4. Modern history of Korean Churches

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Korean Churches started in modern times. The Roman Catholic Church was first introduced into Korea just about two centuries ago while Protestant missionaries entered the country one century thereafter. Significantly, the Koreans had already paved the way for both Catholic and Protestant organized missions before these reached Korea. Protestantism in Korea was virtually planted by American missionaries and it was well adapted to Korean religiosity. Bible studies and prayer meetings called forth the Pyongyang revival in 1907 and the revival meeting has been a tradition of Korean Protestant churches ever since. The socio-political situation also affected Korean church development. In this chapter, we shall observe Korean church history with focus on the Protestant church and with emphasis laid on the reasons for and the development of the revival movements.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section (4.2) deals briefly with the Roman Catholic Church. The second section (4.3) is allotted to the history of Korean Protestant churches. In the third section (4.4) Christian sects in Korea are dealt with. The main reference books will be as follows: *Wild Fire: Church Growth in Korea* (1966) by a missionary to Korea, Roy E. Shearer, who described only the Korean Protestant Church focusing on the Presbyterian Church; *Korean Church History* (1972), which was formulated from the viewpoint of the Korean church by Kyong Bae Min; *A History of the Korean Church* (1992), which was written from the viewpoint of the relations between theology and the church by Yung Jae Kim; and *A History of Korean Church* (1993) by Sung Joon Kim who wrote with the experience of more than half a century.

4.2. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (1794ff)

Since the time of open-policy to the Western world (1876), the Roman Catholic Church in Korea has become an open religion after one century of secret religion under persecutions. We look back at its early history first. There is no positive evidence to suggest that the Nestorian Church, which flourished in the period of the mid-seventh century to the mid-ninth century in China, was introduced in Korea. 1 For the first time, Christianity came in touch with Koreans during the Japanese invasion (1592-1597). 2 Thousands of Korean captives, who were taken to Japan, were converted there. Some of those are said to have kept their faith when they

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2 Kyong Bae Min, *Korean Church History*, Seoul, 1994, pp.34-41. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) came to Japan in 1549 and many Japanese were converted at first. In this invasion, several generals and thousands of their followers were Catholics. Therefore, a Portuguese priest accompanied them as a chaplain. He did not have contact with Koreans.
However, the mission to Korea via Japan was still a closed door. The missionary door was opened via China. Various Korean delegations to Peking brought back Catholic books, which were studied by retired or exiled scholars as Western knowledge, and regarded as Heaven-Lord study, Heaven study, or holy study. For some time they considered it to be practical philosophy, but finally, they found religion in it and became believers. In 1783, Seung Hun Yi was sent to Peking by those who were interested in Christianity so that he could investigate the new religion in depth. Next year, he confessed his faith and was openly baptized by a Jesuit priest in Peking. When he returned to Korea as the first baptized Christian, he baptized two Koreans (1784). This was the official start of Roman Catholicism in Korea. In 1785, they began to hold worship meetings in Seoul and organized their own church. In 1794, when the adherents counted about 4,000, Mun-Mo Ju, a Chinese priest, entered Korea, followed by a French priest came 1837. The entire mission was carried out secretly. Persecution began in 1785 on account of their refusal to endorse ancestor worship. Systematic persecutions followed one after the other in 1791, 1801, 1839, 1846, 1866 (great persecution), and 1869. In 1865, one year before the great persecution, the number of believers amounted to 23,000. During this persecution, almost 8,000 believers were killed and nine out of twelve French priests were martyred. Even though Korean Confucian government persecuted early Roman Catholics in Korea, the Confucian view of the world, its concepts such as above emperor, Tien (Heaven), the Mandate of Heaven, and reverence to Heaven rendered services for a pre-understanding of the Christian concept of God, the Kingdom of God, God’s providence, and the fear of God (3.3.2).

The Roman Catholic Church in Korea began to grow from the 1880s onwards, owing to the open policy of the Korean government. By 1900, ten priests had been ordained. Later, the first Korean bishop, Gi-Nam No, was consecrated in 1942 and the first Korean cardinal, Su-Hwan Kim was appointed in 1968. Like its Protestant counterpart, the Korean Roman Catholic Church has experienced the most rapid numerical growth in the world since the mid-seventies of the twentieth century, for which there are several reasons. First, the Protestant church revival affected the self-awareness of Catholic believers so that many Catholics evangelized as well. Second, the liberalism and ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council caused Catholics to become involved in the problems of social justice and human rights. Consequently, it gained credibility in the eyes of young people and intellectuals. And third, the Catholic Church has recently become inculturated through predominantly native clergy and identification with the joys and tears of the Koreans so that the church is no longer distant from the people. In the year of the bicentennial ceremony of the

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4 400 were martyred in 1791. The Chinese priest Ju was martyred in 1801 after 6 years’ secret ministry. Three French priests were included among 113 martyrs in 1839. The first Korean priest Dae-Geon Kim was beheaded in 1846.

5 Min, ibid., pp.61-95.


Korean Catholic Church (1984), pope John Paul II was invited to South Korea and 103 Koreans were consecrated by him as blessed martyrs. In this year, Korean Catholics were counted as 3,047,857 believers with 1,071 parish churches and 2,657 congregations, 1,743 priests, 12 colleges and universities and 8 theological seminaries. From the early part of the 1970s, the charismatic renewal movement began among Catholics in Korea and Catholic charismatics numbered 350,000 around 1990.

4.3. PROTESTANTISM (1884ff)

There is no connection between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant mission in Korea. European Protestant missionaries knocked at the door and began to sow the seed. Then, American missionaries opened the door, harvesting and planting as well. According to the perception of Koreans, it seems that Koreans were willing to receive a pure Gospel, namely, the American revival type of evangelicalism rather than the European territorial and national type of Christianity.

We discuss here the development ‘from mission field to independent church’ according to the expression used by the Dutch missionary leader Hendrik Kraemer. The first part (4.3.1) deals with missionaries/missionary societies from abroad and the second part (4.3.2) with independent Korean churches.

4.3.1. Korea as a Mission Field: Foreign Missionary Societies (1884-1912)

In this section we shall observe how foreign missionaries began to sow the seed of the Gospel and harvest its fruits in the early phase of the Korean mission. It covers the period from the beginning of the foreign missions to Korea until the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church which was formed in 1912.

4.3.1.1. Prehistory: European Missionaries (1875-1884)

The German missionary Karl F. Gützlaff (1803-1851) who served the Netherlands Missionary Society visited the Korean west coast by merchant ship in 1832 for one month. In 1865, an English missionary to China, Robert J. Thomas (1840-1866), was martyred at Pyongyang: the American merchant ship which he took was burnt by Korean soldiers and sunk.

Two other Scottish missionaries, John Ross (1842-1915) and John McIntyre who were stationed in Manchuria, actually embarked on a Korean mission. In 1875, they met two Koreans who were interested in the Gospel. The missionaries learnt the Korean language from them and began to translate the Bible into the Korean language, Hangeul. They published thousands of copies of the Gospels and the

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8 Gyomunsa, *Korean Church Growth in 100 Years*, Seoul, 1993, pp.214-215. The number of believers does not correspond with the number written on p.225 of this same book. The difference might be understood as the number with children or without.


whole New Testament in the period between 1882 to 1887. These Bibles and other tracts were distributed by colporteurs among diaspora Koreans in Manchuria and in the northwestern part of Korea. In a few years, more than 100 Koreans were baptized in Manchuria by the Scottish missionaries. In 1883, hundreds of Bibles were distributed by colporteurs in Pyongyang and in Seoul. Through the translation of the Bible and the work of colporteurs, Christianity was introduced from Manchuria to Korea.  

At that time, in Japan, Su-Jeong Yi was converted to the Christian faith. In 1885, he published 1,000 copies of Mark’s Gospel. In the same year, the first resident missionaries to Korea brought this Bible into Korea. In this way, the Korean Bible had existed before American missionaries reached Korea and became residents. As Korean Catholics had done one century before, so the Protestant believers worshipped God by themselves in West-Gando of Manchuria (1884), at the frontier city of Uiju (1883), and in the village of Sorae (1884).

4.3.1.2. American Missionaries in Residence (1884ff)

The first resident missionary Horace N. Allen (1858-1932), a doctor of medicine, entered Korea on 20th November 1884. He was sent by the American Northern Presbyterian Church. However, the real Korean mission was started by the Northern Presbyterian Missionary Horace G. Underwood (1859-1916) and the Northern Methodist Missionary Henry G. Appenzeller (1858-1902). They came in through Japan on 5th May 1885, followed by other missionaries from the various churches.

The Protestant missionaries commenced their enterprise differently from the advanced Roman Catholic mission. They started medical treatment and education according to the demand of the government and with its permission. At the same time, they began to evangelize cautiously and actively. When the missionaries opened schools and hospitals, they cooperated with the King and Queen who gave financial help and encouragement. The Underwood family became friends of the royal family. Such indirect investments helped much to consolidate the early Korean missions. Literary work was also active from the very beginning. The easy Korean Hangeul was effectively used in printing the Bible and Christian literature. Which was distributed by the colporteurs. By 1892, they had distributed 578,000 copies of the Bible and in the period between 1895 to 1936, more than 18 million Bibles were distributed. Korean churches began as ‘the churches of the Bible.’ This can be understood by the research of the previous chapter that Confucianism, which prefers to literary and scholarly character, had been deeply rooted in Korean society (3.3.2).

11 Man-Yeol Yi, “Study on Colporteur,” in Korean Christianity and National Consciousness, Seoul, 1991, pp.109-200. passim. Yi asserted that the main body of the establishment of early Korean churches was made up of colporteurs. They went around the entire land selling Bibles as well as evangelizing and teaching people. During the period of 1908-1940, the colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society (B.F.B.S.) distributed 85% of all the Bibles which were sold by that society in Korea. (p.152). In Asia, “people in no other country more welcome the Bibles and colporteurs than people in Korea.” (p.156). In some areas, 70% of all new converts were the results of the colporteurs’ work. A large number of churches were founded by them. Many of them became pastors later.

12 Yung Jae Kim, A History of Korean Church, Seoul, 1994, p.80; Kyong Bae Min, ibid., p.174. Of the numbers of the Bibles distributed in Korea in the 1890s, it is said, “In Korea they distributed in 10 years the same number that they distributed in China in 50 years.” (Quoted from the Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, vol.92-93, p.242).
Underwood secretly baptized one convert in 1886. In the following year, Appenzeller also baptized one of his students. In 1887, Underwood undertook the first missionary journey, visited Sorae Village and baptized seven villagers. Underwood established the Saemunan Presbyterian Church in Seoul in September 1887 with fourteen members, although only one member was converted by him, the rest becoming believers through the mission of Ross. One month later, Appenzeller also opened the Jeongdong Methodist Church in Seoul. These missionaries had been able to establish churches in the two and a half years since they arrived in Korea. However, the official permission for missionary work was given in 1898 for the first time.

4.3.1.3. Background of the American Missionaries (1884ff)

The spiritual background of the early American missionaries to Korea was the aggressive evangelicalism of Charles Finney (1792-1875), the holiness movement of the 1860s, and the revival movement of Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899). Furthermore, about 88% of all missionaries to Korea before 1983 were Americans. American Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries took charge of almost 80% of the Korean population and more than 70% of all land when they divided it up as mission territory. The American influence on Korean churches can be estimated. Their basic theological concepts can be formulated according to several main points: the authority of God; exclusivism; Biblical basis; and revivalism. Accordingly, they emphasized personal evangelism, Bible study, prayer, caring for women and poor people, and Sabbath observance and self-discipline (prohibition of drinking and smoking). Such a theological trend must have found a welcoming soil under Korean masses who lived by the morality of formality-oriented Confucianism and by a shamanistic spirituality.

At the same time, they adopted their missionary policies at the early stage of the Korean mission. The first and most important policy was to accept the teaching of John Nevius (1829-1893): the principle of self-supporting; self-governing; and self-propagating churches. He had been already working in China as a missionary of the American Northern Presbyterian Church. Having been invited to the missionaries’ conference in 1890 by seven young and inexperienced Presbyterian missionaries in Korea, who had read his book about church planting in the mission field, this veteran missionary explained his principle. His emphasis was on teaching solely from the Bible. His principle was not so successful in China, but it played an important role in the development of Korean churches. The second policy was that

14 Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.123-130.
16 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.147-156; Ig-Jin Kim, “Korean Cultural Identity and American Missionary Concepts.” This article was presented at the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association (EPCRA) Conference 95 (July 10-14) at Mattersey Hall, England.
17 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., p.66. Nevius published *The Planting and Development of Missionary Church*, NY, 1899; Leo Oosterom, *Contemporary Missionary Thought in the Republic of Korea: Three Case Studies on the Missionary Thought of Presbyterian Churches in Korea*, Utrecht-Leiden, 1990, pp.30-32. Some critical sides arose, too. The Nevius plan resulted in the lack of “profound social analysis of the mission field as well as critical evaluation of its efforts nationwide.” Also it could not see the long-term effects of the plan because of aiming for visible success. The development of an extreme form of congregationalism and the divisions of the Korean church may have been partly caused by it; Kyong
of co-operation among the missionary societies. In 1893, the Presbyterian missionaries organized the Presbyterian Council which could serve as a presbytery for the whole of Korea. In that year, they divided up the mission territory in Korea so that they might evangelize Korea without rivalries and frictions among missionaries. The third important policy was to adapt their activities to government policy. Accordingly, they first opened hospitals and schools.

There are different approaches between the European Roman Catholic Mission and the American Protestant Mission in their early phases in Korea. The difference between them was due not only to the different historical situations, but also to differences in their faith. The latter ignited Korean religiosity and turned it into a national movement.  

First, most pioneer Catholics were learned Koreans while the early Protestant faith found its adherents among the humbler classes. Second, the Catholics did not teach the Bible enough while the Protestants spread the Bible.  

Third, the Catholics tried to take advantage of political and military capabilities of world powers as factors for missionary enterprise while the Protestants tried first to meet the conditions of the Korean government. Fourth, the early Catholic missionaries lived together with Korean believers and established the unity of the church while the Protestant missionaries lived separately and evangelized fervently, on the one hand, and trained Koreans so that they could evangelize and lead the Korean churches, on the other.

4.3.1.4. The First Revival in Korea (1903-1907)  
When Christianity was introduced in Korea, society was passing through the greatest cultural transition in Korean history after the introduction of Chinese culture (together with Indian Buddhism) in the fourth century A.D. It was also a process of the nation’s pangs of childbirth, with the period of fifteen years (1895-1910) corresponding to its climax. Only missionaries showed their sympathy for Koreans in the trials of that time even though official American policy stood by the Japanese. In that situation, Korean believers as well as evangelical missionaries had no choice but to depend upon God. The 'Korean Pentecostal Movement' (1907) was prepared in this way.

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Bae Min, ibid., pp.195-201. The principle of Nevius was first advocated by Henry Venn, the secretary of the Church Missionary Society of London. Venn emphasized that missionaries should concentrate on lower class people so that they would turn into citizens, who can support themselves.

18 Masahiko Sawa, “Christian Identity in Japan: Self-Discovery through Encounter,” in The Japan Christian Quarterly 44/1 (Winter 1978): 85-92. The Japanese church is similar to early Catholicism in Korea. It is a middle-class intellectual church and has never approached being a mass or people’s movement.


20 Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.68-108.


23 Shin-Hwan Kwak, “Catholicism and Catholics Seen from Confucianism,” in Theology and Thought, Nr.14 (1994/12): 84-104. When the Chosön Dynasty ended (1910), Confucianism as the national ideology collapsed as well (100). Now, Western culture began to be established in Korea with the Protestant missions as focal points and without organizational (national) opposition. See 4.2.
In 1895, when the Japanese mob murdered the Queen of Korea (1851-1895) in her bedroom, confusion and panic struck with the hundreds of dwellers within the palace walls.24 Even the King was seized with fear at that moment because he could be the next victim. The war between the two great neighbours (1894-1895) on Korean soil left desolation, especially in the northwestern territory. Pyongyang City was not only war-devastated, but also stricken by cholera. The missionaries devoted themselves to healing the sufferers and comforted the King with their love. Christianity, America, and the missionaries became believable to Koreans. The door to the Gospel was opened wide. The first harvest in the mission fields began after this Sino-Japanese war.25

Even though the revival started in 1895, significant results did not come until later. Assuming that evangelicalism of the missionaries laid the theological foundation for the revival, we can pick out prayer and Bible study as the most important practical factors for the revival. In Korea, these two elements cannot be separated, and we observe the revival centering on these two elements from the first. First and foremost, to pray fervently to God characterized the revival, which arose in Wonsan City in 1903. Parallel with Pyongyang latitudinally, this harbour is located on the east coast and at that time had 3,000 houses. The believers of Wonsan kept their own triple principle: “pray fervently, evangelize hard, and study the Bible earnestly.”26 The constituent members of the church, namely 80% of the congregation, had immigrated from the northwest into this city. Many of these immigrant believers were converted from their prodigal lives and were bold in witnessing and praying.27 Besides, a Canadian missionary A. F. Robb, an untrained Canadian farmer and private missionary M. C. Fennwick, and a Canadian medical missionary Dr. R. A. Hardie (Wonsan belonged to Canadian mission territory), were especially fervent in their prayer. Therefore, the revival at Wonsan was not without cause. In 1903, when they had an interdenominational (Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist) conference, Dr. Hardie was blessed first. Lillias H. Underwood (the wife of Underwood) wrote:

In the latter part of 1903, a remarkable revival began in Wonsan. The writer has always believed that this was the first of a wonderful shower of blessings which some 3 years later fell upon the whole national church of Korea. Dr. Hardie, who then lived in Wonsan, tells how two Christian women had been praying daily for an outpouring of

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25 Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 1908/ reprinted in Seoul, 1983, pp.134-150. Missionary Underwood divided up the early mission history into 4 periods: the first 5 years (1885-1890) was the confirmation of the receptivity of Koreans; the next period (1890-1895) was that of missionary enforcement; the third period (1895-1900) was the beginning of the large harvest; the fourth period (1900-1905) was that of large harvest and great ingathering. The main circumstantial ground for the growth of the third period was the consequences of the war, he said. In 1907, there were 56 clerical missionaries, 15 male and female physicians, 35 single ladies, and 53 missionary wives in Korea. In 1895, there were 20 church members in Pyongyang and 73 baptized persons in the adjacent province. Only 4 church buildings were ready in that whole area. In 1899, they had 2,232 members, 153 self-supporting churches with 7,433 adherents. In connection with the Seoul missionary station, there were 105 meeting places, 1,102 members, and 2800 adherents. The revival was remarkable.
26 Taek-Bu Jeon, *The Faith Mountains of Natives*, Seoul, 1993, pp.132-205. passim. He described how the fires of the first revival (1903-1907) and the second one (1930s) were ignited at Wonsan. That harbour city was the meeting place of those who would be used for lighting the fire, he says.
27 Roy E. Shearer, ibid., p.200.
grace, and how meetings were arranged for. He was asked to prepare to lead the missionaries in some weeks of Bible study, but, as he tried to make ready, he himself was convicted with deep and overwhelming grief and repentance for coldness and shortcomings. He openly confessed before both the Korean church and missionaries, and begged for their prayers. Others were overcome with like conviction and repentance until all missionaries and the native Christians had received a baptism as of fire. The story of the thrilling experiences of Wonsan spread all over the country.28

When they had such a conference in the spring of 1904, Missionary Robb, Gye-Eun Jeon, and Chun-Su Jeong were also moved by the Spirit. When they prayed together, it sounded like a wailing cry coming from a mourner’s house. These two Koreans preached boldly on the street.29 Missionaries and Korean Christians from various places began to pray for revival. During the next two years, all over the various missions, “many had moved to most unremitting prayers for the gift of the Spirit and there was a feeling everywhere that a blessing was coming ... there is little doubt that the beginning was there in that little missionary community in Wonsan, perhaps brought through the prayers of those good two women.”30 The revival at Wonsan should be ascribed to those people who were especially devoted to prayer.

Having heard of the revival at Wonsan, Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries in Pyongyang invited Dr. Hardie in August 1906 to lead a conference for a week. During the conference, the Spirit showed them “nothing but the baptism of God’s Spirit in mighty power could fit them and Korean brethren for the trying days ahead.”31 They agreed to pray for a great blessing, especially at the winter Bible classes for men. Not only were Koreans and missionaries praying, but also home churches in America prayed.32

In September 1906, Reverend Howard A. Johnson from New York visited Korea. He introduced the revivals of India and Wales in Seoul and in Pyongyang. The response in Pyongyang was different. When Johnson asked the congregation in Pyongyang if there was anyone who would bring about the revival in Korea by the power of God as in Wales, only Seon-Ju Kil (1869-1935), who was the elder and ‘lay assistant teacher or preacher’ [조사: Josa: 조사] of the church, raised his hand. Kil and the congregation began to pray fervently to have that kind of revival in Korea. Elder Kil began an early morning prayer with Elder Park. That became a tradition for Korean churches. At four o’clock in the morning they prayed for the revival and the winter Bible classes of 1907. After two months, several hundred people (600~700) gathered at 4:30 to join the prayer meeting. The revival was already there.33 In this way, Kil played an important role in the Pyongyang revival.

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28 Lillias H. Underwood, ibid., pp.223-224; Yung Jae Kim, ibid., p.110. Missionary in China Miss M. C. White and Scandinavian Allianz missionary to China F. Franson visited Wonsan and stimulated them, too.
29 Kyong Bae Min, ibid., p.266; Yung Jae Kim, ibid., p.111.
32 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.111-112.
33 In 1906, there were signs of baptism with the Spirit in various places already. It was the effect of the Wonsan revival. There were reports of revivals in Jaeryeong (northwest area), Mokpo (southwest area), and Gaeseong (central area). During the meetings, people repented in agony and were filled with joy. They witnessed their filling in the Spirit.
He had been a Taoist for ten years before he was converted. Here is one aspect of his old religious practices:

One of the Taoist set seasons is a hundred days of prayer, the object being to keep recollection constantly on the go; to keep awake, not to fall asleep once in all that time. If successful, assuredly you will find God. Such was Kil’s understanding. Various ways and means were resorted to keep awake; pouring water on the head, for example, or placing a block of wood on it, like a flat hat, so that a nod of sleep would drop it on the floor with a bang to awaken the sleeper. What a labor! Through rain, and snow, and nights of starvation, all for just one thing … to find God. They had heard, these three (with two special friends), that God had been found by men of other nations, and so they too would seek until they found Him. Kil was the leader, tremendously in earnest.34

He had various experiences as a Taoist together with fasting, praying, and meditation. Now, as a new creature in God, he used his Taoistic discipline to express his Christian faith. As Kil led a meeting in Seoul just after the Pyongyang revival, “He seemed to pray all night and then speak three or four times a day, led here and there by the hand, and never seemed to be tired. His words were like a prophet’s risen from the dead, none could withstand them.”35

The other factor in the revival movement was Bible study. It was started by Underwood in Seoul in 1890 with seven believers. Next year, the mission society laid down a Bible study programme in its regulations. A men’s class, a women’s class, and a mixed class were organized, taught by missionaries and Korean assistant lay preachers. Praying, counselling, and evangelization activities were also carried out. In 1904, more than half of all believers (60%) attended one or more of such classes. In 1907, there were 800 Bible classes and almost 50,000 persons attending them in the Northern Presbyterian Mission district. This number was double the number of baptized believers, which means that many believers attended more than one class.36 The Confucian tradition in Korean society might have influenced Korean Christians so that they read the Bible more and become Bible-believing Christians (3.3.2).

Let us briefly look at the course and the effect of the Pyongyang Pentecost. Scattered missionaries gathered at Pyongyang as usual in 1906 around Christmas and New Year’s Day. They prepared the forthcoming Bible class. But, that year, they had no heart for social gatherings, holding a prayer meeting each evening instead. A two weeks’ Bible class was opened from January 6th 1907. It was the Northern Presbyterian Mission programme. About 700 Christians attended from all parts of the northern lands. During the day, they had Bible classes and in the evening a revival meeting. The strongest men from all the churches were present as well, a gathering of about 1,500 men. On Saturday night, a number of believers confessed their lack of love for others, especially for the Japanese. They went home with confidence that their prayers were being answered. An eyewitness, the Missionary

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34 James S. Gale, “The Blind Pastor of Korea: A True Story for Young and Old,” in PE (February 8, 1930): 8, 9. He was partially blind at the time of the Pyongyang revival.
36 Roy E. Shearer, ibid., pp.60-61.
William Newton Blair, reported in his book *The Korean Pentecost and the Sufferings Which Followed* as follows:

On the following Sunday night, they had a strange experience. There was no life in the meeting. The church was crowded as usual, but something seemed to block everything. After the sermon a few formal prayers were offered and we went home weary as from a physical contest, conscious that the devil had been present, apparently victorious.

They redoubled their earnestness in their prayer: “Let everything be forgotten but just to pray.”38 On Monday at noon, the missionaries met and cried to God. They were bound in the Spirit and refused to let God go till He blessed them. God began to work on Monday night (January 14th, 1907). Missionary Blair writes:

That night it was different. Each felt as he entered the church that the room was full of God’s presence. Not only missionaries but Koreans testify to the same thing ... After a short sermon, Mr. Graham Lee took charge of the meeting and called forth prayers. So many began praying that Mr. Lee said, ‘if you pray like that, all pray,’ and the effect was indescribable – not confusion, but a vast harmony of sound and spirit, a mingling together of souls moved by an irresistible impulse of prayer. The prayer sounded to me like the falling of many waters, an ocean of prayer beating against God’s throne.

The meeting went on till two o’clock a.m. with confession, weeping, and praying. On Tuesday night, more missionaries together with Methodist missionaries attended. As missionary Blair prayed and called on God, it seemed as if “the roof was lifted from the building and the Spirit of God came down from Heaven in a mighty avalanche of power upon us. I fell at Kim’s side and wept and prayed as I had never prayed before ....”40 The Korean Pastor K. C. Pang, who was present, told Missionary Gale, “We were under a mysterious and awful power, hopeless – missionaries as well as natives.”

This movement spread out to the schools and churches in Pyongyang. Little children were in no way exempt. When the Spirit of God moved, man did not need to make anything happen under compulsion. Even the leading missionary Underwood did not participate in it. He was in America at that time. Those who experienced the power of God returned to their homes in the country taking the pentecostal fire with them.42 The Methodist mission held a training class for preachers and Christian workers soon after this in Pyongyang. The experience was repeated. Some missionaries and Korean ministers like Dr. Hardie, J. L. Gerdine, and Seon-Ju Kil held revival meetings throughout the country. It became like a nation-wide movement. Further, it influenced the churches in Manchuria (1908) and in China (1910).

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38 James S. Gale, ibid., p.204.
40 ibid., p.73.
41 James S. Gale, ibid., p.207.
42 Blair, ibid., p.75.
43 Gale, ibid., pp.215-221. Two Chinese elders in Mukden, Manchuria, heard of the revival in Korea. They visited Seon-Ju Kil and the leaders after the Pyongyang revival. They reported the news in
Even though not all agree on the achievements of the Pyongyang movement, the Gospel took firm root in Korea and the spirituality of Korean churches was shaped through it. The formation of a single presbytery of the four Presbyterian churches in 1907 was the result of its influence. Sung Joon Kim formulated its results as follows: believers were renewed from within; believers and missionaries were reconciled; the Bible study programme (later revival meeting) was established in the church; co-operation between denominations was enforced; plans were made for foreign missions (to Japan, China, Manchuria, and Vladivostok in Eastern Russia from 1907); the strengthening of the Bible school; and the one million souls for Christ movement was organized. Liberal and progressive circles have some different views on the revival movement.

As the movement began to wane in 1909, the united missionary council called forth a nation-wide evangelistic campaign in the autumn of that year. They adopted a slogan ‘a million souls for Christ’ in one year from 1909 to 1910. It was the first organized national movement of Korean Christians under the missionaries’ leadership. American revivalists were invited. Several millions tracts and 700,000 copies of Mark’s Gospel were distributed. Thousands of believers prayed daily for it and many thousands of unbelievers were invited to the meetings and many of them confessed their faith. However, most of them did not remain in the church. The result was different from what they expected. It left them with the lesson that well-organized human efforts which do not wait for God’s participation fail in heavenly business. Nevertheless, it was a natural consequence of the fact that the Korean church was growing through a series of revival and evangelization efforts of this kind. In 1910, the number of all Protestant Christians reached 167,000.

Mukden. A Canadian Missionary called Goforth from Honan (northern part of middle China) had also visited Korea around that time and gave an account of the movement to the church at Luoyang. “At once, similar phenomena took place. In Mukden, in Fakumen (northwest of Mukden), and in Hailuncheng the same fervent prayer happened and repentance ... It is unprecedented and striking in China.”; Kyong Bae Min, ibid., p.279; cf. Kenneth S. Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, vol. 6, pp.343-344.

45 Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.270-281; Gwang-Seon Suh, “Intellectualism and Anti-intellectualism of Korean Church,” in Christianity in Korean History, Seoul, 1985, pp.287-288. Some criticisms are mentioned. First, the revival was used as a means for the de-politicization of Korean Christians. Second, it caused Korean churches to be anti-intellectual. Third, the factional and individual piety of Korean churches is based on it; Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.118-119. Kim argues against the view of de-politicization saying that a revival movement cannot be artificially manipulated. It can only be performed by the Holy Spirit beyond human control. It was an instance of such movements that broke out in European Protestant churches and mission fields from the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the 20th century, he argues.

46 Sung Joon Kim, ibid., p.89. Roy E. Shearer, ibid., pp.63-64. Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.298-299. Boo-Woong Yoo, Korean Pentecost, pp.89-93. The positive valuation of it: the Gospel was preached all over Korea; the absorption of interest in the campaign maintained peace during the trying years of annexation to Japan; the increase of the people’s evangelizing zeal and the establishment of this tradition.
4.3.2. Independent Korean Churches: the Korean Presbyterian Church and Other Korean Churches (1912ff)

As an after-effect of the Pyongyang revival, a presbytery was constituted by the Presbyterian churches in accordance with the general assemblies of four Presbyterian churches (North and South of America, Canada, and Australia) in September 1907. It was composed of 33 missionaries and 36 Korean elders. On that evening, this presbytery ordained seven Korean candidates who had graduated from the theological seminary. They adopted the articles of confession which were standard in the Indian Free Presbyterian Church.47

The first independent Korean church started in 1912. The General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church was formed with seven presbyteries, having 44 missionaries, 52 Korean pastors, and 125 elders. Even though Underwood was elected as the superintendent and Blair as the treasurer in the assembly, they always were ready to cooperate with Korean leaders. Since 1915 Koreans took the position of superintendent. The Northern and Southern Methodist Missions opened a united Bible school in 1907. They also formed a single Methodist denomination in 1930. Other denominations also began to form their own organizations: the Baptist church in 1906; the Holiness church in 1910; and the Anglican Church in 1910. Then these churches began to be independent in cooperation with missionaries.

In the following sub-section we deal with Korean independent churches in three successive periods of time: the Korean Churches under Japanese imperialism; the Korean Churches under communism; and the development of Korean Churches after the Korean War.

4.3.2.1. The Trial of Independent Korean Churches under Japanese Imperialism (1912-1945)

As Japanese Imperialism annexed Korea in 1910, it took all necessary measures to deal with Korean churches because it realized that these churches as nation-wide organizations in Korea were the main agents of national consciousness. Nevertheless, Korean churches did not lose their basic liveliness. Christians took the leadership of the March First Independence Movement of 1919. Kyong Bae Min summarized four spiritual reasons for this. First, Christians believed that unrighteousness would be punished by God. Second, they acted according to the nature of Christianity which promotes freedom and justice. Third, it was the expression of the power of Christian ecumenism and unity. Fourth, the church was a unique circle where people did not give up their hope.48 Because of this independence movement, Korean churches suffered a loss of life and property within their country and in Manchuria.49

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47 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.128-129. The presidency was occupied by a missionary, but most offices were allotted to Koreans. The Korean Presbyterian church had 789 churches, 7 pastors, 53 elders, and 70,000 members (19,000 baptized). The creed was adopted from the 12 articles of the Indian Free Presbyterian Church in 1904. It tends towards Calvinism.

48 Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.339-341.

49 ibid., pp.345-349. For example, Korean Presbyterians suffered arrest (4,140), death (47), imprisonment (1,642), and destruction of church buildings (12). Moreover, Korean churches in Manchuria and Gando area suffered more from Japanese punitive forces: in the Gando area, 3,469 were killed (many
From the mid-1920s, Korean churches were confronted with internal and external problems. The inner problems were composed of three aspects. One was the rampantcy of ecclesiastical authority and formalization of the churches. The second was the beginning of theological controversy between conservatives and liberals. The third aspect was the shaking-up of the leadership of Korean churches. Some tried to form independent indigenous Korean churches. Therefore, missionaries began to retreat from active evangelization to working indirectly. The external problems were composed of four aspects. The first was the oppression by Japanese Imperialism, which displayed its rule over Korea by enforcing Shinto shrine worship. It schemed to make the Koreans its imperial subjects and forced them to worship at the shrine as its faithful subordinates. Even though the full-scale enforcement for believers started around 1935, Korean churches had already sensed the increasing oppression by imperialism. The second aspect was the threat of communist activities. In 1925, the Choseon Communist Party and Goryeo Communist Youth Association were organized. Communists propagated against Christianity and persecuted it in Manchuria. The third was the attack of atheistic and secular thought combined with natural science and human knowledge. The fourth aspect was the economic difficulties of the Korean churches when the Koreans suffered both from Japanese plundering and from poverty. We can see three countermeasures that took place in Korean Churches to cope with the difficult situation. Firstly, they organized evangelization in the periods of 1919-1921 and 1929-1932. Secondly, they engaged in social works like the enlightenment of the farmers and the campaign for temperate living and Young Men’s Christian Association activities. Lastly, they also engaged in the new type of revival movement introduced by Yong-Do Yi (1901-1933).

The position of the Methodist Reverend Yong-Do Yi in the Korean Church still remains an unsolved theological problem. However, it is clear that his ministry shook and awakened the Korean churches. In spite of the ministries of Seon-Ju Kil and Ik-Du Kim (1874-1950), and regardless of the evangelization efforts and the increase in the number of believers in general, the Korean Church in the period of 1920-1930 was “like a baby that has to walk through the storm alone.” We have already observed the reasons for this. In a word, the spiritual atmosphere of the Korean churches at that time was seized with stagnation and uneasiness. However,
Yong-Do Yi had taken up a special position. When he was a theological student in 1927, he wrote in his diary as follows (February 9):

The Korean Church must have a revival. It does not have prayer, personal evangelization, enthusiasm, love, courage, gratitude, praise, cooperation, Bible study, a truth-seeking heart, service, and family prayer. It has chattering, gossiping, criticism, only thinking of money-gathering, idleness, arguing and conflict, cowardice, fear, complaint, uneasiness, worry, dissolution, greed, selfishness, and anxiety in the family.55

When he was ministering as a revivalist in 1930, he wrote in his diary (February 20):

Modern Christians request ‘a strange Jesus’ and modern pastors preach a strange Jesus. If the true Jesus comes, He has no choice but to be killed. They killed the true Jesus after all. Instead, according to the demand of sin, they propagate the demon. Woe to the modern church! The Jesus that they request is a Jesus of the flesh, a Jesus of honour, a Jesus of wealth, and a Jesus of height. The Jesus that Jesus wants is the Jesus of Spirit, the Jesus of the humble, the Jesus of poverty, and the Jesus of the low. Do you need Jesus? Seek Jesus of the Son of God, not the Jesus of humans that you have manufactured. Do not try to adapt Jesus to your mind, but adjust yourself to Jesus.56

He criticized the Korean churches where fundamentalism reigned, also attacking professional revivalists, lifeless Western churches, and the sense of superiority of missionaries. His revival method was centered on prayer and experience that was different from Seon-Ju Kil and Ik-Du Kim, who concentrated on Bible teaching. He used to say that real Christians should be “crazy” for Jesus and die for Him. When he prayed he often sank into self-effacement and prayed for several hours. He did not prepare his sermons because he only preached when God gave messages to him. We find his spirituality that can be compared to the spiritual performance of Korean shamans (3.2.2). Thus he kindled the shamanistic spirituality of Koreans, and Korean Christians were enraptured over his ministry for several years.

Through his mystic faith-revival-movement, a “matured form of Christian mysticism held the position as a decisive factor to shape the pious form of Korean Protestant Christians.”57 He opened a new horizon in the Korean churches: from the traditional fundamentalist evangelicalism of the missionaries to a form of experiential and indigenized Christianity. Consequently, his spirituality and revival method were more successful in touching the shamanistic spirituality of the Koreans than the previous fundamentalism. At the same time, it contained the dangerous element of falling into heretical spiritualism.

His influence on Korean churches, regardless of right or wrong, may be formulated as follows. First, he introduced a new type of revival meeting in Korean churches, which was followed by most revivalists after the 1945 liberation. It was prayer-centered and experiential. Second, he brought about a “prayer boom” all over the land. Third, he awoke Korean churches from idleness and factionalism. Fourth,

56 ibid., p.87.
many young people entered the ministry through his service. Fifth, he influenced Koreans to form an indigenized Korean church. Just before his death (October 1933), Jesus Church was organized by those who followed him. Sixth, his faith represented the form of the suffering Korean Church underwent under Japanese imperialism: Christian martyrs under Japanese persecution were influenced by him. Most of all, from the point of view of “prayer boom” and experiences in God, he contributed to the preparation of a spiritual legacy for Sunbogoeum pentecostalism in the future.

The Japanese government in Korea began to force Korean schools to visit and worship Shinto shrines from the 1930s, propagating it not as a religious act but as a national patriotic ceremony. The Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Canadian United Presbyterian mission decided to comply. Under compulsion from Japanese police, the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church decided to worship there in September 1938. But most laymen and leaders who had a conservative and reformed faith refused to do so.

Japanese imperialism attempted to make all Korean church organizations one single system around the time when Japan attacked the Pearl Harbour (1941). Missionaries had to leave Korea until 1942. Some parts of the Bible (for example, the Old Testament and Revelation of John) and some hymns were revised or their use prohibited in church. Small denominations were dissolved until 1943. At last, in July of 1945, all Korean churches were unified under the title ‘Japanese Christian Church Choseon Denomination.’ This happened just three weeks before the end of the war.

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59 When Jong-Ho Byeon took the lectureship at the Sunbogoeum Theological Seminary (1966-1979) he introduced Yong-Do Yi as a model for pentecostals.

60 Seok-Hi Han, Japanese Occupation and Religious Policy in Korea, trans. by Seung-Tae Kim. Seoul, 1990, pp.75-160; Myeong-Gwan Yi and Sochon Kyuchi, The Material about the Relation History between Korea-Japan Christianity: 1876-1922, trans. by Yun-Ok Kim and Gyu-Tae Son, Seoul, 1990; Kurata Masahiko, The Persecution History of Japanese Imperialism over Korean Christianity, Seoul, 1991, pp.32-62. The Japanese church had a greater tradition of liberal tendency than the Korean church. The National Christian Council of Japan decided to worship State Shinto in 1936. The Japanese government-general in Korea wanted to use Japanese Christianity to cultivate Koreans. The Congregational Association Church of Japan acted upon it. That church began to evangelize in Korea from 1911. In 1919, before the independence movement, it had 150 congregations with 14,387 Korean members in Korea. But, it adapted itself to governmental policy. When the government stopped its financial support, it lost most of its members. Here are the statistics. In 1921, it had only 2,955 members and in 1940, it had 560 Korean adherents. Its basic idea for Korean mission showed how it sided with the imperialism. The motivation for its mission was explained as follows. First, Korea had been traditionally not an independent country. Second, the annexation of Korea to Japan was an act of God who realizes righteousness. Third, Japan can evangelize Korea best because the Japanese shared the same culture with Koreans. Fourth, although political annexation brought Korea economic development, only Christian edification would change Koreans into subjects of the Emperor. Fifth, even if there were twice as many Christians in Korea as in Japan, those believers became Christians from ulterior motives like political reasons and worship of the powerful (the Western powers) or they
4.3.2.2. Communism (1945-1953)

Communism was introduced in 1920s. It did not develop into a physical threat to the church in Korea itself owing to imperial militarism. But, the Korean churches in Manchuria suffered, and many pastors and believers were martyred by Korean communists there. However, real persecution by communists set in after the liberation from Japan in 1945. From the time the Russian army occupied the northern part in August 1945, Christian leaders there tried to engage in politics so that they might not only check the establishment of a communist government but also help believers to maintain their Christian lives. In September 1945, Reverend Ha-Yeong Yun and Reverend Gyoung-Jik Han organized ‘the Christian Social Democratic Party’ in Pyonganbuk-Do. Elder Man-Sik Jo and Reverend Yun-Yeong Yi set up ‘the Choseon Democratic Party’ in November of the same year. But they existed only several months because of the Communists’ oppression. To oppose and break up the North Korean churches, the communist party formed the North Choseon Christian League as a political puppet organization in November 1946. This organization was arranged by ex-Reverend Yang-Uk Kang, the secretary of Il-Seong Kim. Reverend Sang-Sun Pak was appointed as chairman. The League threatened to arrest and drive out all those who did not participate in it. Christians in the North took either the way of persecution and martyrdom, of coming to South Korea, of going underground, or of submitting to the League. From 1947, the church in the North began to have martyrs. Next year, the political regime nationalized church property. Many believers were included among those almost two million refugees who moved down to South Korea through the war. The socialized Christian League has lasted ever since in North Korea as an official religious organization.

4.3.2.3. Expansion, Schisms and Theological Developments in the Independent Korean Churches (1953ff)

In this section, we survey three points of expansion, schisms and theological development of Korean churches since the cease-fire of the Korean War (1953). First, we deal with the expansion of Christianity in Korea. After the war, the number of Korean Protestant believers increased almost twofold in each decade (see figure 1). The evangelist Reverend Chin-Hwan Kim believes that “the hearts of Korean people were more open to receive the Gospel after the Korean War than any other previous time in Korean mission history.”

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61 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.230-237.
63 Heung Soo Kim, *North Korea Church History since the Liberation*, Seoul, 1992, pp.20-34. North Korea has a temporary provision which permits freedom of religion. It is a makeshift. The communist party was convinced that it could not hold on to its regime without dealing with the churches because of the great number of believers in North Korea. The communists oppressed churches with all possible means like persuasion, plots, and raising internal troubles in the churches. After the war, 350 pastors were martyred or disappeared.
64 Chin-Hwan Kim, ibid., p.217.
At the same time, heretical groups, which made inroads into the contemporary state of despair, were prevailing. This age also produced Elder Un-Mong Na (1914-…), who rendered great services to indigenization and the Holy Spirit movement in Korean churches in the 1950s. He corresponds more to the Korean pentecostal revivalist than Yong-Do Yi. But, as his faith was mainly based on the Bible and experiences without theological training, his influence decreased. Un-Mong Na’s case is a noticeable example how Korean traditional religions and Christianity encounter positively, on the one hand, and cannot harmonize, on the other hand.

In the 1950s, expectancy for the future life and eschatology were the chief subjects taught to believers bearing post-war hardships. In the 1960s, hope, active work and duty were preached to Koreans as economic development broke out after the military revolution. Furthermore, the Sunbogeum church of Yonggi Cho took fire and gave impetus to this movement. In the 1970s, through mass evangelization campaigns, Korean churches began to expose their united resources and their influence on society. Minjung theology appeared in this decade. In the 1980s, Korean churches grew with the vision of world mission.

Korean churches are seen to have expanded riding Korea’s wave of modernization as the sociological study of religious phenomena shows (see 2.4). Byong-Seo Kim’s analysis shows that the shamanistic, conservative, formalistic and depending-upon-the-Spirit religiosity of the Korean Church and its modernity (capitalistic and economic system that is activated by industrialism) could mutually interact with Korean modernization. Hence, he also pointed out the problems of the Korean Church which were caused by its business-style competition and blessing-seeking faith. He regards the Korean Church as an edition of Korean society in miniature. Max Weber’s theory which deals with the relation between the development of religion and society was taken as an example for this explanation.

Making the mass evangelization campaigns in the 1970s as the period of explosion

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66 Un-Mong Na, The Holy Spirit that I Experienced and Its Movement of a Half Century, Seoul, 1990/2 ed., 1995. He entered Yongmun Mountain in 1940 alone to seek the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy. In 1942, he heard God’s voice to tell him to repent and saw a vision there. He was dramatically converted to Christianity. Soon he began to preach. He was trained through Bible study and prayer. He was persecuted by imperialism and communism. From the early part of the 1950s, his ministry at the mountain began to be known. He was invited by churches in the cities from 1952 (during the Korean war). In his ministry, experiences such as healings, speaking in tongues, and falling into a trance broke out. He taught the filling with the Spirit as the second experience after salvation. In August of 1954, almost 30,000 gathered at the prayer house in Yongmun Mountain. He founded the prayer house in 1947 and Gideon Theological School in 1956 in that mountain; Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp.268-269. Korean churches watched him with suspicion because he tried to harmonize Confucianism and Buddhism with Christianity. In the 1960s, he was rejected or declared as a heretical Bible teacher by most denominations; Deok-Hwan Kim, The Foundation History of Korean Church Denomination, Incheon, 1991, vol.3, pp.129-143. Na was ordained a pastor in 1979 by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Most pastors in it graduated from his theological school. This denomination has 348 churches and 70,000 members; Un-Mong Na is the first indigenous Korean pentecostal leader. Even though he does not accept tongues as the initial sign of baptism with the Spirit, he accepted and mentioned the gifts of the Spirit. His ministry brought abundant fruit and the denomination that he founded follows the right track. Nevertheless, his somewhat inharmonious mixing of theology with traditional doctrines (for example, he advocates a spiritual prison after death like purgatory and takes Confucius and Buddha as God’s prophets), makes him unpopular in Korean churches.

of the revival movement, the Korean Church was able to reach about 25% of Koreans in 1990. It appeared as a church which missionizes.

The relation between shamanistic religiosity of Korean people and such a revival in Korea can be traced by Yung Han Kim’s idea of formal correspondence: shamanism contains the idea of divine spirit and heaven god which finds a point of contact with the Jahweh concept in the Bible; there is the idea of a world beyond this one in shamanism, whose point of contact is the idea of Heaven in Christianity; it has the idea of supplicating for blessing to the divine spirits, which is comparable to the blessing of God in the Old Testament; it has the idea of sincerity and prayer, which can be the equivalent of prayer and devotion in Christianity; it seeks blessing here and now, which is comparable to the teaching of Christianity which takes a serious view of life and blessing in this world; it has a fatalistic idea of life, death, fortune, and misfortune depending upon a transcendental divine power which is comparable to God’s transcendental power and authoritative guidance for Christians; it employs singing and dancing, which are comparable to the joy of Christianity in becoming reconciled with God; and it has the idea of mystic salvation through suffering, which corresponds to the suffering of the cross and the glory of the resurrection.68

Secondly, we pay attention to the schisms in this period. The first schism in the Korean Church had already started in the 1910s.69 However, the real divisions in Korea sprang up in the 1930s out of theological issues of conservatism and liberalism. Until 1959, the Korean Presbyterian Church was fundamentally formed into four groups (Kosin, Kijang, Tonghap, and Haptong) for basically theological reasons.70

Since 1960, only the Haptong group has been the subject of divisions. In 1960, Daesin and in 1962 Hoheon separated themselves. But the dissension since 1979 has been like the splitting of an atomic nucleus. The main reasons were not theological issues, but issues concerning the theological seminary and ecclesiastical authority. In 1995, there were 112 organized denominations under the name of the Presbyterian Church in Korea.71 The Confucian heritage like putting stress on formality and party strife among Neo-Confucian scholars must have prepared soil for the Korean churches to develop into schisms.

The Methodist Church split in 1953 owing to a problem with the election of the general bishop, but was re-united. In 1962, one part separated from the main body. The Holiness Church also split into a conservative group and a progressive group in 1961. The Assemblies of God split in 1981 and were reunited in 1992 as well. For

69 Yeong Gwan Park, A Historical Christian Faith in the Korean Church, Seoul, 1981, pp.40-52; Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.402-417. The reasons for this can be formulated as follows. First, the influence of some Canadian missionaries and liberal theology from Japan gave rise to confrontation in the conservative Korean Church. Second, there was an attempt to establish a pure indigenous church freeing itself from foreign missions. Third, there was an attempt to harmonize Christian faith and scientific knowledge. The Korean Church had not reached sufficient maturity at that time. Fourth, some tried to overcome denominational factionalism and found an ideal church. However, those attempts did not so much affect the Korean Church in general.
all that, there exist main denominations in each group (the Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness, and Pentecost), and recently, discussions about uniting the denominations among those that share the same theology have become an issue.

Finally, we refer to theological developments in this period under discussion. The theology of the Korean Protestant Church was dominated by conservatism and subjective faith until the mid-1920s. Then, two tendencies made their appearance, as we have already discussed. Until the 1960s Korean theologians had only introduced Western theology but after that liberal and progressive theologians began to discuss indigenous theology in the 1960s (mainly Methodist scholars) and Minjung theology in the 1970s (mainly Kijang scholars).

At the same time, each denomination began a period of self-examination in the middle of the 1970s, each carrying out a reappraisal as to its possible one-sidedness. Conservatives began to talk about Christian responsibility in society, while liberals began to realize that their theology caused them to remain relatively small and weak churches. Until that time, Americanized fundamentalistic evangelicalism played the main role in Korean theology. As reformed theology, it put emphasis on dogmatic theology, which was mainly applied to God’s providence and predestination centering on soteriology. Therefore, God’s sovereignty was not fully developed in their denomination and doctrine with the result that they neglected the wider cultural lives of believers. In other words, they neglected the hermeneutic function and cultural theology in reformed theology. Evangelical theologians also discuss Korean indigenous theology, but, they try to transform the traditional culture according to Biblical principles. Yung Han Kim suggests a transformative cultural theology, first seeking religious and cultural equivalents to Christianity in the traditional religions and culture and then christianizing them. Today, in North Korea, the Christian League is pursuing the harmonization of Christian faith and the autonomy thoughts of Il-Seong Kim. It tries to produce an ideological theology.

Preparing for the 21st century, Korean theologians make ecclesia reformata semper reformanda a principle in order to propose new guide posts in an ever-changing world. This trend offers pentecostal theology, especially Sunbogeum theology in Korea, an opportunity to display its ideas more freely.

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72 Yung Jae Kim, ibid., 319-322. Evangelical Tonghap and Haptong began to pay attention to missio dei whereas Kijang reflected on its theology. Kijang could not achieve the church growth as Haptong and Tonghap did; Ui-Hwan Kim, “Korean Church Revival History and Prayer Movement,” in The Holy Spirit and Prayer: A Spiritual Program for the Pastors, Seoul, 1995, pp.136-152. Yung Jae Kim, ibid., pp. 320, 356-358. Church growth complies with theology. The Methodist Church in Korea which took an open attitude towards theology is falling behind the Presbyterian Church in church growth. The statistics of 1991 show that Presbyterians number ca. 7.5 million in all and Methodists ca. 1.5 million in all. The growth rate from 1964-1975: Haptong 66.8%; Holiness 50%; Tonghap 26%; Methodist 29%; and Kijang 8.6%.


74 Yung Han Kim, ibid., pp.460-461.

75 Heung Soo Kim, ibid., pp.192-223. Today, in North Korea, several churches are officially open and the majority of believers are known to meet as house churches; the Open Door Mission Society assumes that there are about 140,000 believers in North Korea (Kookmin-ilbo Daily News, 11.10.1996).
4.4. CHRISTIAN SECTS

Today, there are about 92 Christian sectarian groups in Korea. The total of followers amounts to 180,000. Almost 35 persons fancy themselves to be the re-incarnated Jesus or Jesus at His second coming and 12 claim to be god.\textsuperscript{76} Heretics originate either from rationalism (liberalism) or from mysticism. Rationalistic heretics are generally beyond discussion because they pose as theologians while mystical heretics do become an issue.\textsuperscript{77}

The main mystical heretics in Korea have their origin in the 1930s. Under Japanese oppression and ecclesiastical lukewarmness, there not only arose Yong-Do Yi’s spiritual revival meetings, but also moral perfectionist (Mr. Guk-Ju Hwang) and counterfeit prophecies (Mrs. Myeong-Hwa Yu, Mr. Jun-Myeong Han, and Mr. Nam-Ju Paek). Especially, Guk-Ju Hwang and Nam-Ju Paek fell into religious adultery, which implies the typical analogy between religious trance and sexual ecstasy.\textsuperscript{78} Such activities were suppressed until the end of the Korean War (1953), but then, they broke out. The Unification Church of Seon-Myeong Moon (1920-....), which was organized in 1954, and the Revival Society of Jesus Evangelization of Korea by Tae-Seon Park (1917-1990), which was organized in 1955, are the best examples.\textsuperscript{79}

Here, we are concerned about the view that Yong-Do Yi (1901-1933) was the root of the Korean heretical movement. Yeong Gwan Park writes, “Mr. Yong-Do Yi fell from insane mysticism to the idea of an interchanging spirit-body, which brought forth mixed-adultery.”\textsuperscript{80} But, most scholars and especially Jong-Ho Byeon, who devoted his life to vindicating Yong-Do Yi’s ministry, denied that his mysticism became the direct root of Korean heretics. Today we know that he had nothing to do with promoting the principle of mixed-adultery, which originated from Guk-Ju Hwang and Nam-Ju Paek. Nevertheless, Yong-Do Yi made the mistake of having fellowship with those who had been excommunicated, which was why he was also rejected by the church. His heart and intention were too good to do any harm, but he lost the balance of his God-given-reason. He was a man deceived, but not deceiving.\textsuperscript{81} Yet, he might have deserved indirectly to be called the father of Korean mystical heretics.

\textsuperscript{78} Kyong Bae Min, ibid., pp.434-448.
\textsuperscript{80} Yeong Gwan Park, \textit{The Two and Four Major Cults}, Seoul, 1976, pp.30-36, 130-133; idem, \textit{A Historical Christian Faith in the Korean Church}, Seoul, 1981, pp.78-86. Park also writes, “Yong-Do Yi developed a system of insane mysticism ... Baek-Mun Kim followed his principle ... Seon-Myeong Moon and Tae-Seon Park imitated Kim’s principle.”; Myeong Hwan Thak, who was the expert on Korean new religions and Christian heretics wrote: “It seems that Christian new religions were quite a lot influenced by Minister Yong-Do Yi’s mysticism.” (\textit{The New Religions in Korea: Christian Groups}, vol. 1, 1992, p.36). But, he also claimed that according to the new studies, he hardly believed that Yong-Do Yi was the origin of the mixed adultery (\textit{The Research on Christian Cults}, 1994, p.101).
\textsuperscript{81} Kyong Bae Min, ibid., p.444.
Korean heretics mixed the teaching of the Bible with traditional Eastern thought, and then produced their own structures which are expressed through shamanistic spirituality. Koreans, who were familiar with shamanism, were vulnerable to such syncretism. Having pursued mystical trance without thoroughgoing repentance and theological discretion, Korean mystical heretics were entrapped in the snare of the cunning dark power. All such problems display a syncretistic religious climate in Korea discussed in previous chapter.

4.5. CONCLUSION

We conclude this chapter with eight remarks.

First, it is worth noticing that both Catholicism and Protestantism started missionary work among the Koreans before the missionaries entered Korea. Above all, the Bibles in easy Hangeul and the colporteurs made great contributions to paving the way for the Protestant missions in Korea.

Second, the Korean Protestant Church was established by American missionaries who were well accepted by the Koreans in the period of transitions and afflictions. The puritanic and evangelical faith of those Americans was more suitable to Korean religiosity than the earlier Roman Catholic and European types of Christianity so that Christianity quickly could spread as a movement in the land and could become instituted.

Third, Japanese Imperialism certainly obstructed the growth of Korean churches. However, it was not able to destroy them but rather served as a stimulus, forcing them to depend only on God and pray persistently. Communism’s ruin of the churches in North Korea eventually became the mainspring for driving out believers from the northern part to the south. The revival of South Korean churches after the Korean War was caused by this to no small degree.

Fourth, the Korean Church revivals are basically attributed to fervent prayer and devoted Bible study. The first revival in the northern part of Korea (1903-1907), which became manifest through these two activities, played a decisive role in planting and indigenizing Christianity in Korean soil. This revival gave birth to a spiritual movement with the lapse of time (1930s), which emphasized the filling with the Spirit more than Bible study. Such a transformation has prepared the ground for both the following pentecostalism and for mystical sects after the Korean War.

Fifth, the Korean Church continued growing after the 1960s when economic development was pushed ahead by the military government. Material prosperity (development) did not choke the spiritual life. On the contrary, the church expanded

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82 For example, the Unification Church inductively applied the creation account of the Bible (God created man and woman) to the nature of God so that it developed a god, composed of positive and negative dispositions (both sexes), which corresponds to Yin-Yang of Tai Chi. It explains creation, the fall and salvation according to the process of giving and receiving between the two dispositions. Tae-Seon Park has also confused Biblical truth with spiritualized materialism. According to him, the main theme was that of stained blood. As Eve ate the forbidden fruit, her pure blood was contaminated. Man can be saved by the blood of Jesus, who gave his blood into Park’s mouth. By this, his blood became pure, he claimed. That event is filling in the spirit according to his version. He almost behaved as if he were the Holy Spirit.
on the waves of prosperity. This phenomenon in Korea can be interpreted less as a secularization process than as a dynamic relation between religion and society. Nevertheless, problems associated with being a modern capitalistic society emerged from Korean Christianity in this period.

Sixth, the birth and growth of mystical heretics might have partly originated in emotional revival meetings. However, the real reasons for them lay in the search for heroic mysticism without thorough repentance and theological discernment in Korea, where a syncretic religious atmosphere, partly comprising shamanistic spirituality, was still powerful at grass-roots level.

Seventh, theological polarity of conservatism and liberalism caused unavoidable schism in most denominations. Yet, according to the principle *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* of the Reformation, each theological party began to give up its extreme attitude.

Eighth, the Korean religious background which is syncretism of both the traditional religions and the immigrant religions has had impact on the development of Korean churches positively and negatively. Syncretism with Christianity, that holds the definite canon (the Bible), meets with resistance differently from other religions.