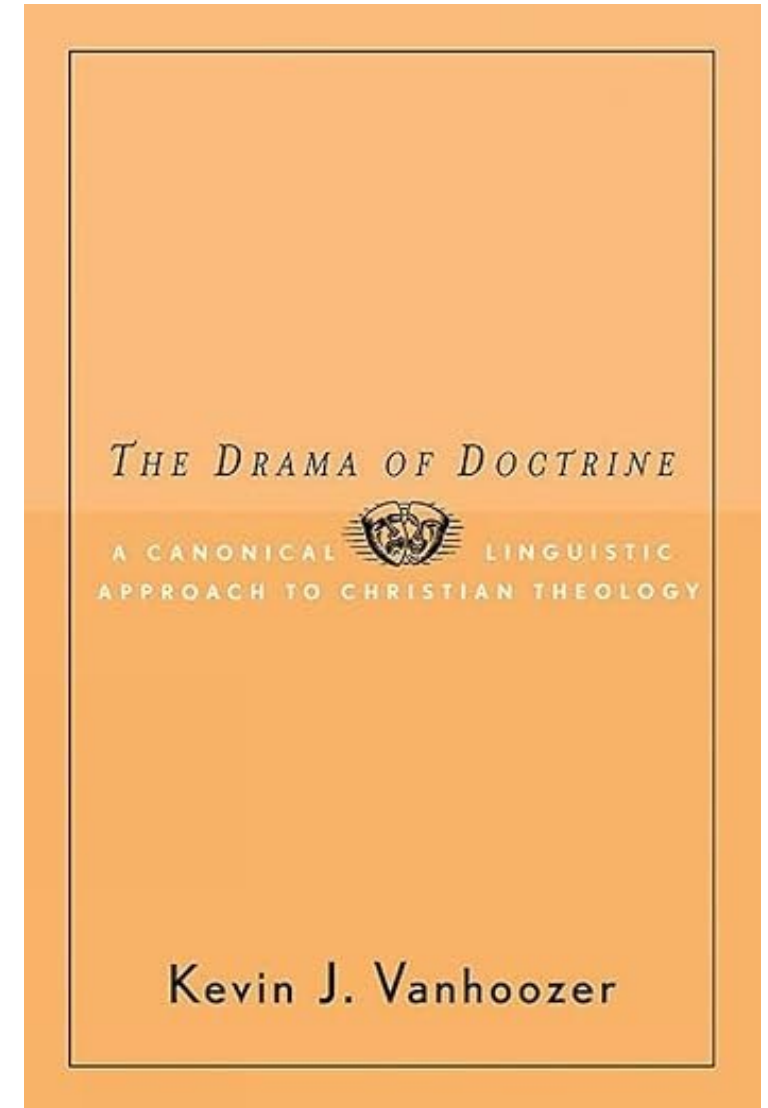
Drama: The history of redemption

Script: The canon of Scripture

Dramaturge: Theologians

Director: The Holy Spirit (and pastors under Him)

Actors: All believers



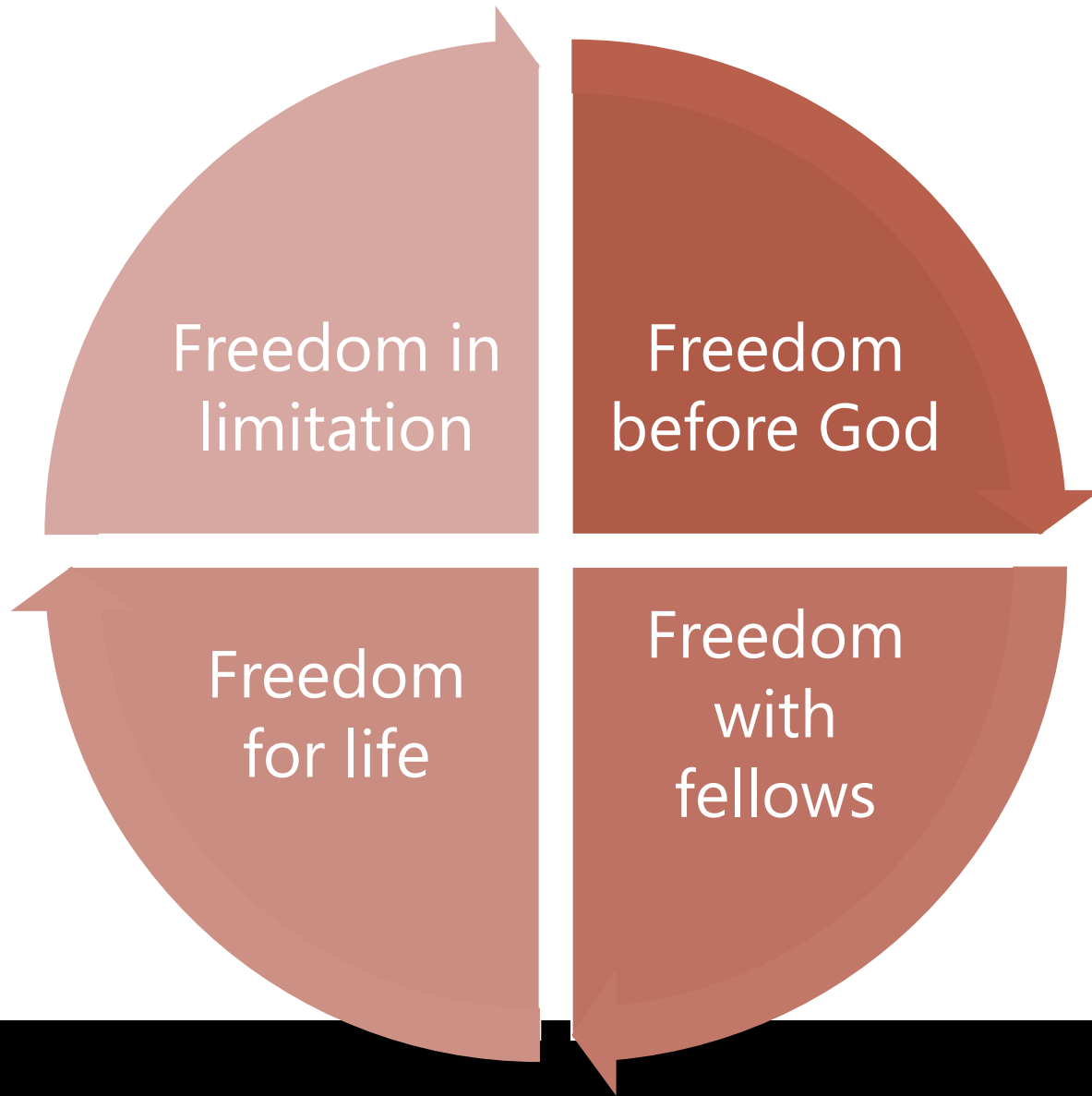
C. Viewing Scripture as God's life story emphasizes the coherence and existential significance that such a narrative offers—both to the narrator and to the audience. The listener is neither expected to replicate the narrative of God's life nor to extend or complete an unfinished divine story. Instead, the listener is invited to engage in a reflective and transformative process, wherein they are inspired and empowered to discern and articulate their own life story in response. This is the meaning of that lives touch lives.



a) Scripture portrays the triune God as the source and sustainer of creation, reconciliation, and renewal—an understanding encapsulated in Jesus' declaration, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). This abundant life or life flourishing is proposed here as a central motif in God's life story. On one level, God possesses flourishing life within the relational unity of the Trinity; on another, God actively brings creation into its fullness.







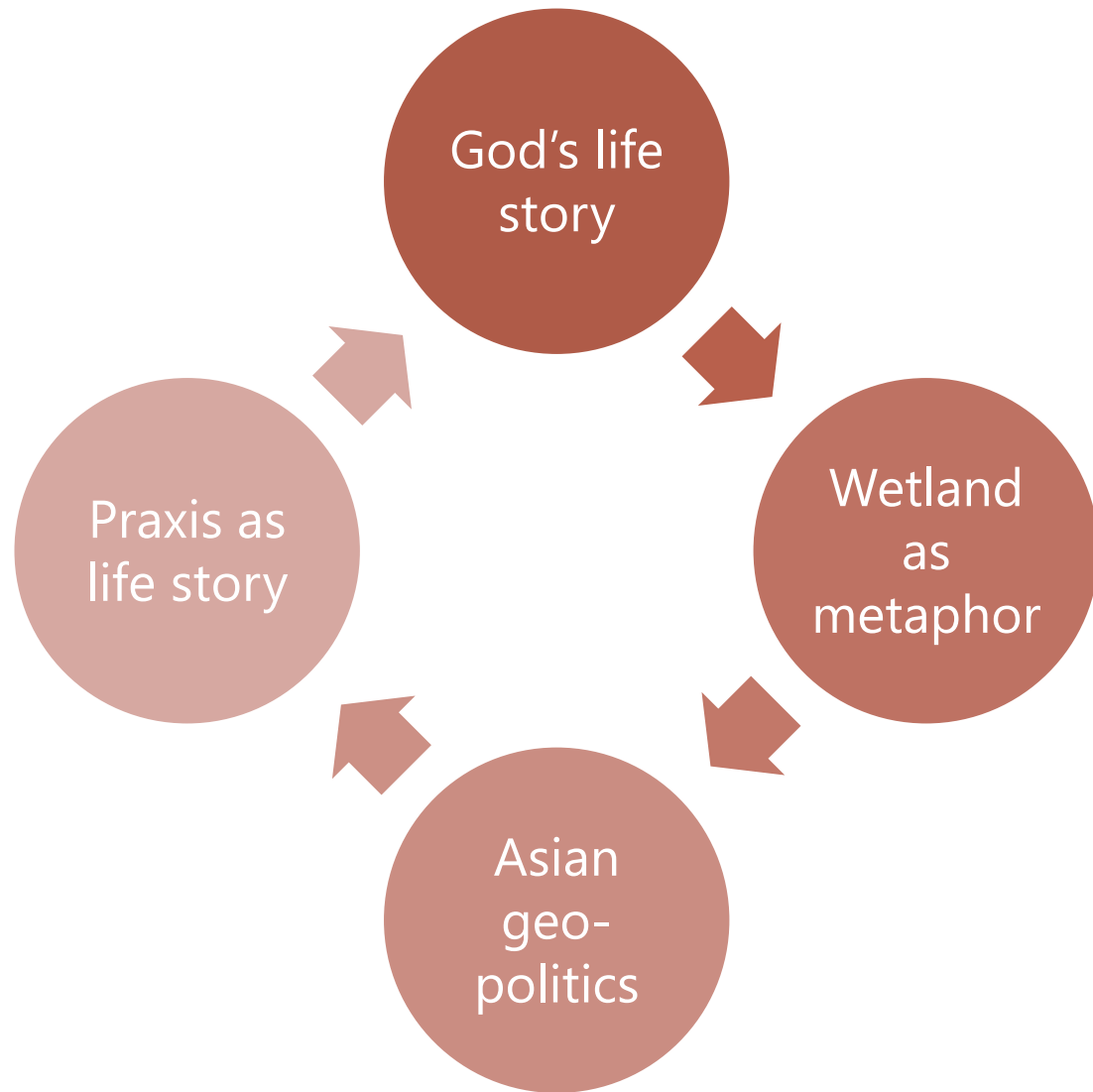
b) In what ways does God's life story inspire and empower us to live in freedom amid conditions that deny human dignity, so that the promise of life flourishing in Jesus Christ might be realized?

#### 4. Life-flourishing and Southeast Asian Geo-politics

A. The principle of “non-interference” puts national sovereignty first and emphasizes “non-interference” in the internal affairs of other nations. This is so-called the “ASEAN Way”. The challenge to ASEAN is the extent to which the “ASEAN Way” characterized by sovereign boundaries, is still effective.

B. Article 1.13 of the ASEAN Charter states that ASEAN should “promote a people-oriented ASEAN”.






C. The role of metaphor  
a) Analogical imagination  
b) Dialectical imagination

D. Wetland

a) Boundaries for others  
(freedom for others, freedom  
in limitation)  
b) Blurred boundaries,  
coexistence as together  
towards life (freedom with

## E. Reflection

a) ASEAN is a top-down model where nations take initiatives, while the model of civil society is bottom-up, where people take more initiatives. ASEAN is framed by boundaries, while civil society always exists across boundaries and borders. Civil society is not the soft power of governments in international relations. Ironically, it challenges and pushes governments to be committed to life flourishing



b) Coexistence challenges the “ASEAN Way” on the one hand and illustrates the protection of human rights as the basis of coexistence on the other.

c) Minor utopias are visions of partial transformation that “sketch out a world very different from the one we live in, but from which not all social conflict or all oppression has been eliminated.” Churches are minor utopias or moments of possibility, but these are not confined

