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**Church Growth in Korea: Perspectives on the Past and Prospects for the Future**

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One of the more remarkable aspects of twentieth-century and early twenty-first century Christianity has been the rapid growth of the church in many parts of the non-western world.1 Perhaps the most outstanding example of this growth is Korea, where it is estimated that approximately 25 percent of the population is Christian.2 In this essay we shall examine this phenomenon of church growth and seek to identify the factors that have contributed to it. We shall begin by considering the question of why the church has grown in Korea but not in the other nations of northeast Asia such as China and Japan.

There are a number of answers that traditionally have been given to this question. They can be summarized under three basic categories: religious factors, socio-historical factors, and cultural factors. Each of these will be considered and critically examined. It will be shown that taken together as a whole, all of these factors have contributed to the uniqueness of the Korean situation and to the receptivity of Christianity.

In spite of the uniqueness of this overall situation, there are two events which stand out: the great revival of 1907, which stressed quantitative growth through the building up of the church, and the Independence Movement of 1919, which emphasized qualitative maturity through the strengthening of national consciousness. These events represent two vastly different yet interrelated paradigms, and the growth of the church is largely due to a paradigm shift which occurred between 1907 and 1919. This paradigm shift was from ecclesiology or concern with the institutional church, to nationalism and concern with the [page 2] task of recovering national identity. It is this paradigm shift which has enabled Christianity to become truly Korean.

An examination of Korean Christianity in its many and varied forms reveals a strong predilection toward nationalism. This is true not only in the progressive wing of the church, with its emphasis upon minjung theology and national reunification, but also of the conservatives who focus on church growth, evangelism, and international mission. It is this nationalism and the sense that Christianity is deeply intertwined with Korean history and aspirations which has contributed to the remarkable growth of the Christian church in this land.

The Question: Why Church Growth in Korea?

The growth of the church in Korea has always been problematic when one considers the state of Christianity as a whole in Northeast Asia. Nowhere, except Korea, is the percentage of Christians over 10 percent. If one considers the Nestorians, Christianity was first established in China in the year 635.3 Yet the present number of Christians is estimated at a mere 5,000,000 out of a total population of over one billion. Christianity was first introduced to Japan by Francis Xavier in 1549.4 Although this was over two hundred years earlier than the coming of Christianity to Korea, the number of Christians in Japan today is estimated to be around one percent.5 Christians in Hong Kong make up 10 percent of the population, but it must be kept in mind that Hong Kong was previously a British colony and the high percentage of Christians is directly related to this fact. In Taiwan the number of Christians is placed at four percent with a significant number of these being non-Chinese aboriginal people.

In light of these statistics one cannot help but ask the question: Why church growth in Korea? How is Korea different from China and Japan? Although Nestorian Christianity came early to China, the main missionary advances came from the West in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, thus coinciding with the encroachment of the colonial powers. The interference of the Vatican in the Chinese Rites Controversy brought the early Catholic mission to an abrupt end, and extraterritoriality, gunboat diplomacy, and unequal treaties spelled eventual doom for the later Protestant mission. In China, and to a lesser extent in Taiwan, Christianity [page 3] came to be identified with the negative elements of colonialism. This, coupled with an officially atheistic communist government which came to power in 1949, severely hampered the growth of the church in China.

The situation in Japan was different due to two factors, the changes brought about during the Meiji Era (1868-1912) and the transformation of the indigenous religion of Shinto. The Meiji Restoration enabled Japan to change from a feudalistic nation into a modern industrial state in just forty years. Japan was strong enough both to resist the encroachments of the western colonial powers, and perhaps more significant, to become a colonial power itself. The indigenous religion of Shinto proved to be an almost insurmountable barrier to Christianity, for Shinto was deeply embedded in the Japanese ethnic and cultural consciousness. The folk religion of the pre-Meiji period was transformed into the imperial state Shinto of the post-Meiji period. When the power of the modern military-industrial state was wedded with the cultic devotion of Shinto, the result was a strong resistance to the acceptance of Christianity.6

We see, therefore, that both China and Japan have proved to be unreceptive to Christianity with the consequence that the church has experienced a relatively slow rate of growth in these countries. Korea, on the other hand, underwent a process of historical development very different from either China or Japan. To begin with, the colonial power that came to dominate Korea was not from the West, but rather from the East. It was Japan which colonized Korea, so there was no association between colonialism and Christianity in the Korean mind. Furthermore, Korea had no indigenous religion comparable to Shinto. Neo-Confucianism, which had the rituals of a civil religion, was originally from China. Buddhism also came from outside the country by way of China. Shamanism was more of a loose organization of folk beliefs and practices than a highly structured religious tradition. This meant that Korea provided more fertile soil than either China or Japan in which the seeds of Christianity could grow.

Seen in this light the question: “Why church growth in Korea?” becomes much less problematic. At the same time, fertile soil is not enough; newly planted seeds must be watered, cultivated, and carefully tended if they are to mature into plants that bear fruit. If we are to fully[page 4] answer the question: “Why church growth in Korea?” we must look beyond the general historical situation and consider the answers that are traditionally given to this question.

Some Traditional Answers to the Question

Visitors to Korea frequently ask Korean Christians this very same question: “Why church growth in Korea?” The answers received often center around religious factors such as divine providence, the dedication of Korean church workers, the practice of prayer and fasting, and the frequency of revival meetings. One observer puts it this way: “There is no adequate human explanation of the fact that there are more Christians in Korea than in neighboring Japan or Taiwan . . . . The conversion of one person or one million people is the work of God’s mercy and grace.”7 For reasons known only to divine providence, Korea has been responsive to Christianity.

At the same time, many would say that the reason for the outpouring of this divine mercy and grace upon Korea is because of the dedication of Korean Christians. Not only do many parents still pray that a son or daughter will enter the service of the church, but Koreans spend a great deal of time in prayer and Bible reading and evangelization. It is quite common to see shop employees read their Bibles during free moments and to meet people passing out tracts on street corners ana in bus and railway stations. Korean Christians also spend much time in prayer and fasting. Dawn prayer services are held in virtually all churches, as are Wednesday evening prayers and all-night prayer meetings on Fridays. Many Christians spend extended periods of time praying and fasting at prayer houses located in the mountains. Pastors frequently engage in a forty-day period of fasting just prior to special evangelistic campaigns or annual revival meetings. All churches and Christian institutions hold annual revival meetings where faith is renewed and new converts are brought into the church. For many, these religious factors provide a sufficient answer to the question: “Why church growth in Korea?”

It must be admitted, however, that most of these religious factors became significant after Christianity was firmly established in Korea. Indeed, much of the current emphasis upon prayer developed out of the great revival of 1907, and the annual revival meetings are an attempt to[page 5] keep alive the spiritual momentum generated by the earlier revivals.8 These religious factors, while of great importance, are not the cause of church growth, but rather are the fruit of seeds planted by past generations of Christians.

Probing a bit deeper we find other factors at work in the socio- historical process. To begin with, the period of rapid church growth came with the establishment of Protestant Christianity in Korea in 1884. This came only after a century of Catholic presence in Korea, much of it under conditions of severe persecution.9 The first Catholics to come to Korea were a Father Gregario de Cespedes and a Japanese priest named Fukan Eion, who came in 1593 to attend to the spiritual needs of Christians in the Japanese army.10 This was, of course, during the Hideyoshi invasions so that any connection whatsoever with the Japanese was totally rejected by Koreans. From the Korean perspective, therefore, this first contact was an utter failure.

Although Korea was closed to foreigners—and known as “the Hermit Kingdom”—Catholic ideas did enter Korea via China from Koreans who came into contact with the Jesuits in Peking. Eventually a church was established in 1784 but it encountered almost immediate persecution.11 There was strong opposition on the part of the Neo-Confucian gentry due to the refusal of Catholics to participate in the Confucian ancestral rites. This was, of course, due to Vatican interference in the famed Rites Controversy in China. Numerous persecutions followed in which thousands were martyred, including a number of missionaries who had clandestinely entered the country.

George Lak-Geoon Paik, a noted Korean historian of Christianity, offers three criticisms of the Catholic presence in Korea: (1) The laity were untutored in Scripture; (2) there was too great an emphasis placed on the ecclesiastical structure; and (3) Catholics became involved in political activities which were perceived to be traitorous to the Korean state.12 It was the third factor which was decisive and James Huntley Grayson goes on to say that “probably the strongest criticism which may be made against the Church is that it allowed itself to become entangled with foreign powers, and thus ran afoul of strong feelings of national pride and independence.”13 Entanglements with both Japan and the Vatican (which was allied with European powers such as France) served to[page 6] hinder the growth of the Catholic Church.

Thus the first century of the Catholic Church in Korea was characterized by a series of persecutions in which thousands died. It is estimated that between 1801 and 1876 over 10,000 Catholics were executed because of their refusal to follow the traditional Confucian ancestral rites.14 The Church was therefore placed in a position of opposition to the royal court. Catholics were forced to live in isolated rural villages, sometimes deep in the mountains,and they were unable to found any institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals. The Church played no official role in Korean cultural life, and in the latter years of the Chosun Dynasty when some Neo-Confucian scholars became influenced by Catholic ideas, and in several instances even became converts, these scholars were either executed or sent into exile.

At the time of the Independence Movement against the Japanese, the position of the Catholic Church was ambiguous at best. Already severely weakened by years of persecution, “the Korean Church did not take active part in the independence moment and other movements to protect national sovereignty.”15 There were some lay people who participated in independence related demonstrations, but they did so as individuals. Students from the seminaries in Seoul and Taegu who participated in the March 1,1919 Independence Movement were punished by their superiors and some were expelled, and the ordinations that were scheduled for 1919 were canceled.16 On the other hand, the well-known patriot Ahn Chung-Gun, who shot the Japanese official Ito Hirobumi at the Harbin railroad station in 1909, was an ardent Catholic. In the end, however, “the Japanese authorities ruled that the prayer at the Shinto shrine is a national ceremony, and on the basis of this rule the Holy See permitted Korean Catholics to offer prayer at the Japanese shrine.”17 Thus the Catholic Church in Korea found itself in the paradoxical position of forbidding the practice of the Confucian ancestral rites, which were at the heart of Korean culture, during its first century in Korea, and allowing the practice of bowing at the Japanese Shinto shrines, which sought to suppress Korean culture, during the first half of its second century in Korea. Neither of these positions was conducive to the rapid growth of the Church. Thus in 1945 the number of Catholics in Korea was estimated to be a mere 183,606.18 [page 7]

The turning point for the Catholic Church in Korea came in the 1960s. During this decade the Vatican Council II was held, the Korean hierarchy was officially sanctioned, three archdioceses were formed, an emphasis was placed upon education in the Church, ecumenical relations were improved, and a joint Catholic-Protestant Korean Bible was published.19 At long last the Catholic Church in Korea had “come of age” and was now accepted as a major institution within Korean society. This in turn enabled the Church to play a leading role in the human rights movement during the 1970s and 1980s.20 As a result the Church experienced rapid growth, so that by 1992 the number of Catholics was estimated to be approximately 3,000,000. Indeed, one observer points out that as of 1996 there were at least ten churches in Seoul which had over 10,000 members.21 Current unofficial data suggests that the Catholic Church in Korea is experiencing a sustained, steady rate of growth, and that this is due, in part, to the continued involvement of the Church in social issues such as the labor movement, farmers’ organizations, and human rights.

Protestant work in Korea had its beginnings in Manchuria where missionaries John Ross and John McIntyre worked together with five Koreans (Lee Ung-Chau, Baik Hong-Joon, Kim Jin-Ki, Lee Sung-Ha, and Su Sang-Ryoon) to translate the New Testament into Korean.22 This Korean translation of the New Testament was brought into Korea and circulated prior to the coming of the missionaries and the establishment of the church in 1884. At the same time, another Korean by the name of Yi Su-Jong went to Japan on a diplomatic mission and while there became a Christian after reading the Sermon on the Mount on a scroll in a Japanese Christian’s home. Yi was baptized by a Japanese pastor and then worked with Henry Looms of the American Bible Society who was stationed in Yokohama. Together they translated the four gospels into Korean. Pioneer missionaries H. G. Underwood and Henry Appenzeller brought copies of this translation when they landed in Korea in 1884.

We find, therefore, that portions of the Bible in Korean translation were in circulation, that Korean Christians had made contacts in Korea itself so that there were Protestant Christians there, and that there were communities of Korean Christians in Manchuria and to a lesser extent in Japan. Thus “the development of the church in Korea from the first[page 8] depended upon the efforts of the Koreans themselves. Before any foreign missionaries actually engaged in evangelism on Korean soil, Christianity had been brought there by local evangelists.”23

The early Protestant missionaries made it a policy to win the favor of the royal court. This was accomplished initially through medicine, and they were granted royal permission to open a hospital. Later this permission was expanded to include educational institutions. Writes one observer, “It is a simple fact... that the Protestant missionary movement never received any official opposition from the Korean central government”24

One of the reasons for this openness to Protestant Christianity was the desire for modernization. At the time that Protestant Christianity entered Korea the old order was passing.25 The Neo-Confucian gentry were in disarray due to corruption, factionalism, and an inability to come to terms with change. Buddhism was in decline and had largely withdrawn from the affairs of society. Shamanism had never developed a social conscience and was primarily centered on personal concerns.

There was a vacuum in Korean society and Protestant Christianity came at just the right time to fill it. This was truly a time of kairos for Christianity in Korea. The title of pioneer missionary Horace G. Underwood’s book The Call of Korea: Political—Social—Religious, underscores the breadth of the early missionary efforts in Korea.26 Medical work included the introduction of vaccination for smallpox, the establishment of a hospital for contagious and infectious diseases in Seoul, and the dedicated service of missionaries in treating victims of a cholera epidemic and the victims of the Battle of Pyongyang in 1894. Educational work included Bible study groups, church-related schools and Sunday schools, primary schools and academies, theological seminaries, and colleges and universities. Coupled with this was an emphasis upon literacy making use of the Korean hangul phonetic alphabet rather than the difficult Chinese characters. At first this was resisted by the Neo-Confucian gentry, who complained that “even women could learn to read,” but over time it resulted in hangul being accepted by society at large. Today Korea has one of highest literacy rates in the world due to the acceptance and use of hangul.

Protestant educational work was particularly strong among women. [page 9] Women were taught to read and write and this in turn enabled them to make fuller use of their abilities and unique gifts. Ewha Woman’s University, the largest women’s university in the world, had its beginnings in this early educational work among women. Out of this came the “Bible women”—women who dedicated their lives to evangelism and social service throughout Korea Although constrained by conservative theology and Neo-Confucian social custom, both of which were patriarchal, this educational work among Korean women raised their status and made a significant impact upon society at large.

Still another historical factor in the growth of the church was the adoption of the Nevius principles. Dr. John Nevius was a Presbyterian missionary in China who over a period of five years published a series of articles and two small books which set out a number of principles for effective missionary work. In 1890 he came to Korea at the invitation of a number of missionaries and presented his principles. The Nevius principles have been summarized as self-support, self-government, and self-propagation, but in reality were considerably more complex than that.27 Also included was an emphasis upon Bible classes, the training of national church workers, and development of a program of lay training in evangelism. Of particular significance was the emphasis upon missionary itineration where “the missionary was to itinerate widely, with a Korean helper, but avoided accepting pastorates of Korean churches.”28 This was in marked contrast to the Catholic mission, where foreign priests often served local congregations. It is significant that the Presbyterian Church of Korea was organized and ordained its first pastors just twenty-three years after the arrival of the first missionary in 1884. This was due in part to the adoption of the Nevius principles.29

In addition to these socio-historical factors, there were also cultural factors that contributed to the growth of the Korean church. The first of these was a sympathetic relationship between the Neo-Confucianism of Korean society and the theological conservatism of the early missionaries. This sympathetic relationship was so pronounced that James Huntley Grayson asserts that “in the altered political conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Korean Confucianism became an ally rather than an enemy of Protestant Christianity.”30

Neo-Confucianism was the official ideology of the Yi Dynasty[page 10] (1392-1910). The philosophy of Chu Hsi became the established orthodoxy of Korean social and political thought from which no deviation was allowed. “Neo-Confucian ethics was becoming the basis of political principles, gradually but so firmly that the people’s thinking was fixed in a rigid Neo-Confucianism in short time. This brought about the narrow-mindedness which we find in the institutions and culture of the dynasty.”31 As the legal scholar Hahm Pyong-Choon puts it, Yi Dynasty intellectuals had a “predilection for ideological orthodoxy.”32

This ideological orthodoxy was reinforced through the educational system which was under the firm control of the Neo-Confucianists. The only texts used were the Confucian classics which were committed to memory by the students. These in turn formed the basis for the examination system by which men were prepared and approved for positions in the state bureaucracy. It was believed that right knowledge led to the development of virtue which in turn brought about right action.

The early Protestant missionaries to Korea were men and women of Puritanical zeal and Wesleyian fervor whose theology would be described today as fundamentalist. Like the Neo-Confucianist gentry, they too were strictly orthodox, resistant to new theological ideas, and used only one text—the Bible—as the basis for their thought.33 Writing in 1934,Presbyterian missionary Samuel A. Moffett made the following observation concerning the new theological ideas that were beginning to find their way into the Korean church:

Today in the Church we occasionally hear that the Church will have to make a change; that it must become up-to-date; that if the Gospel is preached in the old way, people won’t like it; that in a new day, the old-fashioned Gospel does not fit. We would be wise to preach a new Gospel in the new day—so we are told.... Today some modernists criticize me as being too conservative. But the old Gospel brought salvation, while the new does not. When we preached the old Gospel that Paul preached, there were great results.... There are those who go about talking of a new theology, a new Gospel, today, but let us beware of them. Even though the Korean missionaries all die or leave the country, let the brethren of the Korean church continue to preach the same Gospel as forty years ago....34

Needless to say, this theological conservatism of the early missionaries [page 11] was similar to the cultural conservatism of the Neo-Confucian gentry.

The result was that Neo-Confucianism and theological conservatism interacted with each other in a number of ways. Both were patriarchal and denied leadership positions to women. Both emphasized authoritative texts and rote memorization based upon the texts. Both believed that this would bring about the attainment of virtue. While the Neo-Confucians looked upon Chu Hsi as their teacher, the early missionaries looked back to the preaching of Paul While the Neo-Confucianists attempted to shut out foreign influences, the missionaries tried to keep out higher criticism and the new theology.

It is significant that a number of the early converts and leaders in the church were sons of Neo-Confucian scholars and had studied the Chinese classics. Among these were Yi Sang-Chai (1850-1927), Yi Seung-Hoon (1864-1930), and Kil Sun-Choo (1869-1935). Kil Sun-Choo, for example, had studied the Chinese classics, and following his conversion to Christianity studied the Bible with the same degree of intensity and dedication. He became one of the most effective Bible teachers in Korea, and while in prison for his part in the March 1, 1919 Independence Movement, memorized the entire book of Revelation.35

A second cultural factor that influenced the growth of the church is shamanism. The Neo-Confucian gentry and the early missionaries both strongly rejected shamanism as heterodox. Yet shamanism is a fact of Korean religious life which basically involves a belief in the spirit world and in certain people, spirit mediums, who are able to contact these spirits and communicate with them. Korean shamans serve as exorcists, fortune tellers, healers, and givers of advice. Because the shamans go into an ecstatic trance-like state in order to establish contact with the spirit world, there is a great deal of emotional activity involved. In Korea shamans are usually, although not always, female.36

The significance of shamanism for church growth is twofold. To begin with, a number of practices with their origins in shamanism have carried over into Christian faith and practice. These include all night prayer meetings; the establishment of prayer retreat houses in the mountains; the belief in and practice of exorcism in cases of emotional, mental, and severe physical illness; and the expression of intense emotional states while praying. In addition, there is the commonly held belief that [page 12] one receives spiritual and material blessings in direct proportion to one’s financial giving. It has been frequently observed that the shaman’s advice to a client improves as the amount of money given is increased. This same idea has been carried over into the churches.

More important for the growth of the church, however, has been the relationship between shamanism and the role of women, both in society and in the church. Traditionally, women were excluded from Neo- Confucian ancestral rites. Indeed, for the most part Neo-Confucianism was centered upon the males, and women had very little direct control over their lives. It was through shamanism that women had their emotional and religious needs met, and it was through shamanistic ritual that they carved out a niche for themselves in society where they could have some degree of control over their own lives. When Protestant Christianity was introduced into Korea it made a place in the church for women, but the leadership positions and the power remained firmly in male hands. The women thus transferred their shamanistic practices into the church to ensure themselves a position in this new structure. Youngsook Kim Harvey explains how this took place, especially in the revival of 1907 in which many of the participants were women:

To individuals with little control over their lives, shamanism offered avenues for direct negotiations with the supernatural. This mode of religious behavior proved an advantage to the missionaries. Stylistically, it predisposed the Koreans to Pentecostal, fundamentalist Protestant Christianity, and the Christian concept of the Holy Ghost was compatible with the shamanistic concept of spirit possession. There were other parallels. Shamans and their followers believed in the exorcism of spirits and Christians accepted Jesus’ capacity to exorcise evil spirits; both healed through prayer. The concept of hanunim, by which Koreans represent the embodiment of supernatural power, was adopted by the Protestant missionaries as suitable for expressing their idea of God.37

Although the early missionaries and the churches officially rejected shamanism and denied its influence, ethnographic research suggests that the influence was both profound and widespread.38

We find, therefore, that even as Neo-Confucianism and shamanism were contradictory yet complimentary in Korean cultural life, they retained [page 13] this same uneasy but necessary relationship in the Christian church.

There is one other cultural factor that deserves mention, and that is that the Koreans are one people ethnically, linguistically, and culturally. In recent years there has been a shift in emphasis among church growth theorists from countries or nations to what are commonly called people groups. People groups are often identified by their ethnicity, language, or culture. Many countries are made up of numerous such people groups, some highly resistant to the introduction of Christianity and others which show a high degree of receptivity. Studies have shown that mass revivals and mass conversions to Christianity almost always take place in a specific people group that shares a common language, culture, and ethnic identity. Korea is unique in that it is highly homogeneous, and there is no doubt that this has been a contributing factor to successful church growth, for the entire nation was, and is, a clearly identifiable people group.

The religious, socio-historical, and cultural factors outlined above all contributed to the growth of the church in Korea. Taken together they formed a unique combination that served to greatly enhance the growth of the church. Taken separately or in various combinations, however, these same factors can be found elsewhere either in people groups within one or more nations or within given nations as a whole.39

Although the question: “Why church growth in Korea?” becomes less problematic, these religious, socio-historical, and cultural factors do not provide a completely satisfactory answer. While these traditional answers provide pieces in solving the puzzle, the final solution remains elusive.

Two Paradigms for Korean Church Growth

One of the highlights of the church in Korea, and an event to which constant reference is made, is the great revival of 1907. In fact the revival began in 1903 and slowly spread across the country. The climax came, however, early in 1907 in the city of Pyongyang when the men’s Bible class met for two weeks. This particular class had an average attendance of between eight hundred and a thousand. When the revival came the results were as astounding as they were unexpected. Hundreds confessed their sins, wept openly, engaged in fervent prayer, and asked God for forgiveness and renewal.40 Like wildfire the revival spread and [page 14] increased in intensity until all of Korea was affected. Even the missionaries became involved.41 Before it was over thousands experienced an intensity of religious emotion that had previously seemed impossible.

The revival of 1907 did not happen in a vacuum; Korea was the arena for the Russo-Japanese War. As the victor in that war, Japan annexed Korea, and the Korean people were aware for the first time that Japan had no intention of withdrawal. Korea was stripped of her dignity as an independent nation and humiliated by being at the mercy of foreign powers. Thus “it should come as no surprise that during this time of national crisis the church experienced a revival which led to a massive movement for indigenous evangelization.”42 This revival movement was also an expression of national catharsis whereby the feelings of hatred toward the Japanese were transferred to others and confessed, thus releasing pent up feelings and emotions. Martha Huntley, a missionary journalist, writes at length concerning this, and her comments and citations bear repeating:

It has been widely acknowledged that the Great Revival was a spiritual renewal of Christian believers rather than a movement to convert non-Christians. But beyond its influence on the church, the revival had a national impact which was made manifest later, during the Independence Movement of 1919. Canadian missionary William Scott recognized the national implications of the revival when he wrote, “Scenes similar to those that accompanied the revival in Pyongyang were witnessed in churches everywhere. It is probable that much of the agony of confession came not only from a sense of individual unworthiness but from a deep seated conviction that every Korean bore a responsibility for the tragedy that had befallen the nation. The practice of prayer in unison, though causing a babel of sound, was a means of expressing corporate guilt as well as an opportunity for sensitive souls to pour out pent up emotions which national pride and personal reticence would otherwise keep bottled up within. The utter helplessness of the nation and the individual made it easy to throw oneself unreservedly upon a God whose supreme revelation came in the bearing of a cross for the sins of all.... God broke through the disillusionment and despair of countless Korean individuals and led their minds from the uncertainties of human institutions to the eternal stabilities.”43[page 15]

The revival of 1907 was, therefore, a kind of collective national catharsis during a period of national crisis.

Just prior to the revival there was an outbreak of anti-Americanism in Korea due to the recognition on the part of the United States of Japanese control over Korea. The missionaries strongly resisted any involvement in politics and counseled the Koreans to be submissive, forgiving, and focus on personal repentance rather than revenge.44 One missionary, speaking in 1908, said: “We have assured the people that their duty was to obey the Japanese and to do so with a ‘sweet mind’ and not to work for independence, and we have in no way tried to discredit or hamper them in their reforms. I have spent hours explaining to church officers and teaching men advantages of Japanese rule, and I cannot think of one who has been kept from it.”45 Another missionary, Donald Allen Clark, explained his position in these words: “The church is a spiritual organi-zation and as such is not concerned with politics either for or against the present or any other government. Literally hundreds of times in the past we have stood by when our people have been suffering persecution and we have refused to speak one word to any magistrate that might free them.”46 It was the firm conviction of the majority of the missionaries that the affairs of the church took priority over the destiny of the nation.

The events following the revival were highly significant for the Korean church. These included the Million Souls Movement evangelistic campaign which was only partially successful, and a movement toward unity among the foreign mission boards which was a complete failure. However, the successes far outweighed the failures. Korea was divided into regions where each foreign mission would work, thus eliminating needless duplication of effort and competition. In September of 1907 the Presbyterian Church of Korea became fully independent. There was also a renewed development of Methodist work. In addition the complete translation of the Bible was published in 1910. From 1907 until 1910 there was a steady growth of the church as well as a developing missionary movement. Missionaries were sent to the island of Cheju and to Korean communities in Manchuria, Vladivostok, and Shantung Province in China. Allen Clark writes that “these were thrilling and important years in the development of the Korean church.... The Korean church was benefited because, in a time of political crisis, it was engagea in an [page 16]absorbing campaign which, amid the defeated temporal, raised aloft the spiritual and eternal.”47

In the great revival of 1907 and in the events immediately following we can see the ecclesiastical emphasis of the missionaries. Their concern was to build up the church through evangelism. All of the “successes” were church oriented. Even the educational institutions, which became centers of resistance to Japanese rule, were primarily oriented toward evangelism. In the words of James E. Fisher: “We may say, therefore, that the primary aim of mission education in Korea is to bring as many as possible of those who come under the influence of this education to a full acceptance of the Christian religion as the true and completely adequate guide for human life.”48

Harold Hong asserts that there has always been a “heavy shadow of ecclesiasticism” among Korean Christians. He writes that “Everything has been Church-centered. By the word ‘Church” I mean the ‘ecclesia,’ the called-out Church, the literal Noah’s Ark. The loyalty to the institutional Church has been tremendous.”49 Similar thoughts are echoed by Kim Chai-Choon: “The Church was understood as something like a ‘Noah’s Ark,’ saving men from the world. Thus the outlook of churchmen tended to become extremely other-worldly, with a strong legalistic and mystical bias. The evangelical message was simplified to something like: ‘Come to church; believe in Jesus; and go to heaven’.”50 Kim goes on to point out that “This kind of approach, to a certain extent, brought satisfaction to the Korean people, during the colonial period, since they had little opportunity to participate in their national or cultural life. But from the independence movement of 1919 the foundations of such time of the fundamentalism began to be shaken…”51

“The March First 1919 Independence Movement was a pivotal event in modern Korean history,” wrote Donald N. Clark in his 1986 study Christianity in Modern Korea.52 Although the movement failed to gain the immediate independence of Korea from Japan, it signaled the beginning of a renewed sense of nationalism among the Korean people. On March 1, 1919 a group of thirty-three Korean religious, cultural, intellectual, and political leaders met at a restaurant in downtown Seoul and affixed their signatures to a document proclaiming independence from Japanese rule. Fifteen or sixteen of those signing were Christians, fifteen[page 17] were members of Ch’ondo-gyo, an indigenous religion growing out of the Tongkak Rebellion of the 1890s, and two or three were Buddhists.53 At the same time thousands of ordinary citizens and students staged a rally at Pagoda Park in Seoul and then marched through the streets shouting, “Long Live Korea!” Similar rallies and street demonstrations were held in every major Korean city and even in many small towns and villages. The Korean flag, which was forbidden by the Japanese, was displayed by young and old all across the land.54 Needless to say, the Japanese—and the foreign missionaries—were taken completely by surprise.

This Independence Movement was planned and executed in complete secrecy. Furthermore, it was totally non-violent. Most significant, though, was that the Independence Movement of 1919 was carried out by the Koreans themselves. There was no foreign encouragement or support. This was truly a nationalistic movement. The Japanese response was both swift and brutal. In the aftermath of the movement 7,509 Koreans were killed, 15,961 were wounded, and 46,948 were arrested. In addition 715 houses and 47 churches were destroyed.55

Although 37,000 of those arrested were acquitted, over 9,400 were given prison sentences and of those 2,033 were Protestants with 1,461 being Presbyterians, 475 being Methodists, and the others being Salvation Army and smaller denominations. Indeed,the list of those arrested reads like a “who’s who” of the Korean church.56 It was obvious that from the Korean point of view the church was no longer a Noah’s Ark! It was equally obvious to the Japanese that Protestant Christians were not only deeply involved in the Independence Movement; they were among the leaders and instigators of the movement.

The Independence Movement of 1919 did not develop in a vacuum, for there were at least nine independence groups in operation between 1905 and 1915.57 Many of these groups attracted young Christians and frequently held their meetings in churches and church-related schools.58 In addition there was the famed Conspiracy Case of 1911 in the southern port city of Sunchon in which 123 Christians, most of whom were associated with a Presbyterian Bible school, were accused of plotting to assassinate the Japanese governor-general. At the trial they retracted their confessions, claiming they were tortured, and most were later [page 18] acquitted. It was obvious that the trial was a bungled attempt to neutralize the political witness of the church.

Although the Independence Movement of 1919 was non-violent, it was followed by at least thirteen violent incidents between September 1919 and December 1926.59 These included bombings, hijackings, attacks on police stations, and assassinations, some successful and others unsuccessful. As a whole, however, “the movement was aimed more at expressing the nation’s basic self-realization than at resorting to armed revolt.”60

Christian resistance flared up again in the 1930s and 1940s when Koreans were required to bow at the Shinto shrines.61 This became a crucial issue in the church-related schools and many were closed as a result. Korean Christians were far from united in dealing with this issue. There were those who accepted the Japanese argument that the Shinto shrines were non-religious. Under duress from Japanese police, the 1938 general assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea voted to counsel their members to accede to the Japanese position. There were many, however, who strongly resisted and refused under any circumstances to compromise their faith. One of these was the Rev. Chu Ki-Ch’ol who died in prison. Rev. Chu was a theological conservative of the “old school” who remained aloof from involvement in politics. Yet his conservative, even fundamentalist, faith resulted in a radical political act.62 “It was a resistance against the absolutist and totalitarian power in the strongest terms of faith.”63

How shall we understand these two very different events, the revival of 1907 and the Independence Movement of 1919? And furthermore, how did the Independence Movement of 1919 influence the growth of the church? One way of understanding these two events is to think of them in terms of paradigms. There are two aspects to a paradigm, the sociological and the epistemological.

In the first case, a paradigm may therefore be defined as the total body of theories, philosophical premises, and values enshrining the area and procedures of a certain scientific group in normal research. In the second case a paradigm may be seen more specifically as the source of a certain methodology recognized by a group, as that which defines the area of problems for scientific activity and provides the criteria by [page 19] which solutions may be found. In both cases, however, the term paradigm denotes a recognized scientific vision—a vision, for example, inculcated in students in the course of their studies and often reinforced later in their professional practice.64

When one paradigm begins to falter and is threatened by a competing paradigm, “that model is invariably reduced to clearly formulated rules and laws; and at the same time strong claims are made, with firm conviction, for the reliable authority of the recognized paradigm.” 65

When a paradigm change occurs, it is much like a religious conversion. There is not only a change in one’s theoretical and problem-solving outlook; there is “also a shift in what are seen as truly relevant problems.”66 Furthermore, divergent paradigms cannot be integrated. After a period of struggle the old paradigm is usually replaced by a new one. Significantly, “paradigm choices are... founded more on the promise a paradigm holds for the future than on the results already achieved through it.”67

In the revival of 1907 we see the ecclesiastical paradigm of the mis-sionaries at work. The major concern is for the strengthening of the institutional church through the spiritual renewal of its members and the gaining of new converts through the evangelization of Korea. Everything is directed toward the fulfillment of these two goals. When this paradigm begins to falter we find missionaries exhorting the brethren to preach the same gospel that was preached forty years ago.

In the Independence Movement of 1919 we see a new paradigm of nationalism at work. This paradigm is championed by the Korean Christians themselves. They speak a different language, seek to solve different problems, and boldly look toward the fixture. Kim Yong-Bock summarizes this paradigm of nationalism in the following words:

The March First Independence Movement was an axial historical movement in the sense that the movement gave the people of Korea a new language, a new historical language; with this new language came the power of new historical perception and new historical imagination. Messianic in character, Utopian, and futuristic, this is the language of historical transformation, more than the language of political revolution—ideology; it was more than purely religious language. Certainly it was not the language of the Confucian [page 20] orthodoxy, nor is it the language of the Western missionaries. The language belongs to the people of Korea and to history of the people under oppression.68

While the missionaries were busy with the Million Souls Movement, the Koreans were planning the Independence Movement. One paradigm sought to build upon the successes of the past; the other to construct a new future.

Korean Church Growth—A New Paradigm?

From the perspective of church growth both paradigms were necessary, but it was the paradigm of nationalism that was decisive in the case of Korea. The reason for this is that “Christianity could be identified with national feelings involving a continuity with tradition.”69 The strong Christian involvement in the Independence Movement of 1919 meant that the church was fully involved in Korean history.

The missionaries “struggled with the business of being in but not of the world Just as the missionaries struggled with the problem of being in but not of the world, they were in the position of being in but not of Korea.”70 Had the ecclesiastical paradigm prevailed, in all likelihood the church too would have been in but not of Korea. Certainly the church would have survived and perhaps even experienced a degree of numerical growth. But it would have remained a foreign church, a church that had not really participated in the historical struggle of the Korean people. It would have been a church outside the cultural mainstream, without deep Korean roots.

Two of the churches that are often the subject of church growth studies are the Yong-nak Presbyterian Church with over 55,000 members and the Yoido Full Gospel Church with over 700,000 members. One is a mainstream evangelical church, the other a charismatic Pentecostal church. According to Donald Clark, nationalism has played a significant role in the growth of both churches. He writes:

If, as it is sometimes proposed, the cause of Korea’s present malaise is not the North Korean threat or the ordeal of modernization but the discrediting of the old Confucian wellsprings of value, then churches such as Yongnak—and there are many, both Catholic and Protestant—may be succeeding because they offer an alternative[page 21] tradition that seems to the church members themselves to belong to them, with roots in their own history. This seems like a paradox in a church so heavily influenced by foreign missionaries at various stages. The explanation lies in the fact that missionaries never could become Koreans and, as foreigners and with few exceptions, have never been able fully to share in the experiences of their Korean co-workers.71

With reference to the Yoido Full Gospel Church, Clark writes: “Much of the praying focuses on daily problems, and daily problems invariably involve money. It also involves praying for security from a North Korean attack and for preservation of the South Korean state. There is a patriotic fervor and an emphasis on Korea as Asia’s first Christian nation, God’s chosen people and instrument. The power of positive thinking, mixing religion and patriotism, has reached Korea and has found a following.”72

In one instance there is an identification made between the Christian church and Korean history. In the other instance there is an identification made between the biblical motif of being God’s chosen people and the Korean nation. Here are two, albeit vastly different, expressions of the paradigm of nationalism in the Korean church.

In a 1969 “Postscriptum” to his work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas S. Kuhn modified his definition of paradigm as follows: “A paradigm is not a theory or a leading idea. It is an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community.”73 In applying Kuhn’s modified definition of paradigm to theology, Hans Kung writes: “In other words, several theologies are possible with a single paradigm.”74

Lee Jung-Young points out that one of the central theological ideas that has captured the minds of the Korean people “is that Korea is the center of spiritual renewal and that Koreans will be the instruments through which the world will be saved....”75 The rapid growth of the Korean church has tended to strengthen this nationalistic belief and it has been further enhanced by the historical connection made between Israel and Korea as God’s chosen peoples. Many of the efforts made in church growth, evangelism, and international mission operate on this premise. The emphasis is on what Koreans are doing and how the church will be God’s primary instrument for evangelism and mission in the future. [page 22]

At the other end of the theological spectrum there is minjung theology and those who are deeply involved in the struggles for peace and justice on the Korean peninsula. National reunification is a major priority and a conscious attempt is made to show the continuity between previous struggles such as Tonghak Rebellion and the Independence Movement of 1919 and the struggles of the present day.76

In the Korean church both the conservative and progressive sectors have used the language of the paradigm of nationalism. The Christian church is intertwined with the destiny of the Korean nation and the two cannot be separated. It is this paradigm exemplified in the Independence Movement of 1919 that has made the growth of the Korean church possible, for both conservatives and progressives proudly proclaim that they are Korean Christians. Unlike so many other countries of Asia and the world, Koreans need not reject their culture and history upon converting to Christianity. The church in Korea has been baptized in the fire of persecution and struggle, not because it was opposed to Korean culture and tradition, but rather because it sought to preserve Korean culture and champion the aspirations of the Korean people in the face of oppression.

But what of the future? The 1960s and 1970s marked the high point of church growth in Korea.77 It was during this period that such mega- churches as the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the Young Nak Presbyterian Church, the Kwanglim Methodist Church, and the Sung Rak Baptist Church experienced unprecedented growth.78 Korean Christians believed that theirs, was a unique situation, and from a historical perspective they were correct. By the late 1980s and early 1990s,however, there were signs that church growth was slowing, and indeed, some church officials even spoke of a slight decrease in church growth, or at least a plateau in the growth rate. Accurate statistics were hard to come by, but anecdotal evidence and the undercurrent of conversation at various church meetings suggested that the “boom days” were coming to an end.79

At the same time, the 1980s and 1990s saw several events that quite literally shocked the churches to the core. First, there were a number of heterodox groups which came into being and which drew considerable membership from the established churches. In the late 1980s the nation was shocked one Sunday morning by the news that police had raided the [page 23] compound of one such group, the Evangelical Baptists (which were neither evangelical nor Baptist). The bodies of fourteen defecting members were found above the ceiling in the main building and over the next several weeks more bodies were found buried at various remote locations in the country. In 1992 another group called the Tami Mission claimed that Jesus was going to return on October 28. Members quit their jobs, sold their homes, deserted the military, and dropped out of school. When Jesus did not return as scheduled, the founder of the group was arrested, and it was discovered that most of the profits from homes that were sold had been placed in time deposits in a number of banks. The churches realized that quantity was not enough; they also had to focus on quality.

Not only were there lapses in theological doctrine; there were lapses in moral and ethical behavior as well. In June of 1984, when currency controls were still in place in Korea, the pastor of one of the largest churches in Seoul was caught attempting to smuggle $200,000 through Kimpo Airport In June of 1995 the Sampoong Department Store collapsed with the loss of over 500 lives. The owner of the store, who had paid numerous bribes for faulty construction work and building permits, and who refused to close the store after safety engineers warned of a possible collapse, was none other than a leading elder in one of Seoul’s well-known mega-churches. Again the churches were forced to face the reality that quantity in numbers did not guarantee quality behavior.

As a result there was a strong focus upon religious education that included both doctrine and ethical teachings. Most Protestant churches developed new curriculum materials for use in the churches, and theological schools began offering undergraduate majors as well as graduate degrees in religious education. Religious education was understood to be not only for young children, but for youth and adults as well. The churches began to make a low key but significant shift in their emphasis from quantity of members to the quality of the theological beliefs and the ethical practices of those who were already members of the church. Although many were loath to admit it, it was also becoming increasingly obvious that the uniqueness of the Korean situation in the past was no guarantee against the universal and globalized trends of the future.

Two events served to illustrate this in a dramatic way. The first was the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, and the [page 24] second the collapse of the Korean economy and bailout by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1997. Both of these events placed Korea firmly within the general world order, and the churches were forced to face, for perhaps the first time, that Korea and Koreans were not all that unique after all. As a result Korean society is now facing the same problems faced by industrialized nations throughout the world: economic restructuring, corporate downsizing, unemployment, family breakdown, juvenile delinquency, a rising crime rate including an increase in violent crime, changes in sexual ethics, the use of illicit drugs, an increase in the rate of suicides, and an aging population. The divorce rate in Korea, for example, has risen from 11 percent in 1990 to a staggering 47 percent in 2002, a rate of divorce which is higher than the United Kingdom, Denmark, or Hungary, 80 Furthermore, Koreans are now constructing nursing homes for the elderly, something that was unthinkable twenty years ago.81

Is the Korean church beginning a paradigm shift in terms of church growth? Evidence suggests that the answer is affirmative and the new paradigm is focused primarily upon quality of life. What began as an emphasis upon quality in theological doctrine and ethical practice has now been enlarged to include a concern for the stresses and strains of modernization. At a number of church-related universities, such as Hanil University and Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Jeonbuk Province (where the writer is a member of the faculty), there are now more students studying social welfare and social work than there are studying theology.82 An increasing number of pastors who have been out in the parish for five to ten years are now returning for graduate degrees, not in theology as was common in the past, but in social welfare and social work. Increasingly the topic of conversation among the students is not evangelization and church growth, but how to counsel the divorced, how to provide activities for the aged, and how to provide economic aid to the unemployed. Another frequent topic is corruption and power politics, not only in society in general, but within the churches themselves.

Writing in 1986, Donald Clark suggested that one of the reasons for the growth of the Korean church was that it provided an alternative to old Confucian social values.83 It was an alternative that took root in Korean society in a way that was unique in all of Asia. It was also, [page 25] however, an alternative that came into Korea hand in hand with the process of modernization, as Donald Baker has pointed out so well.84 As the Korean church enters the third millennium it is now having to deal with the sometimes bitter fruits of the modernization process, and is discovering much to its dismay that these bitter fruits are just as globalized as the California oranges and British Columbia apples that are flooding the Korean market. Baker was quite correct when he wrote that “Korea’s turbulent history over the last century has forged a link between modernization and Christianity which has forever altered religion in what was once the Land of the Morning Calm.”85 It would appear that now it is the turn of modernization to alter Korean Christianity from a religion focused on nationalism and church growth, to a religion focused on living a quality life of faith and practice in an increasingly globalized world.

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3. Lee Shiu-Keung, The Cross and the Lotus (Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, 1971), 2.

4. Richard Drummond, A History of Christianity in Japan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971),36. See also James M. Phillips, From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981).

5. Mark R. Mullins, Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 156.

6. See Helen Hardacre, Shinto and the State (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). [page 26]

7. Marlin L. Nelson, “Some Secrets of Korean Church Growth” (unpublished manuscript, 1989), 1.

8. The April 2004 issue of the local church newspaper O Byeong Yi Oeo (Five Bread and Two Fish) has as the headline “Again 1907! Let us prepare for a great revival.”

9. For an account of the Catholic presence in Korea prior to 1784 see Juan Ruiz de Medina, SJ, The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins 1566-1784, trans. John Bridges (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch/Seoul Computer Press, 1991). Ruiz asserts that the Catholic Church was established in Korea prior to 1784. For a somewhat critical review of this position see Daniel J. Adams, “Review of The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins 1566-1784 by Juan Ruiz de Medina,SJ,” Japan Christian Review 61 (1995): 122-124.

10. Kim Duk-Whang, ,A History of Religions in Korea (Seoul: Daeji Moonhwasa, 1988), 272.

11. For accounts of the Catholic mission after 1784 see: Francis X. Buchmeier, SJ, “The Catholic Church in South Korea: Social Involvement and Church Growth,” (Asia-Australasia Dossier No. 36), Pro Mundi Vita: Dossiers, no. 1 (1986); Kim Chang-Sook and Lee Choong-Woo,Holy Places of the Korean Martyrs (Seoul: Lay Apostolate Council of Korea, 1986); The Catholic Church in Korea (Seoul: Bicentennial Episcopal Commission, 1984); and Seong Youm, “Catholicism,” in Religious Culture in Korea, 68-83.

12. Cited by James Huntley Grayson, Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea: A Study in the Emplantation of Religion (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 83. Paik was writing from a Protestant perspective.

13. Ibid., 83.

14. Choi, “The Catholic Church in Korea,” in The Catholic Church in Korea, 6.

15. Choi Suk-Woo, “Korean Catholicism Yesterday and Today,” in The Founding of Catholic Tradition in Korea, ed. Yu Chai-Shin (Mississauga, Ont.: Korea and Related Studies Press, 1996), 153.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 154.

18. O Kyong-Hwan, “Korean Catholicism Since 1945,” in The Founding of Catholic Tradition in Korea, 163.

19. Choi, “Catholic Church,” 9-10.

20. O, “Korean Catholicism,” 164-166.

21. Ibid., 175. Although Catholics do not have any mega-churches as Protestants do, they are not averse to proudly citing the numbers of unusually large congregations. Because of the parish structure of Catholic churches, it is highly unlikely that Catholics will ever have anything like a mega-church with tens of thousands of members.

22. Histories of early Protestant mission work in Korea include: Allen D. Clark, A History of the Church in Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of [page 27] Korea, 1971); Earnest J. Fisher, Pioneers of Modern Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1977); Everett N. Hunt, Jr., Protestant Pioneers in Korea (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1980); Martha Huntley, Caring, Growing, Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea (New York: Friendship Press, 1984) and To Start a Work: The Foundation of Protestant Mission in Korea (Seoul: Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987); and George Lak-Geoon Paik, The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1932-1910 (1929,rpt. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1980). Also available are histories of specific denominations such as the Presbyterians (both from Australia and the United States), the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Anglicans and others. Institutional histories of schools, colleges, and hospitals have also been written, as have histories of specific organizations such as the Korean Bible Society and the Urban Industrial Mission.

23. Grayson, Buddhism and Christianity, 127.

24.Roy E. Shearer, Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1966), 42. This does not mean that there was not opposition to Protestant mission work, mainly from Neo-Confucian circles. Those opposed to Protestant missionaries coming into Korea tried to have an exclusion clause written into early treaties made with the western powers, but their efforts failed. See Lee Kwang-Rin, “Progressive Views on Protestantism (I),” Korea Journal 16, (Feb. 1976): 19-26; and “Progressive Views on Protestantism (II),” Korea Journal 16 (March 1976): 27-39.

25. See Homer B. Hulbert, The Passing of Korea (1906,rpt. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1969) and Yi Kyu-Tae, Modern Transformation of Korea, trans. Sung Tong-Mahn and others (Seoul: Sejong, 1970).

26. Horace G. Underwood, The Call of Korea: Political—Social—Religious (New York: Fleming H. Revell,1908), 100-126. See also Harold S. Hong, “Social, Political, and Psychological Aspects of Church Growth,” in Korean Church Growth Explosion, ed. Ro Bong-Rin and Marlin L. Nelson (Seoul: Word of Life Publishers/Taichung: Asia Theological Association, 1983),171-181; and in the same volume Ro Bong-Rin, “Non-Spiritual Factors in Church Growth,” 159-170.

27. For a fuller exposition of the Nevius Principles see Charles Allen Clark, The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods (New York: Fleming H. Revell,1930), especially pp. 16-35. It is interesting to note the Nevius Principles were applied in China by the post-1949 Communist government following the expulsion of all Christian missionaries and have been institutionalized in the Protestant Three Self Movement.

28. Samuel Hugh Moffett, The Christians of Korea (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 60.

29. Not all Koreans are positive in their evaluation of the Nevius Principles. See Chun Sung-Chun, Schism and Unity in the Protestant Churches of[page 28] Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1970), 90-93 where he criticizes the Nevius Principles for being both theologically conservative and ecclesiastically patriarchal.

30. Grayson, Buddhism and Christianity, 139.

31. Hong Yi-Sup, Korea’s Self-Identity (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1973), 22.

32. Hahm Pyong-Choon, The Korean Political Tradition and Law: Essays in Korean Law and Legal History, second edition (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society/ Hollym International Corp., 1971), 84.

33. These early missionaries were men and women of their time and should be evaluated accordingly. Chung Sung-Chun points out that most of the Pres-byterian missionaries were from the more conservative wing of the church and were influenced by the Old Side/New Side schism of 1741-1758 and the Old School/New School schism of 1837-1869. Needless to say, the conservatives were represented by the “old” in both of these schisms. The latter of these schisms was resolved during the lifetimes of the earliest of the Presbyterian missionaries to Korea.

34. Quoted in Harvie M. Conn, Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church: An Historical Outline (Seoul: Presbyterian General Assembly Theological Seminary, n.d.), 79.

35. Clark, Church in Korea, 175.

36. See Youngsook Kim Harvey, Six Korean Women: The Socialization of Shamans (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing, 1979) for a series of accounts of how women become shamans. See also Laurel Kendall, The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman: On Tales and the Telling of Tales (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988) and Hyun-key. Kim Hogarth, Kut: Happiness Through Reciprocity (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1998).

37. Youngsook Kim Harvey, “The Korean Shaman and the Deaconess: Sisters in Different Guises” in Religion and Ritual in Korean Society, ed. Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California: 1987), 152. Harvey shows the parallels between shamanistic rituals and the women’s prayer meetings and between shamans and deaconesses. She points out how both survive by offering solace in times of severe stress and by not challenging the established social order (p. 167). She also poses the intriguing question: “One wonders if the Christian prayer meeting and the shamanistic ritual are but different expressions of the same needs.” (p. 150)

38. One theologian who has recognized the interrelationship between shamanism and Christianity is David Kwang-Sun Suh, Theology, Ideology and Culture (Hong Kong: World Student Christian Federation. Asian/Pacific Region, 1983), 31-51 where he writes concerning “shamanized Christianity” and asserts that Korean Christianity has been profoundly influenced by shamanism. [page 29]

39. Three collections of essays which examine Christianity, culture and church growth from a global perspective are: William A. Smalley, ed., Readings in Missionary Anthropology II (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978); Charles Kraft and Tom Wisely, ed., Readings in Dynamic Indigeneity (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library/ 1979); and Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, ed., Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981).

40. See William Newton Blair and Bruce F. Hunt, The Korean Pentecost and the Sufferings Which Followed (Edinburgh/Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 67-97 where an eyewitness account of the revival of 1907 is given.

41. One missionary was forced to leave Korea when a Korean woman publicly confessed to having had an illicit relationship with him.

42. Grayson, ,Buddhism and Christianity, 139.

43. Huntley, To Start a Work, 420. See also William Scott, “Canadians in Korea: Brief Historical Sketches of Mission Work in Korea” (unpublished manuscript, 1975), 57.

44. Biair and Hunt, 63-65. According to Paik, History of Protestant Missions, 414, “What was the attitude of the missionaries toward the Japanese and Koreans? As far as we can discover in the private letters of the missionaries, a large number favored and cooperated with the Japanese and made one effort to quiet the restlessness of the churches.” There were, however, exceptions among the missionaries, who, in varying degrees, supported the Koreans in their struggle for independence. See Kim, A History of Religions in Korea, 381 and Samuel H. Moffett, “Protestantism: Its Influence on Modernization in Korea,” in Yi, Modern Transformation of Korea, 200-201. Both Kim and Moffett list those missionaries who supported the Korean cause. Homer B. Hulbert, a Methodist missionary, served as a royal emissary to Washington in 1905-1906 and to The Hague Peace Conference in 1906-1907 where he presented the Korean position. Both of these missions were unsuccessful. Although forced to leave Korea by the Japanese, his book The Passing of Korea, published in 1906, served as an eloquent statement of Korean independence. Hulbert died in 1949 at age 86 during a visit to Korea and is buried in the Seoul Foreigners’ Cemetery. His epitaph reads: “I would rather be buried in Korea than in Westminster Abbey.”

45. Cited in Paik, The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 415.

46. Ibid., 415-416.

47. Clark, Church in Korea, 184-185.

48. James Fisher, Democracy and Mission Education in Korea (1928,rpt. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970), 41.

49. Harold Hong, “General Picture of the Korean Church, Yesterday and Today,” in Korea Struggles for Christ: Memorial Symposium for the Eightieth [page 30] Anniversary of Protestantism in Korea, ed. Harold S. Hong, Wong Yong Ji, and Chung Choon Kim (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1966), 21.

50. Kim Chai-Choon, “The Present Situation and Future Prospect of the Korean Church,” in Korea Struggles for Christ, 32.

51. Ibid.

52. Donald N. Clark, Christianity in Modern Korea (Lanham, MD: University Press of America/New York: The Asia Society, 1986), 9.

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55. Shin Yong-Ha, “Re-evaluation of the Samil Independence Movement,” in Main Currents of Korean Thought, ed. Korean National Commission for UNESCO (Seoul: Si-sa-yong-o-sa Publishers, 1983), 280 and 285.

56. Kim, A History of Religions in Korea, 379-380.

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58. For a discussion of the Christian influence upon the various independence groups see Carter J. Eckert, Lee Ki-Baik, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, Korea Old and New: A History (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers for Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), 247-251, 262-263, and 315. They point out the importance of Christian educational institutions as places where issues relating to independence could be discussed in relative safety. In addition a number of the early leaders of independence groups were either Christians or were influenced by Christian ideals and ideas.

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60. Ibid, 227.

61. See Lee Kun-Sam, The Christian Confrontation With Shinto Nationalism (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966). Lee provides an in-depth account of the issues involved between the church and [page 31] Shinto nationalism. See also Kim Sung-Gun, “Korean Christianity and the Shinto Issue in the War Period, 1931—1945: A Sociological Study of Religion and Politics,” Ph.D. diss., University of Hull, 1989.

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63. “Introduction” in Testimonies of Faith in Korea, 27.

64. Wentzel van Huyssteen, Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology, trans. H. F. Snijders (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 51.

65. Ibid., 53.

66.Ibid.,54.According to van Huyssteen, 58, “Paradigms are basically incommensurable because paradigm switches imply a conceptual transformation, both sociologically and epistemologically. Consequently, competing paradigms no longer speak the same scientific language, no longer observe the same date, do not ask the same questions, do not solve the same problems, and do not construct valid methods of proof in the same manner.”

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71. Clark, Christianity in Modern Korea, 24.

72. Ibid., 25.

73. Cited by Hans Kung, “What Does a Change of Paradigm Mean?” in Para-digm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future, ed. Hans Kung and David Tracy, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 215.

74. Ibid.

75. Lee Jung-Young, “Christian Indigenization in Korea,” Asian Quarterly of Cultural & Social Affairs 18, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 17.

76. Ibid, 17-18. See also Suh Nam-Dong, “Historical References for a Theology of Minjung,” in Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History, ed. Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (London: Zed Press/Maryknoll, ,NY: Orbis/Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1983), 155-182; and Donald N. Clark, “Growth and Limitations of Minjung Christianity in South Korea,” in South Korea’s Minjung Movement: The Culture of Politics and Dissidence, ed. Kenneth M. Wells (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 87-103. The term minjung (“the masses of people”) is taken from two Chinese characters, min, meaning “people” and jung, meaning “the masses.”

77. Grayson, Korea, 204.

78. Cho Yonggi’s first church in downtown Seoul grew from 1,218 members to[page 32]

over 10,000 members in the early 1960s. In the 1970s Cho founded the Yoido Full Gospel Church with 12,556 members. By the early 1980s this church counted a membership of 500,000. See Daniel J. Adams, Christ and Culture in Asia: Explorations from Korea (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2002), especially Chapter 9, “The Life and Ministry of Cho Yonegi in Theological Perspective,” 160-187. The Young Nak Presbyterian Church started with just 14 members following the Korea War and by the early 1980s had close to 50,000 members. Mega-churches in Seoul and other major cities experienced similar rates of growth during this same period.

79. Not only Protestants, but Catholics as well, are echoing these same concerns. In 1987 approximately 10 percent of the total number of Catholics in Korea were nominal Christians who did not attend church and another 13 percent were those whose residence could not be identified. See O Kyong-Hwan, “Korean Catholicism Since 1945,” The Founding of Catholic Tradition in Korea, 163.

80. Lian Fitzpatrick, “Getting Out: Asia’s Divorce Boom,” Time, April 5,2004, 35-40.

81. When the writer first came to Korea in 1980, he was told by a colleague, “Koreans will never face these social evils that you have in the West because we believe only in conservative theology and receive God’s blessing, and we will never, ever put our elderly parents in nursing homes. We Koreans are different from the West.” Two of the recent retreats sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of Korea for foreign mission coworkers in the late 1990s have either been held at new church sponsored facilities for the elderly or included field trips to such facilities.

82. As of April 1, 2004 there were 470 students in the undergraduate theological department and 630 students in the social welfare/social work department.

83. Clark, Christianity in Modern Korea, 24.

84. See Don Baker, “Looking for God in the Streets of Seoul: The Resurgence of

Religion in 20th Century Korea,” Harvard Asia Quarterly (Autumn 2001), [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/haq/200104/0104a002.htm], 5/30/02.

85. Ibid.