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A STUDY OF
THE CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL CONFLICT
IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KOREA

by

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Taegu, Korea

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
April 1963

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the contemporary theological conflict in the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The thesis will represent an attempt to analyze the theological bases of the main divisions along with the steps taken to restore unity.

B. Significance of the Problem

The problem facing the Korean Presbyterian Church at the present time is significant since the Church is in a period of transition. The way in which the problem is handled and solved will to a large measure determine the course of future Christian work there.

C. Delimitation of the Problem

This in no way purports to be a history of the Korean Church. It is rather an examination of the theological basis of conflict in the Presbyterian Church of Korea with a view to presenting some suggested solutions for the present problems.

Terms frequently used are defined as follows:

1. Fundamentalism may be properly defined as defensive biblicism to conserve the factuality of the events to which the Bible witnesses and to defend selected doctrines on the basis of literal interpretation, plenary inerrancy, and verbal inspiration of the Bible.¹

¹ Thomas C. Oden, "Fundamentalism's Weak Christology," The Christian Century, vol. LXXIX, 1962, p. 1349.

2. Orthodoxy is a term frequently used to describe the theology of the fundamentalist wing of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. By referring to their position as orthodox, they are claiming to the standard and authority of the Church.

3. Liberalism is a reaction against the Biblical literalism of fundamentalism. The details of this reaction will be discussed in the study.

D. Method of Procedure

Since many of the events in the contemporary conflict have their roots in the past developments in both the Church and the society at large, chapter one will serve to give a brief outline of the most important developments which impinge on the present theological crisis.

Chapter two will present the two streams of thought in theology --fundamentalism and liberalism. The main divisions in the Church and the theological basis for each division will be dealt with in some detail.

Chapter three will indicate the recent attempts to restore unity and the results of such efforts, along with the author's suggestions of further means by which the problems may be overcome.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR UNDERSTANDING

THE CRISIS IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR UNDERSTANDING

THE CRISIS IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to outline the historical background of the Church in Korea to provide a basis upon which the present theological crisis in the Korean Presbyterian Church may be understood.

This will be done by means of a brief resume of the old religions, the coming of Christianity, the period of Japanese control, the liberation following World War II, and the events during and after the Korean War.

B. Influence of the Old Religions

"The contemporary Korean Church is soaked by Confucian externalism, Buddhist escapism, and Shamanistic emotionalism."¹ This statement by Chai Choon Kim indicates the influence of three religions beside Christianity upon Korean society and the Church.

a. Shamanism

This has been the dominant religion of the superstitious masses of Korea. Confucianism infiltrated the upper ranks of society while Shamanism increased among the lower strata. The believers sing, dance, and drink wine as a means of worshipping the spirits. Shaman-

¹ Chai Choon Kim, "Korean Gods and Christian Message," Christian Thought, vol. II, no. 8, Seoul, 1958, p. 74.

ism has been defined as:

. . . a primitive religion of Polytheism or Polydemonism with strong roots in nature worship, and generally with a supreme god over all. Through auto-hypnotism caused by different methods, state of trance or alternate personality is produced. He becomes a mediator between gods and spirits on the one hand and men on the other. ¹

The Korean Church has been influenced by Shamanistic emotionalism in worship, practices, and customs. For example, devil posts by the roadside at the entrance of every village could be seen decades ago, but such things as the position of a new house, use of land traditionally inhabited by evil spirits, and the ordering of activities according to "good" and "bad-luck" days are still observed by common people of the lower ignorant classes and even by some Christians. ² The educated people do not follow these traditions.

Shamanism has no supreme deity. It was rooted in nature worship. The idea of sin and questions of morality were not raised at all. It was not that they have taught evil to others. Outside of their example in cultivating the intimate friendship of the evil spirits, and the rumored suggestions as to their own private lives, they had no message on nor interest in these matters. Shamans were busy getting men free from the omnipresent, harassing spirits and the discomfort which they brought. Their interests were in the spirits and the supernatural world. Many of the ceremonies include

¹ Charles Allen Clark, Religions of Old Korea, New York, 1932, p. 216.

² Ibid.

prayers for progeny.¹

The effects of the influence of Shamanism can be seen in the Church in that oftentimes Christians would rather pray and worship purely for their own benefit than the fellowship of others.

In addition, through the influence of Shamanism Christians are driven to a state of fanaticism from the worship of spirits. They are also taught to abandon their families and hence lack true Christian concern.

b. Buddhism

When Buddhism came to Korea in 372 A.D., its evangelizing spirit was strong. Buddhist missionaries from Korea were sent to Japan in 545 A.D., taking images and sacred books, urging the adoption of Buddhist doctrine.

During the Japanese control of Korea from 1909 to 1945, the Japanese government encouraged a revival of Buddhism in Korea because the government leaders were Buddhists themselves. It was also as a political measure to counterattack the influence of the Christian Church.

Buddhism in Korea absorbed the mythological elements of other religions already present in Korea such as Taoism, while retaining its philosophical views which it held in common with Buddhism in other countries. Buddhism holds the doctrine of universal salvation.

1 Ibid., p. 218.

2 Ibid., p. 29.

The way of salvation is the way of enlightenment or the way to Buddhahood. Buddhists believe that both ignorance and salvation are products of the mind. Therefore, Buddhists insist on the purification¹ of the inner life.

They believe that all men, demons and even the gods themselves are bound to the Wheel of life, ascending or descending in successive rebirth, according to an exact system of retribution, exactly according to the merit accumulated in the various previous lives. They are all on the Wheel and salvation consists in anything that might give release from the Wheel into a state of peace. The ordinary method of escape from the Wheel is asceticism, the crucifying² of the body.

Buddhist influence has often been felt in the Church. Buddhistic doctrines mixed with Christian belief have led to believers being misled. Christians in Korea as a result of Buddhistic influence came to believe that religious fulfillment was the main point of Christianity, ignoring thereby cooperation and fellowship with other Christians. They thus became competitive rather than cooperative in the outworking of their faith.

c. Confucianism

Koreans regarded Confucianism as more educational than religious in nature. It was the basis of the education of the noble class as late as 1900 and an examination in Confucianism was required

1 Ibid., p. 86.

2 Ibid.

by those aspiring to official government positions. Among the many precepts of Confucianism which have molded Korean society are loyalty to the king, faithfulness to friends, conjugal fidelity, and fraternal love. In addition, reverence for ancestors and filial piety have been influential doctrines of Confucianism in Korean life.

Confucian believers rejected the subjectivism of Buddhism and substituted the Confucian method of acquiring knowledge through studying the objective world.

Further, in moral teachings, the emphasis was on the proper relationship to others. Self-control, and a deep respect for parents, elders, and superiors marked their conduct. These ideas of conduct and behavior influenced the Korean people and hence their understanding of Christian teachings.

C. The Coming of Christianity

Many details could be included in presenting the first days of Christianity in Korea. It will be necessary, however, to limit the discussion to two specific matters. First, the program operated under the Nevius plan will be mentioned, and second, the strategy of early mission work will be discussed.

The first Christian missionaries went to Korea in 1884. Almost from the beginning of mission work in Korea, the principle or policy¹ that was adopted for the Korean Church was called the Nevius plan.

¹ The plan takes its name from John L. Nevius, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church to China from 1847 to 1893. He visited Korea in 1890 and his ideas were transmitted to Korea by his colleagues.

This plan has been employed in the main by the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The intention of the plan was to nurture self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing individuals and hence churches by providing spiritual strength through prayer and systematic study of the Bible.¹

Won Yong Kang, lecturer in theology at the Chosun Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Han Kuk Theological Seminary)² explained the success of mission work in Korea. He said that the increase to one and a half million believers in seventy years was attributable to "first, a constant theological education through short-term training programs based on the memorization method in accordance with a strong and fundamentalist theology; second, intensive evangelical activities through revivalistic congregations; third, the adoption of the Nevius method; and fourth, the political changes toward the end of the Yi-Dynasty, in 1900 A.D."³

The Church grew prior to the Japanese control in the period 1907 to 1910. The movements by the vigorous and independent people of northern Korea who had zeal for the propagation of the faith and for self-support had now come to extend throughout the peninsula.

1 Yang Sun Kim, "Retrospect and the Future of Missions in Korea," Christian Thought, vol. III, no. 6, Seoul, 1959, pp. 12-13.

2 Chosun Presbyterian Theological Seminary was built by the decision of the General Assembly in April, 1940. After the liberation of Korea, the name of Chosun (given by the Japanese) was later changed to Han Kuk (Republic of Korea).

3 Won Yong Kang, "The Korean Church in the World Community," Koreana Quarterly, vol. I, no. 1, Seoul, 1961, p. 122.

This period from 1907 to 1910 was remarkable for the events in both the political and religious history of Korea. Politically, the Japanese Protectorate which was established in 1905 resulted, in 1910, in annexation, and the political independence of the country was terminated. Religiously, a nation-wide evangelical campaign began, known as the million movement.

In this early period, the Nevius method which was applied in the movement encouraged people to become Christians. In its application to the Korean people, its individualistic thought encouraged men to content themselves with their own lot and make the most of what they had already. There are pro and con arguments on this method, however, it is obvious that at this time it was applied with great success. However, the method, even as supplemented by more formal training in Bible Institutes and other short-term education, failed to produce leaders who could pass on to the people the deeper theological insights. The churches required ministers to help them cope with their social responsibilities and to maintain moral character and instead accepted men with little education to spread the Christian faith.

For this reason the entire Church remains to this day theologically shallow. The Nevius method was carried forward easily without any severe struggle in connection with the formalistic Confucian emphasis: ancestor worship, obedience to the authority of one's elders, respect toward teachers and support of the patriarchal system.

If the ethical system of Confucianism has relevance for the

noble class in Korean society, the Nevius method enjoyed success in the evangelization of the middle class in a bourgeois society.

The people in the northern part of Korea were fitted in their social condition to become self-supporting, and they welcomed the Nevius method. In the southern part of Korea the people of the ruling noble class, with their different cultural background were hostile toward missionaries because of the missionaries' misunderstanding of the cultural heritage of the class. The Nevius strategy continued for a long time.

In 1901, Arthur J. Brown visited Korea and criticized the use of the Nevius method. He was one of the earliest critics of the Korean Church and he asserted that the inadequacy of the leadership training program in the Protestant Churches in Korea was due to a rigid adherence to the Nevius program. In his words:

The only reason they assigned to me for deferring Church organization, after a sufficient number of believers have been baptized, was the lack of duly qualified men for Church officers. I have stated the dangers involved, not so much because I think that the mission is blindly running into them, as because they are perils which clearly shadow the present policy, and which should be kept in mind as sure to bring trouble if that policy is pursued any longer than absolutely necessary But just at this point the question arises: What is meant by "suitability?" I can only say that, in my brief contact with Korean Christians, I got the impression that from the viewpoint of spiritual life they averaged as an equal number of American Christians Christ selected twelve rather imperfect men, one of whom turned out to be a thief and a traitor. But no one doubts that Christ did wisely, and that the infant church prospered. 1

1 Arthur J. Brown, Report of a Visitation of the Korean Mission, Inter-Church Center, Presbyterian Library, New York, 1902, p. 15.

In assessing the Nevius method for Church growth, Nam Kung, one-time professor of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pyongyang and later a general secretary of the National Council of Korean Churches, wrote in the yearbook of the Korean missions for 1932:

The Church as a whole has been steadily growing The Church in some places shows a tendency to develop more on the emotional side and less on the intellectual. Emotion is an important part in religion but there is a little too much in some of our churches. I believe the Church needs revivals, but I fear a special type of revival is becoming special blessing rather than on God. In other words there is more formal revival than spiritual awakening. People think that such blessing can be obtained only by leaders from outside and not through the local church leaders. At present there are some unauthorized men and women who claim to be prophets or prophetesses It is also a matter of thanksgiving that a spiritual movement is going on among the young people nowadays. But one is sorry to see, here and there among these young men and women, a tendency to fanaticism instead of intelligent faith. 1

The Church of Korea has been influenced theologically as a result of the adoption of this plan. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Korean Mission in 1934 six main theological principles developed from the Nevius method were set forth as the final Presbyterian strategy for mission work in Korea. These are:

1. The acceptance of the entire Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for true Christian faith and service.
2. Personal evangelism and witnessing stressed as the sacred privilege and duty of every professing Christian.
3. The prime necessity of regeneration through the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself in supernaturally transformed Christian lives.
4. The main purpose of the mission's educational program is the training of the children of the Church to furnish Christian leaders and to prepare for Christian life and service.
5. Medical work as an evangelizing agency.

1 Nam Kung, The Korean Missions, Yearbook of 1932, Seoul, pp.11-12.

6. The indigenous Church is to apply the principles of self-support, self-propagation, and self-government included from the beginning. ¹

The Nevius method in its underlying thought was based upon an individualistic approach to and understanding of the Gospel. In this regard, Edward D. Brunner surveyed rural Korea and noted that, "While enthusiasm for Bible study in Korea is an outstanding characteristic of Korean religious life, the Church has been chiefly concerned with the individual and not with the social gospel."²

In summary, it can be said that the Nevius method was responsible for the growth of the Church in Korea in the early days. On the other hand, its one-sided emphasis upon the individual and its superficial approach to theology became the source of disagreement among the leaders of the Church.

Secondly, concerning the strategy of early mission work, it is notable that some Canadian Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopal missionaries considered education, both religious and secular, rather than evangelism to be of primary importance. They stressed that conversion should follow proper religious education. These two differing points of view developed into a conflict within the mission boards and created a severe strain because of the wide acceptance of the Nevius method. Sun Chun Chun, formerly a professor of the

¹ L. Year Book of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Chosun Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1884-1934, 1934, p. 171.

² Alfred W. Wasson, Aims and Method of Mission Education, Seoul, 1917, p. 161.

Chosun Theological Seminary, observed in his doctoral dissertation that this conflict came from the early days of Presbyterianism in the United States.¹ He referred to the Old Side-New Side Schism of 1741-1758 and the Old School-New School Schism of 1837-1869.²

Chun showed in his dissertation that the early missionaries in Korea came almost exclusively from the area where the Old School idea was dominant. They were called the Church-minded group of the Scotch-Irish wing who stressed the more objective aspects of the Christian Church as distinct from the subjective or experimental side of the Christian faith.

The principle of educational work in the Korean Mission was stated in the annual report of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1900 as follows: "Everything is practical, everything Scriptural, everything looks not merely toward the reception of the truth, but to its promulgation."³

From the outset, it is clear that there were two differing

1 Sun Chun Chun, Schism and Unity in the Protestant Churches of Korea, Yale University doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 1955, p. 132.

2 In 1830 following the Puritan and Revivalist period of the Great Awakening in America, some groups reacted against the individualism of the emerging type of American Christianity. Both Old and New parties argued on questions of Church government and doctrine. The Old School reflected its Churchly traditions and interest. On the other hand, the New School was quite satisfied with the Plan of Union and the nondenominational voluntary societies. Lefferts A. Loestcher, A Brief History of the Presbyterians, Philadelphia, 1958, pp. 17-18.

3 The Presbyterian Board in the United States of America, Annual Report 1900, Inter-Church Center, Presbyterian Library in New York, 1900, p. 171.

points of view as to the nature of missions and the means to mission. This early division helps to account for the present conflict in the Korean Church.

D. The Period of Japanese Control

The most significant events during the period of Japanese control (1910-1945) were those concerning Church school education and the problems arising from the Shinto Persecution.

From about 1910, the missionaries began to devote more effort to the "business of organizing and training the Korean Church and the development of necessary institutions"¹ rather than personal evangelism. Consequently many schools, both secondary and elementary, together with professional schools maintained by the Church sprang up in the large cities all over Korea.

The conservative group of the Presbyterians in Pyongyang believed that education was only for the children and doubted the effectiveness of higher education. The more progressive group of Presbyterians in the area of Seoul believed in educational evangelism. The Japanese forces were against the work of foreign missionaries in Korea. By 1910 there had appeared two distinguished representatives of the mission boards: one was Horace H. Underwood and the other was Samuel A. Moffet. Underwood built several institutions of higher education in Seoul while Moffet worked in the area of theological

¹ George Paik, The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910, Pyongyang, 1927, p. 361.

institutions.

Later on, the Japanese interfered with the schools and all educational institutions were required to conform to the government standard. By 1936 liberalism had appeared in the Church and the fundamentalism versus liberalism controversy was in full swing. This conflict was also labeled Seoul versus Pyongyang and education versus evangelism.

During this period, the Shinto question became the central problem involving persecution for the Protestant Church in Korea. The problem was whether or not Korean Christians should follow the government instruction to worship at Shinto shrines.

In 1935 more pressure was put upon the Christians regarding observances at the shrines. Eventually all Christian schools had to be closed. Since the Japanese invasion of China in 1938 there was heavy opposition to the Christian movement. The shrine problem arose and this was the turning point for the Protestant Church of Korea.

The Japanese required that all Christian Churches should be registered and that all Protestant Churches in the Empire should unite into one organization. On September 20, 1940, about three hundred preachers and lay leaders of all denominations were arrested, imprisoned and tortured. Both the Holiness Church and the Seventh Day Adventists were dissolved by order of the Japanese governor.¹

The Japanese influence upon the Church through the Shinto shrine

¹ Mission Report, The Korean Mission Field, vol. XXVII, 1934, p. 34.

problem formed the starting point for argument in the early stages of Church conflict in the Presbyterian Church in Korea since some churchmen observed Shinto practices and others did not.

E. Liberation Following World War II

Following the surrender of the Japanese in August, 1945, Korea was liberated. During the period after the withdrawal of the Japanese two important matters came into prominence.

First of these was the establishment of Chosun Theological Seminary in Seoul. This school, which was organized in April, 1940, under the decision of the Presbyterian General Assembly was always under the threat of the Japanese government. The first graduation took place in 1942 with eleven graduates. That year, the Japanese police raided the school and arrested its president.

When the Japanese wanted to make the Korean Church a United Japanese Church with a united seminary including the Methodist Seminary, two of the professors of Chosun Seminary resigned and the school was temporarily closed.

After the liberation of Korea in August, 1945, the previous students of Chosun Seminary who were in North Korea returned to the South and rejoined the Seminary which then had a student body of eighty. In 1947 the enrollment reached three hundred and the first serious threat came. Fifty-one students complained that Chai Choon Kim was teaching liberal doctrine. The Assembly meeting decided on April 20, 1948, that Chai Choon Kim would be replaced by Hyong Yong

Park. Kim refused. In May, 1951, the Assembly decided to establish another seminary, the so-called Assembly Seminary, an orthodox sem-
1
inary.

In 1953 the Chosun Theological Seminary changed its name to Han Kuk Theological Seminary — the Republic of Korea Presbyterian Theological Seminary which is of the liberal persuasion.

The second important matter arose concerning the group of Christians freed after years of imprisonment by the Japanese. They had held a strong faith against the Shinto shrines. They were warmly welcomed by the Christians and were respected as Christian saints. Those who had been released had planned to reestablish the Church and found a seminary because they believed that the present churches did not lead people to salvation.

In 1946 Sang Dong Han, the leader of this group and his sympathizers founded their own seminary. These fundamentalist Presbyterians called it the Koryo Seminary. They held strictly to the ultra-conservative viewpoint and have received continuing approval and support
2
from the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. In 1952 the General Assembly decided to expel this group. However, they promptly formed their own General Assembly starting with about three hundred and fifty local churches. The Board of Foreign Missions of

1 Allen D. Clark, History of the Korean Church, Seoul, 1961, p. 208.

2 Chang Yup Kim, Protestant Theological Education in Korea, thesis presented at the Biblical Seminary, New York, 1955, p. 101.

the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America strongly dis-
approved of its missionaries who supported the seminary.¹

F. The Korean War

Events during and after the Korean War had repercussions in the Church. Five hundred ministers and Christian leaders were killed or kidnapped. In Seoul alone, thirty-nine of the most prominent and able leaders were among the victims. In addition to the loss of leadership, Christian organizations were of course weakened by the economic disruption brought about by the war.²

The efforts by those around the world to rehabilitate both the country and the Church proved to be a mixed blessing. While help was urgently needed, the fact that quantities of materials and money were to be administered by Koreans led to various degrees of corruption both in the country as a whole and within the Church as well.

G. Summary

Chapter one has served to outline the historical background to the theological conflict presently plaguing the Church in Korea. Important developments which impinged on the development of the Church, namely, the influence of the old religions, the early mission policy and theology, the period of Japanese control, the liberation following World War II, and significant events both during and as a result

1 Clark, op. cit., p. 48.

2 Ibid.

of the Korean War have been presented.

Chapter two will seek to delve more deeply into the theological basis for Church conflict. To this the study now turns.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT THEOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT THEOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to outline the present theological crisis in the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The evidence of the crisis is seen in a number of Church divisions which have occurred in the past eighteen years, however the basis for the conflict is to be found in deeper serious theological differences.

The two streams of thought in theology, fundamentalism and liberalism, will be discussed: first, the early influence of liberalism on the life of the Church, and second, the challenge which it has presented to the established order of fundamentalism.

Part two of the chapter will indicate the main divisions and the theological basis for each conflict. First to be discussed will be the problem resulting from the clash of liberalism and Shinto shrine worship. Second, the influence of liberalism will be indicated in the way in which it precipitated division. Third to be discussed will be the divisions resulting from conflict over the relationship with the world-wide church.

B. Theological Basis of Church Division

1. Influence of Early Fundamentalism

In 1949 Emil Brunner visited Korea and described the fundamentalism of the Korean Church in this way: "The fundamentalist theory

of verbal inspiration of the Bible is an unsurmountable obstacle to becoming Christian.¹ Since he spoke of the Church which is nominally Christian he no doubt saw verbal inspiration as an obstacle to genuine Christian commitment. He added, "This is one of the greatest obstacles for making Korea a Christian nation and a most unfortunate and theological leaning which prevents evangelism."²

a. Literal Interpretation of the Bible

The roots of the fundamentalism³ which Emil Brunner detected in the Korean Church go deep into the history of that body.

The first theological seminary in Korea, Pyongyang Theological Seminary, founded in 1901, has been the center of fundamentalism. The professor of systematic theology at that seminary in 1907, W. B. Reynolds, in his book Religion and Eternal Law states his view of Scripture, "When the Eternal Law changes, the religion changes also To change the text and thereby obscure the sense or change it is wrong. You must preserve the original form and interpretation."⁴

1 A letter by Emil Brunner on November 24, 1949, sent to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. This letter was revealed by John Mackay to be used by S.C. Chun for his doctoral dissertation, presented at Yale University, New Haven, 1955, p. 132.

2 Ibid.

3 Supra, p. 2.

4 W. B. Reynolds, Religion and Eternal Law, 1907, quoted in Yang Sun Kim, Ten Years of History of the Korean Church after Liberation, translated by the present writer, Seoul, 1956, p. 174.

He considered rigid memorization of the exact words of Scripture and a strict literary interpretation to be essentials. He saw no reason to discuss any other theological questions.

It is understandable that the Bible was placed at the center of mission work and that consequently views concerning the Bible should be considered of the greatest importance in the training of ministers. In 1896, W.B. Reynolds, setting forth ideals for the Korean ministry outlined seven principles for education on this basis, two of which read: "Seek to fit him to a high plane of spiritual experience. Let him strive above all else to be a Holy Ghost Man. Ground him thoroughly in the Word and in the Cardinal facts and truths of Christianity."¹

Such are indications of the fact that the theology adopted by this seminary in the education of the Korean ministry was that of inflexible fundamentalism. This was the theology of the foreign missionaries and the Korean Church leaders thought that their obedience to foreign missionaries was the strongest and surest way to advance the Church in Korea. Thus, a greater emphasis was placed on this obedience than on their self-reliant spirit or on their leadership based upon free judgment, or on their capability of conversing with the world church on an equal basis.

The fundamentalist attitude which stressed the training of Korean ministers in the Bible alone is exemplified in the statement, "The main thing for the Korean Church to do is to train capable Bible

¹ Won Yong Kang, "Korean Church in the World Community," Korean Affairs, vol. I, 1962, p. 122.

scholars and to have Korean Bible commentaries, that is all."¹
This was their aim, hence they saw no reason for Korean ministers to have additional theological training than they had so that they might stand firm on their Scriptural belief.

Korean church leaders thus were grounded in orthodoxy² which emphasized the literal interpretation of Scripture. They firmly believed that since the Bible was the Word of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit, if any different interpretation was made other than the literal, this must be heretical and classed as heterodoxy. They believed that the Bible has a special factual and theological content.³ The maintenance of orthodoxy they believed to be the best way to preserve the Church.

During the formative years of the Church several problems arose which increased the fundamentalist strength. This idea of orthodoxy became important in the Church of Korea. Several biblical problems arose which forced the Korean Presbyterian Church to stand firmly on the belief of fundamentalism.

(1) The Role of Women in the Church

1 Y.S. Kim, op. cit., p. 175.

2 Orthodoxy is frequently used to describe the theology of the fundamentalist wing of the Church in Korea. It denotes the authority of the Presbyterian Church or the rule of fundamentalism in the Korean Church. When reference is made to the orthodox Presbyterian Church, the standard of measure is the fundamentalist belief in literal interpretation. Orthodoxy and fundamentalism in this context are thus synonymous.

3 cf., I Cor. 15:11; Gal. 1:6-9; I Tim. 6:3; II Tim. 4:3-4.

Sun Choo Kil,¹ the great Korean evangelist, revivalist, and Bible scholar, had a strong influence through his teaching of Bible lessons and preaching in the period of 1930. His theological views were taken as a standard for the Korean Church. He had received his training from the early missionaries, and his theology was in some sense an extremely fundamentalist one.

In 1934, a year before the controversy over the Abingdon Bible Commentary, at the Twenty-third General Assembly, two problems arose. One problem dealt with the authorship of Genesis. The other problem concerned an article written in the Christian News about Choon Bae Kim's "Proposal to the General Assembly" that women should be active in the Church and be allowed to teach. He claimed that the order of Paul to the Corinthians which forbade women to speak in church was only a local custom.² It was given two thousand years ago and was not an absolute truth.

On this issue, the motion was passed and published through the influence of Sun Choo Kil which said that women's place in the Church was not permitted in the Bible, and that those who consider Scripture as not literally applicable for today should be disposed of according to the Constitution.

In this way of interpretation of Scripture, there was no other room to translate scriptural meaning than the Word itself.

1 Sun Choo Kil was one of the first ordained ministers in Korea. He had formerly believed in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

2 cf., I Cor. 14:34,35.

(2) Authorship of Genesis

In 1935, when the Twenty-fourth General Assembly was held, the members passed a resolution of the Committee stating that to deny Moses as the author of Genesis violated the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. And so they considered it advisable to dismiss those holding such views from the ministry of the Church.

The reason they gave was that "The books of the Pentateuch can not be separated from each other but should all be regarded as the work of one author."¹ They felt that any disagreement with this view could not be tolerated in the Korean Presbyterian Church.

The influence of early fundamentalism is clearly seen. There was no room allowed for higher criticism.

(3) Translation of the Abingdon Bible Commentary

In this same period when the Abingdon Bible Commentary was published in 1935 in Korea and the Twenty-fourth General Assembly was held, Kil pointed out that he believed the writers of the Abingdon Bible Commentary were liberal theologians and warned the Assembly not to accept this book. He emphasized the seriousness of taking such a liberal commentary to the people.

The Assembly approved his proposal and proclaimed, "The Abingdon Bible Commentary can not be accepted because the book runs against the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church."² The Assembly also recom-

¹ Minutes of the Twenty-fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1935, p. 1.

² Y.S. Kim, op. cit., p. 176.

mended that a subcommittee investigate how it came to be translated. One of the translators later apologized for participating in the translation, but the others justified themselves and counterattacked the General Assembly for denying them freedom of theological belief. This was the beginning of the liberal challenge to fundamentalism. Early fundamentalism thus was based on the plenary inerrancy of the Bible, and there was no place given for the discussion of other views.

2. The Rise of Liberalism

a. Chai Choon Kim and Fundamentalism

Chai Choon Kim¹ was known by all as the representative liberal scholar among the contemporary Korean theologians. He studied at Aoyama College in Japan, in a liberal theological atmosphere, and then went to America to study at the then Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh.

Though he was not a liberal of the destructive critical type, he opposed the idea that Scripture was verbally inspired or historically or scientifically without error and not only ignored the tradition of orthodoxy² in the Korean Church but directly opposed the fundamentalists.

1 Chai Choon Kim was president of Chosun Seminary during 1951 to 1962 and is professor emeritus. Chosun Seminary was built in April 1940 by the Korean Presbyterians while all the missionaries were not in the land because of the Japanese occupation. In 1946 this school by decision of the General Assembly became the authorized seminary of the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

2 Supra, p. 26.

The word "fundamentalism" has been used since the conservative reaction against Kim's theology began in 1947. In the early spring of 1947, fifty-one students in Chosun Seminary, where Kim was teaching, disapproved of his theology and presented to the Thirty-third General Assembly a statement on his instruction. The statement said:

The Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the Word of God and the one infallible rule for faith and practice. The Creed says this and on this the Korean Church has stood. We must always so stand and defend our faith in the pure evangelical Gospel. But when, in response to an urgent call, we entered the Assembly-sponsored Chosun Seminary and began to study, we soon found that the faith and view of the Bible which we had always held was being overturned. Is this merely because we are of immature experience? Our faith has no source but the Bible. If this Bible loses authority, the basis of our faith is gone. Therefore, we cannot accept the Chosun Seminary's view that faith is conservative and theology is liberal. We rebel against modernistic theology and Higher Criticism of the Bible.¹ We are opposed to liberal theology and rationalistic theology.

The Assembly received the petition and examined Kim's view of Scripture and his doctrine. During the investigation by the General Assembly Kim offered that the Bible, in regard to the revealed truth of the Atonement is infallible, that natural science and historical science can not deny its infallibility in this area. Kim's reply further stated that the Bible was both fallible and infallible, so that religiously it was infallible but scientifically it was fallible.

The statement of Kim's view in this regard is paraphrased in the following translation:

1 Y.S. Kim, op. cit., p. 216.

God never uses persons as machines. He reveals Himself to those who respond to Him. He communicates his word through men to other men. The one who receives his inspiration records his experience in the language and thought patterns of his time. Since those who wrote portions of the Scripture were fallible human beings it is not being faithful to Scripture to insist on literal inerrancy and verbal inspiration for the preservation of Scripture. The purpose of Scripture is to promote faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.¹

This view challenged belief in verbal inspiration and literal inerrancy. This was the first challenge to fundamentalism in the Korean Church. The Committee finally decided that Kim had denied the infallibility of Scripture. By the action of the General Assembly in 1947 the inerrancy of the Bible and verbal inspiration were pointed out to be the two fundamental points of the Korean Church's conservative theology.²

The exponent of this fundamentalist theology, Hyong Yong Park,³

1 Ibid., p. 214.

2 It is notable that in 1901, when the Pyongyang Seminary was set up, their theology was inflexible fundamentalism. In carrying out the school system, they adopted five principles of the Bible Conference held in 1895 in the United States. These were indicated as follows:

- a. The Virgin Birth of Christ.
- b. The physical resurrection of Christ.
- c. The inerrancy of the Bible.
- d. The substitutional atonement.
- e. The imminent physical coming of Christ.

3 Hyong Yong Park was the outstanding member of the extremely conservative group in the Korean Church, and was a president of the Assembly Seminary in Seoul till 1959 before the split of the Church. He received his fundamentalist views from the Pyongyang Christian College founders, W.M. Baird and Samuel A. Moffet, and from the outstanding Korean conservative pastor, Sun Choo Kil. Park was later educated at the Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and it was natural for him to follow the doctrinal footsteps of those ministers who sympathized with the theology of J. Gresham Machen.

who was a member of the Committee and a spokesman, indicated during this controversy that the inerrancy of Scripture and verbal inspiration were two equal tests of theological views. Park's exposition of fundamentalism was approved in the General Assembly but in 1953 the question was raised again.

Insistence on the theory that belief in inerrancy and verbal inspiration were the yardsticks for measuring orthodoxy resulted in the clash of liberal and conservative elements and ended later in denominational division.

(1) Chai Choon Kim's Challenge to Orthodoxy and John Mackay's Visit

In 1946 Kim criticized orthodoxy severely in his magazine Se-Salam (New Man) when he said that orthodox theology included "wisely disguised humanistic elements."¹ He also attacked the fundamentalist Pyongyang Seminary. In the magazine Crusade, he mentioned the theology which the missionaries held:

Theology that was held by the missionaries in Korea is the most extreme fundamentalism, and those young missionaries who came later were also of an extreme fundamentalist position. Therefore, there was no reason for them to accept another theology. Originally, extreme fundamentalists held the belief that they were right and they did not consider others. Korean missionaries intended to hang an iron curtain, not letting Korean Church leaders learn anything except the fundamentalist position. Chosun Seminary was established at the end of the Japanese occupation by Koreans while the missionaries returned home. It was necessary during World War II that they should evacuate Korea.

1 This was a topic often discussed among Church leaders regarding the Church situation in Korea.

It implied that Koreans were not now under the control of missionaries. When they returned to Korea after the war, they were careful and they eagerly desired to manage theological seminaries. This Chosun Seminary would not let go their hold.¹

As a result of Kim's outspoken attacks on fundamentalists, the Korean Presbyterian Church stood on the brink of theological crisis in 1949.

At this time, John A. Mackay, chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and president of Princeton Theological Seminary visited Korea in October, 1949. The Korean Church had expected much from him because he was a well-known Church leader and seminary educator, hence the Korean Church sought a theological interpretation from a responsible theologian from abroad.

Both seminaries, Chosun Seminary and the fundamentalist Seminary,² met him at this time of crisis. They wanted to know which theology he held, fundamentalist or liberal, so that the Church of Korea could know the belief of his Mission Board.

John Mackay gave important messages in Seoul on several occasions. In these speeches both seminaries expected some words in favor of their side. John Mackay emphasized each time the peace of the Church, because he had learned from the missionaries the crisis that the Korean

1 Chai Choon Kim, writing in Crusade, 1946, quoted in Y. S. Kim, op. cit., p. 199.

2 This seminary was built in Seoul in 1948 for Pyongyang Seminary in North Korea. This was before the Church division in 1953 over the seminary problem.

Church was facing. He was concerned about the relation between the local churches and the missionaries.

When Mackay spoke on the trends in contemporary theology, he stated that most theology of the present time originated from the biblical views of Karl Barth. The General Assembly group of fundamentalists took him to be a "crisis" theologian, while the Chosun Seminary group considered that this proved that the world-famed president of the Presbyterian Board was a liberal, taking it for granted that liberalism and present day theology were one and the same thing.

Chosun Seminary was stimulated and satisfied by Mackay's visit and his speech on contemporary theology. From this, Chosun Seminary claimed that Mackay was a spokesman of liberal theology and in accord with them. The General Assembly was suspicious of his theological views. After he returned to the United States, the theological conflict in Korea became more serious.

In such a period of strain between the two schools, people were concerned about their belief whether it was orthodox belief, or not, and there was held in Seoul a Presbyterian Youth Convention where fundamentalist and liberal theology were criticized. Kim and Park were both invited to speak to the convention. Park refused to attend, however, Kim spoke of the theology of Barth and Brunner as misunderstood by the Korean Church. He urged Koreans to study their theological positions.

He challenged fundamentalism in Korea, making a deep impression on the people by his understanding of theological problems.

(2) The Influence of Chosun Seminary

The United Church of Canada,¹ a union of the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches in 1925, did not hold to a strict interpretation of the doctrine and confession of the Presbyterian Church. The weaknesses in the theological basis of fundamentalism and a critical interpretation of Scripture were taught by Canadian missionaries to the Korean leaders. In 1926, the Bible Institute of Hamhung in the northern part of Korea was opened by the mission board of the United Church of Canada for training preachers. However, Korean Christians definitely believed in the literal interpretation of Scripture so this minority group of preachers could not undermine the generally accepted fundamentalist belief in literal inerrancy.

Chosun Seminary was built when the fundamentalist seminary at Pyongyang had been forcibly closed because of the Shinto problem in 1938.² In this period, the liberals, holding a neutral position toward Shintoism, could remain to keep the Church alive, but others who held extreme fundamentalist views and who refused Shinto shrine

1 Canadian missionaries arrived in Korea in 1898, and in 1928 the Twenty-fifth General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church broke with some of the Canadian missionaries on theological grounds; those missionaries of conservative persuasion decided to break away from the mission board of the United Church of Canada, criticizing the board as liberal. The United Church of Canada is the only mission board which supported Chosun Theological Seminary.

2 Infra, pp. 41-42.

worship were imprisoned or had to move out of the country.

The Japanese Government sustained only Japanese-educated theologians and allowed another seminary to be built in Seoul instead of the fundamentalist seminary in Pyongyang.

It was significant for theological education that Chosun Seminary was built in 1940 by the Koreans while foreign missionaries as well as extreme Korean fundamentalists were out of the country. This school was the only theological seminary which remained open in the period during World War II.

Kim remained at Chosun Seminary during the war and indicated his goals for the seminary. He said he hoped to raise the academic and theological standards of the Church of Korea. Secondly, he hoped to see the beginning of a Korean-initiated evangelistic movement. He indicated the need for textual criticism in the study of Scripture. Finally, he hoped to see the end of arguments over theological differences.

His ideas were welcomed by the educated people because of the emphasis on raising academic standards and his interest in promoting Korean-sponsored evangelism.

Thus, Chosun Seminary was influential in the Church of the southern part of Korea as well as in the Northern part because it was the only school open during the Japanese occupation and the views held there were more open to various schools of theological thought than were the views of fundamentalism.

(3) The Impact of Liberalism

After World War II and the military liberation of Korea in 1945, the Korean people wished their nation to be independent. The voices for independence and self-reliance were popular everywhere, including the Church. When the fundamentalist missionaries returned to Korea, they were not received with the same regard as they had been earlier because the Korean people now recognized their need for more education and were eager to go abroad to study. Because of the changed political situation the former authoritative approach by the missionaries was no longer popular, nor did it meet with the same response as in former times.

In such a situation, the influence of Chosun Seminary was particularly effective since there the need for self-reliant evangelism was emphasized and there was concern about academic and theological standards.

On the other hand, the opponents of liberalism expected the Church to return to the same situation which had existed during the early period of mission work and wanted the same type of evangelism as in the past. They claimed that they could not accept the Chosun Seminary views and they fought for the pure Gospel as they said Athanasius had done, to preserve the Church in the fourth century.

In 1951, as a result of a statement by fifty-one students protesting the liberal theology of Chai Choon Kim, the General Assembly investigated the situation of Chosun Seminary. The Assembly in 1953, before the division of the Presbyterian Church defined Chosun Sem-

inary as a school of heterodoxy and said further that whoever accepted the beliefs of Chosun Seminary would be regarded as denying the resurrection of the body, the Virgin Birth, and the Sabbath and so they would be counted heretics.¹

On this point, the views of Scripture and the doctrines which were held by the liberal school of Chosun Seminary are mentioned by the fundamentalists as follows:

1. On the Scripture.

- a. The first five books (and Joshua) of the Old Testament were not written by Moses but by J. E. D. P. Isaiah 40-66 comprises the Second Isaiah written by an unknown author during the Babylonian Captivity.
- b. Outside influence in the formation of the Canon.
- c. Samuel is not the author of Samuel.
- d. Additions to the Scripture. (There are many insertions.)
- e. Time of authorship of Scripture. (Oldest part, time of Samuel; Pentateuch, 800-400 B.C.)
- f. Many mistakes in the Bible:
Historicity of Noah's flood and tower of Babel, origin of races, stories of race of giants.
Old Testament history is dependable only from Abraham, not before, conquest of Jericho a spiritual conquest and in regard to the laws on slavery and impurity, these are matters which change with the times and writers do not always agree.
- g. Sources of Synoptic Gospels:
Mark was written first and leaned on the Logia and seventy-five per cent of Matthew is abstract and twenty-eight per cent of the material is distinct from Mark.
- h. Biblical theory is intended to explain the religious life of the Bible as adapted to each period. Therefore, historical, scientific study of the Bible is the most appropriate form of study.

2. On Doctrine

- a. The Bible is not a textbook of doctrine and there is a difference between the Bible and theology.
- b. Predestination
Professor Kim indicated that he had no interest in predestination. Calvinistic predestination turns into fatalism.

¹ This problem will be discussed later in "Division Because of the Influence of the Liberal Seminary in Furthering Theological Differences." Infra, pp. 46 ff.

c. The Sabbath.

There is no sin in attending daybreak prayer meetings and doing the necessary work of the day in a country church during the busy farming season.

d. The Old Testament idea of Heaven and Hell developed late in the Graeco-Roman period.

e. Doctrine of God.

The one God Elohim was originally the God of the Semitics, called "El," and being so called by all Semitics. God was called "El" and not called "Yahweh" until the time of Moses.¹

Chosun Seminary in the theology of liberalism was led by Kim and the setting up of this seminary was a new departure in the Korean Church.

C. Major Divisions and Their Theological Bases

1. Division Related to Shintoism and Literal Interpretation of the Bible

These early theological differences played a great part in the division of 1948. The issue of idolatry arose at the time of Japanese control. During the period from 1935 to 1945, the Shinto shrine question became the central problem involving persecution for the Protestant Church in Korea.

In such a crisis, both liberals and fundamentalists were worried about how to keep the Church alive. The liberals thought that they could keep the Church alive by cooperating with the Japanese policy which imposed Shinto shrine worship. On the other hand, the fundamentalists refused shrine worship on the basis of the interpretation of the first Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

1 Y. S. Kim, op. cit., pp. 217-222.

The reason for the cooperation with the Japanese governor in 1925 showed the meaning of the shrine ceremony to be to honor the memory of ancestors who performed distinguished services to the nation. It was emphasized that respect shown at the shrines and religious worship were differentiated by law. The act of obeisance at the shrine was simply and purely for the veneration of one's ancestors.¹

On the basis of this interpretation, the director of the Japanese Educational Bureau called both Presbyterian and Methodist leaders to attend a meeting in June, 1936. It was announced there regarding shrine worship:

1. Attendance upon the shrine is not a religious but a government ceremony. It is not an act of worship, but is paying highest respect to ancestors.
2. The educational system has the object of training loyal subjects as well as giving them knowledge. Therefore, school teachers and pupils must make obeisance at the shrines. The attendance of others is a voluntary act and is not required.²

Most American missionaries refused to follow Japanese shrine worship and only Canadian missionaries showed sympathy to the government interpretation.

Eventually, the Christian schools were all closed because of the missionaries' refusal. The Japanese, because of their demanding shrine worship, opposed the Christian movement. They required that all churches should be registered and all Protestant churches in the Em-

¹ Journal of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Foreign Missions, 1948, p. 215.

² Ibid.

pire should unite in one organization to be called the Federation of Reformed Christian Churches of Korea. At this time of crisis, the fundamentalists strongly opposed Shintoism, the practice of bowing to the Shinto shrines, in which it was believed the spirits of the deceased emperors and war heroes were enshrined. They considered this to be idolatrous.

Shintoism held the doctrine that the Japanese people and especially the emperors were directly descended from the Sun goddess whom the Japanese called "Amaterasu-omi-kami." The believers in Shintoism held that they were a divine race with the higher mission of extending the benevolent rule of their divine emperor throughout the earth. The living emperor was believed to be a god upon whom the spirits of the departed emperor had descended.¹

In the Shinto shrine prayers of adoration and thanksgiving were offered. On the basis of this definition of Shinto belief, fundamentalists thought it was idolatrous and would not conform to the government's requirements.

Even though these patriotic observances were pronounced to be non-religious in character, they nevertheless on several occasions appeared to many Christians to be religious ceremonies and therefore conflicted with the Christian principle of worshipping only one God.²

Besides this Shinto worship, another problem was that the Prot-

1 William K. Bruce, Religions in Japan, Tokyo, 1956, p. 120.

2 Ninety-ninth Annual Report of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1936, p. 441.

estant denominations of the Korean Churches were forced to unite to form one Christian Church as a branch of the Japanese Church, on the first day of August, 1945. Many Christians went underground. There were hundreds who stood out against the government pressure, suffering torture and imprisonment. The liberal school of Chosun Seminary thought that this act of worshipping at the Shinto shrines was not idolatry, but a government ceremony, and they remained in the Church and cooperated to organize a united Church according to the Japanese government policy.

At the liberation when the imprisoned fundamentalists were released, questions were raised about the rehabilitation of the Church which had worshipped at Shinto shrines. Those released met together at the San Chun Hyun Church, instead of returning to their Churches or homes. There, for about two months, they discussed numerous problems related to the rehabilitation of the Korean Church.

On September 20, 1945, they issued the following statement of Church polity:

1. Since all Church leaders (pastors and elders) had gone out to the shrine, they must submit to serve discipline and a cleansing repentance before they again take their places as Church officials.
2. The discipline may be worked out either in the form of penance or exemplary behavior, but ministers must stay out of their charges for at least two months and then make open confession.
3. While the ministers and elders are in this time of retirement from their office, the deacons or ordinary Church members shall conduct public worship.
4. These principles for the rehabilitation of the Church shall be given publicity in each and put into effect.
5. The seminary for training workers shall be reopened.¹

1 Y. S. Kim, op. cit., p. 149.

For these fundamentalist leaders who were imprisoned, the question of the "united Church" and Shinto worship which had been forced by the Japanese were vital for the spiritual life of the Church. They required all of the Church leaders to have meetings of cleansing prayer. On the other hand, the leaders of the liberal wing of the Church never worried about the effect of Shintoism in the Church as those did who had been in prison.

As a next step, fundamentalist leaders planned to reopen their school at Seoul, ignoring Chosun Seminary. They believed that Chosun Seminary was liberal and cooperated with Japanese demands for Shinto worship and participated in the "united Church."

They criticized Chosun Seminary, saying that the problem of idolatry came up because of the use of textual criticism instead of literal interpretation of the Bible. They declared that Chosun Seminary had violated the first commandment. In reopening the fundamentalist seminary they insisted that it should follow the doctrines of fundamentalism and add the doctrine of predestination which the Reconstructionist Presbyterian Church¹ believed to be vital. They called this seminary the Koryo² Presbyterian Seminary. Hyong Yong Park was recommended to be the president of this seminary.

An argument concerning the division of the Church arose in December, 1946, when the Kyongnam Presbytery met. The argument was about

1 Those released leaders put the Church name "Reconstructionist" signifying the purifying of the Church.

2 Koryo is the old name for Korea.

the problem of self-discipline which was raised by those Church leaders who had been imprisoned. They insisted that the entire Korean Church needed a thorough repentance and regeneration. The result of the argument was that the plans for the new seminary were cancelled.

The group of extreme fundamentalist ministers, however, who insisted on building a new seminary and reopening the Church, seceded from the Church. They said that the established Church was a devil's organization because it had not repented of Shrine worship. This secession resulted in a division of opinions: one group insisted that past sins must be fully cleansed and that this cleansing must be by self-examination, using the holiness of their own group as a standard; the other side felt that the Church should be rehabilitated through presbyterial action rather than by self-examination, and began to criticize the ex-prisoners' self-righteous attitude and unco-operative spiritual activities.¹

Several special presbyterial meetings were held to resolve the secession and they at the outset accepted the proposals made by the Church leaders who had been imprisoned. The proposals were issued for the rehabilitation of the Korean Church.

When Park arrived at this Koryo Seminary² in 1947, he did not agree with this extremely fundamentalist seminary and his influence resulted in July, 1948, at the special meeting of Presbytery that

1 Allen Clark, op. cit., p. 44.

2 This seminary was already built by the approval of the General Assembly in 1946 in sympathy with the request of the imprisoned Church leaders. Park was in Manchuria in 1946 and returned to Korea in 1947.

the majority group rose up and requested to deal with the action of this new seminary, announcing that this seminary was inadequate for the Church of Korea because the Church could not follow the minority group who were extremely fundamentalist.

The decision regarding the cancellation of the Koryo Seminary was made by a vote of forty-four to twenty-one. The General Assembly declared that this seminary did not have any relation with the General Assembly. Finally the extreme fundamentalist Koryo Seminary seceded from the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

When this extreme fundamentalist group is carefully examined, it may be seen that they were so faithful to the literal interpretation of the Bible that they could not admit that there could be any other interpretation of Scripture. This fundamentalist group held to the plenary inerrancy of the Bible.

The weakness of their theology is that there is too great emphasis put upon Calvinistic predestination, i.e., that God has already chosen those who would be elected or punished. They believed that they were the ones to be elected and saved from the Japanese persecution because they were righteous and kept the faith of the Church.

They insisted that all who did not believe or act according to their standard needed to repent and be regenerated because of their past sins. This point was often discussed by the Korean Christians and greatly hindered evangelical work after the liberation of the

country. Emil Brunner put it well: "This is a most unfortunate and theological leaning which is an unsurmountable obstacle to becoming Christian."¹

As the present writer sees it, the tendency to extreme fundamentalism has been the source of many of the problems in the Korean Church. If, instead of the great emphasis upon plenary inerrancy and the insistence that theirs is the only orthodox theology, they had insisted more on the spirit of Christian love and fellowship there would have been no division in the Church of Korea.

2. Division Because of the Influence of the Liberal Seminary in Furthering Theological Differences

Following the division of 1948 caused by fundamentalist emphasis on Biblical inerrancy, three groups emerged. One was the extreme fundamentalist group (the Reconstructionist), the second the General Assembly group, conservative in theology, yet not so radical as the Reconstructionist group. The third group, composed of liberals, increased in strength under the changing political and social circumstances. Argument persisted between the conservative group and the liberals, the former saying that they were the orthodox and the liberals the heterodox. The extreme fundamentalist group, because of their small numbers ceased to have a major voice in the contest.

Trouble centered around the liberal Chosun Seminary which had been opened in April, 1940, at the time of the Japanese occupation.

¹ Supra, p. 24.

A fundamentalist seminary was opened in Seoul in September, 1951, called the General Assembly Seminary. There was opposition between the two schools. The General Assembly school wished to unite the two seminaries; however, Chosun Seminary flatly refused. The real reason for the conservative proposal to unite was that they hoped in so doing they might remove the liberal professors and the curriculum which allowed historical criticism in the study of Biblical literature. The conservatives held to plenary inerrancy of the Bible. Desire to do away with the liberal seminary at Chosun followed the action of the General Assembly of 1950 which ordered every presbytery "to investigate and discipline all who did not believe in the plenary inerrancy of Scripture."¹ The final result of the controversy between the conservative and liberal group was that the Chosun Seminary group broke away and became the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea.

In separating from the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea designated their ecclesiastical guiding ideas as follows:

1. We would oppose every form of Pharisaism, in ourselves or others, and stand for the free Gospel of faith in the living Christ as our only salvation.
2. We desire to establish a strong Church and at the same time stand firm for freedom of faith and conscience.
3. We reject the slavish spirit of dependence upon others and would foster the spirit of self-reliance and self-support.
4. At the same time we warn against a narrow spirit of isolationism and desire to cooperate faithfully with Christians

1 Typoscript of Official Statement of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, 1955, p. 1.

throughout the world in a true ecumenical spirit.

5. We desire to fulfill our mission of bearing practical witness to the whole of Christ as Lord and Saviour of the whole of man's life.¹

In this issue, the main emphasis was clearly that the liberal group asserted that they were not among the obstinate and legalistic Bible-interpreting fundamentalists. They believed in the same Lord and Savior, but not through the interpretation of plenary inerrancy of the Scripture but rather through the free interpretation of the Gospel of faith.

They were concerned that their group not be confined to a narrow legalism but identify with all those who professed faith in the world-wide Church.¹

3. Division Created by Theological Problems Resulting from Relationship with the World-Wide Church

a. Issue Relating to the National Association of Evangelicals

From three main theological differences over fundamentalism, Shintoism, and liberalism, there had arisen three major Church divi-

¹ Ibid., p. 4.

2 Statistics of Presbyteries and Churches affiliated with the new General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea in December, 1954, were as follows:

Presbyteries	Churches	Pastors	Members	Sunday School Attendance
7	510	319	110,061	95,800

The membership of the other Presbyterian Churches in Korea is as follows:

	Communicants	Total Number of Adherents
The General Assembly Presbyterian Church	150,000	551,000
Koryo Presbyterian Church	30,000	150,000

sions in the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

Two outstanding theological streams were running basically in the Korean Church: one was fundamentalism taught by the early missionaries, and the other, liberalism.

After the liberal Church broke away from the fundamentalist group, there were no longer any arguments on this point. The fundamentalists believed that the liberal theology was heretical and that it denied faith in Scripture and violated the Creed of the Korean Presbyterian Church.

There were thus three main groups in the Presbyterian Church, the liberal (The Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea), the conservative (General Assembly Presbyterian), and the extreme fundamentalist group (the Koryo Presbyterian Church).

The Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea, the liberal group, with the cooperation of the Canadian United Mission Board encouraged contact with the World Council of Churches.

The next cause of dissension thus arose over the ecumenical movement. Delegates from the conservative General Assembly Church attended the second meeting of the World Council of Churches held in Evanston, Illinois in 1954. Upon their return the National Council of Churches of Korea¹ approved the movement and in 1955 organized an Ecumenical Movement Committee of nine members from each denomina-

¹ This organization has members from different denominations. The Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea and the General Assembly Presbyterian Church are members. The Koryo Presbyterian Church did not join.

tion, among them the Presbyterian General Assembly Church.

Part of the General Assembly Church agreed and part disagreed with the ecumenical movement since the latter believed that it would incorporate worldly, communistic, and humanistic elements into the Church.

The group which disapproved of the World Council of Churches approved of the National Association of Evangelicals, whose purpose was to promote evangelism and to unite those who confessed the same faith. The Ecumenical movement and the National Association of Evangelicals were seen to be rivals by the Korean Christians.

The Ecumenicals¹ warned against the narrow-mindedness and divisiveness on the part of the National Association of Evangelicals. The National Association of Evangelicals were concerned about worldly tendencies in the Ecumenical movement.²

1 In this controversy over the Ecumenical movement the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea was not involved. It will be discussed in the succeeding chapter how the Presbyterian General Assembly Church was also called the Ecumenical Assembly party after the friction of 1958 because a majority of this group were in sympathy with the Ecumenical movement. This split was caused by the opposition of the Koryo (Reconstructionist) Presbyterian Church and a part of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals.

2 The following statement is a report by L. Nelson Bell, who came to Korea during the time of severe conflict in the Church. Bell represented the Presbyterian Church of the U.S. mission board: "There is probably no Church in the world more conservative in theology than the Korean Presbyterian Church, while the Presbyterian missionaries in Korea, UPUSA, US, and Australia have for generations been as one in their allegiance to the historic evangelical faith, and that today the same loyalty to the conservative theological position is in evidence on every hand and has just been reaffirmed by these missionaries in basis of the doctrinal statement signed by the Board and professor by the Pyongyang Theological Seminary in 1920." Presbyterian Outlook, January 12, 1960, p. 1.

One part of the Presbyterian General Assembly Church agreed with the National Association of Evangelicals' suspicion of the Ecumenical movement while the other part did not. The Koryo (extreme fundamentalist) Church wholeheartedly endorsed the National Association of Evangelicals.

While there had been controversies in the General Assembly Church over the National Association of Evangelicals, the discovery of the misuse of funds on the part of the more extreme fundamentalists in the General Assembly Church served to make an open break in that Church. Hyong Yong Park was then president of the General Assembly Seminary at Seoul and was responsible for this discovery. The more liberal elements in the General Assembly accused the fundamentalist elements in the same body of parading a self-righteous attitude, while in reality they were failing in their responsibility to administer funds wisely. As a result of this scandal¹ the two groups supporting the National Association of Evangelicals, one from the General Assembly and the other from the Koryo Presbyterian Church, united to call themselves the Anti-Ecumenical group.

¹ Nelson Bell said on this point in his article: "The occasion for the stirring up of serious party dispute came when a scandal arose in connection with the use of seminary funds that had been given directly by certain donors in the United States. The funds were lost by the seminary in negotiation for the purchase of land from the government. In due process, the president of the seminary, Hyong Yong Park, was asked to resign. His former students immediately came to his defense, insisting in loyalty to their professor that he must be reinstated as president. This agitation came to a climax in the General Assembly of 1958, which Assembly confirmed the acceptance of the resignation and authorized the appointment of a whole new Board of directors." The Presbyterian Outlook, January 12, 1960, p. 2.

b. Opposition to the World Council of Churches

After the Japanese defeat and the setting up of the American Military Government in 1945 Communist activity increased.

The Church saw this threat and sought to stop Communist efforts to infiltrate the Church. The Church spoke out boldly against Communism, but on the wrong points. The issues for the opposition of the Church to Communism were these:

- a. Communism is atheistic.
- b. Communism is materialistic and looks at man materialistically.
- c. Communism is anti-religious and anti-Christian.
- d. Communism rules by brute force and dictatorship.
- e. Communism takes away human freedom and would reduce the world to a great prison.
- f. The day that Communism takes over Korea, Korea comes under Russia.

Evangelistic efforts were felt to be a means of opposing Communist activity. In regard to Communism, Korean Christians believed that it was the devil's religion and the Church mobilized all leaders for an all-out fight with Communism and mobilized all Church members for evangelism to withstand Communism.

During the period of this controversy, while the people were especially aware of the threat of Communism, the National Association of Evangelicals' leaders proceeded during the months of 1959 to charge the so-called "Ecumenical party," saying that the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches were collaborating with Communism, and that the National Council of Churches in the United States was also Communistic.

Communism was greatly feared by Church leaders. They believed

that the Ecumenical movement was Communistic. They became gradually aware that they could not trust the missionaries who brought this movement to Korea.

At this juncture, missionaries related to the Presbyterian Church from the three missionary groups, Southern Presbyterian, United Presbyterian, and Australian Presbyterian, all joined in a plan for a cessation of the dispute, recognizing that neither of the General Assemblies should be continued as the valid general assembly, and that after a period of peace a new General Assembly should be elected from the whole Church.¹

It was also proposed that the Presbyterian Church in Korea withdraw from all ecumenical organizations for a period of three years, 1959-1961.

The five month old schism was healed. Members of the majority party agreed to the withdrawal for the sake of peace within the General Assembly Church.

There seemed hope for reconciliation between mission boards and Korean Presbyterian Churches when it was announced: "The reconciliation was realized after a series of discussions among representatives from the two divided groups of the General Assembly and American, Australian, and Canadian Presbyterian Missions."²

1 J. C. Smith, Typoscript document at Far East Department, Inter-Church Center, New York, 1960.

2 L. Nelson Bell, "On the Reunited Korean Assembly," The Presbyterian Outlook, March 7, 1960, p. 5.

The meeting for reconciliation had faced many difficult problems. One of the biggest difficulties involved the International Christian Council of Churches' accusations against the World Council of Churches.¹ Both rival assemblies agreed that it was time to take strong action against any member becoming associated or receiving funds from the International Christian Council of Churches.

It was evident that this action came from a resentment against the activities of the International Christian Council of Churches and some of its accusations that the World Council of Churches was organized to promote one Church and a Communist organization.

c. McIntire Schism and the International Christian Council of Churches

At this point in the crisis of 1960 regarding the problem of the Ecumenical movement, both rival factions, the Ecumenical and the Anti-Ecumenical, had tried to solve the problem.

L. Nelson Bell, representing the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., had participated in a number of meetings and saw the actual situation of the Church. According to his report: "Both sides agree unanimously to unite the divided Assembly and it is imperative."² There was seen a way of uniting both sides.

1 The International Christian Council of Churches is a: "World organization of Bible-believing Protestant denominations and associations of Churches." The structure they emphasize is ". . . to help Churches who hold the fundamentalist truths of the historic Christian faith in common, perform together those aspects of Christian work which can not be accomplished efficiently by each denomination individually." International Christian Council of Churches Pamphlet, For Bible Christians, 1958, p. 1.

2 Ibid., p. 5.

Into the picture came an extreme minority group from the National Association of Evangelicals. They recognized that the General Assembly (conservative) Church had been a member of the World Council of Churches for years and that this was "pro-Communist" according to their views.

They insisted that this organization was dedicated to the spread of liberal theology and to the establishment of a world Church. On this basis, membership in the World Council of Churches, they said, made a Church "pro-Communist" and a part of the modernist apparatus. They proclaimed that any individual who defended membership in the World Council of Churches became a part of this world conspiracy. This claim was also made by Carl McIntire.¹ The aim of this organization, the International Christian Council of Churches, headed by McIntire, is that it should be a "world organization of Bible-believing Protestant denominations and associations of Churches."²

1 Carl McIntire is at present president of the International Christian Council of Churches and chairman of the board of the Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Donald Grey Barnhouse, late pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, criticized Carl McIntire: "In long-range controversy, McIntire fought to stay in the Presbyterian Church. When he was defeated in the Presbytery of South Jersey, he appealed it to the synod of New Jersey, and when they sustained the Presbytery, he appealed it to the General Assembly after he had fought to stay in the denomination. But as soon as he failed, he turned against it and made himself out to be the leader of a great movement for righteousness: so they then founded the Bible Presbyterian Church, the denomination which he erected, repudiated him: they split Faith Theological Seminary, almost all of whose professors left and went to St. Louis. He has backing what he now calls the synod of Callingswood." Donald Grey Barnhouse, Scandal in Korea, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 29.

2 International Christian Council of Churches Pamphlet, op. cit., p. 1.

When Carl McIntire organized a branch of the International Christian Council of Churches in Korea in 1958, he declared in a statement: "The International Christian Council of Churches shall conduct a vigorous campaign of preaching and enlightenment throughout the whole land of Korea with the hope that virtually the entire Christian movement in Korea repudiate the modernism, and compromise of Christian doctrine represented in the World Council of Churches." He continued, "The Christians of Korea can not promote an Ecumenical movement seating Communists such as Joseph L. Hromadka, of Prague, Czechoslovakia, and Lojos Veto of Hungary, as honoured members on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches."¹

The McIntire group represented an extreme separatist movement. While it did not greatly widen the breach already existing, it did slow progress toward unity.

The upshot of the interference of the McIntire group was that a fourth split occurred in the Korean Church.

A small group of ultra-fundamentalists broke away from the Presbyterian Church and the National Association of Evangelicals to form the Bible Presbyterian Church.

The groups in the conservative Church (the General Assembly Presbyterian Church) agreed to withdraw from the World Council of Churches for a period of three years, finally rejecting altogether any association with the World Council of Churches.

The issue of relationship with the world Church thus also had

¹ International Christian Council of Churches News, November 2, 1959, p. 1.

theological roots. Here the problem was one of division between the conservative fundamentalists, who saw the benefits to be derived from fellowship with other Christians in the world, and ultra-fundamentalists, who opposed it and advocated extreme separatism.

McIntire continued to say that most missionaries in Korea were agents of Communism. He offered as proof the fact that the National Council of Churches in the United States at the Cleveland Conference urged Red China's admission to the United Nations. This extreme group of the National Association of Evangelicals went to many parts of South Korea calling the Churches to rally on supposedly anti-Communist grounds. They spread the story that the United Presbyterian Church of North America now joined with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. which was, in his words, a "modernistic and liberal Church."¹

On several occasions Carl McIntire was invited to Korea and talked about the same problem under the sponsorship of the International Christian Council of Churches. McIntire even promised to the Church that all possible funds for the protection of the Church from this "pro-Communist" power would be made available by the International Christian Council of Churches.

D. Summary

This chapter has introduced the main groups and theological differences which provided the basis for Church division.

The influence of early fundamentalist missionaries was shown,

¹ Donald Grey Barnhouse, op. cit., p. 29.

along with the challenge presented by liberalism. The record of actual developments indicated three major splits, first, because of the problem of Shintoism and literal interpretation, second, the tremendous impact of the liberal Seminary in dividing the Church, and third, division because of conflicting theological views regarding relationship with the world-wide Church.

These theological problems have been a source of much controversy and debate; however, there have been serious efforts to resolve the difficulties. Steps taken to heal the breach along with additional suggestions for Church unity will be the subject of the final chapter.

CHAPTER III

RECENT ATTEMPTS AT UNIFICATION IN
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN KOREA

CHAPTER THREE
RECENT ATTEMPTS AT UNIFICATION IN
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN KOREA

A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to present recent attempts to heal the schism within the Presbyterian Churches of Korea which has existed since 1948. Materials presented by the three different General Assemblies concerning the unification plan will be used to give the general outline of these proposals.

Since September, 1962, a movement for unity in the Presbyterian Churches of Korea has developed. The Ecumenical Assembly, the Anti-Ecumenical Assembly and the Neutral Assembly have sought to heal the crisis.¹ Each faction has indicated that they would be willing to form a single Assembly, and there have been encouraging meetings between ministers and representatives of the Churches for this purpose.

Church leaders of the three factions have appealed to all the presbyteries to pray for the unity of the Church and to assist in the cause of unity through preaching or discussion in the Churches.

Leaders have frankly confessed their responsibility for Church schism. At this point all have agreed that the Church faces either a peaceful solution of the difficulty, or despair. Several essential principles have provided a basis for agreement. The way has been

¹ These are names given to the groups which split from the Korean Presbyterian Church in 1958. The names indicate the view which their leaders took toward the World Council of Churches at that time.

opened for the possibility of reuniting.

B. Statements Submitted as Proposals for Church Unity

1. Statement of the Kyongpuk Area Unity Council

In the Taegu area the Kyongpuk Presbytery on Unity issued the following principles regarding unity:

Firstly, we defend stubbornly the Westminster Confession and uphold Calvinistic orthodox theology; secondly, we reaffirm the withdrawal plan from the World Council of Churches and oppose an Ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches that is pro-Communist and liberal in theology; thirdly, we keep friendly ties with mission boards which support both Ecumenical and Anti-Ecumenical Assemblies.¹

It should be remembered that in Taegu revival movements have stressed sensationalism, reflected fanaticism. Problems increased there when Carl McIntire used the Taegu area for his headquarters. Hatred and antagonism still exist among the Churches of the Kyongpuk Presbytery.

In the statement issued by the Kyongpuk Presbytery Committee of Unity, the first concern for Church unity is on the basis of the Westminster Confession and Calvinistic theology. They have claimed that Kyongpuk Presbytery is the mother Church in the Southern part of Korea and holds orthodox theology. This creates theological problems, because the emphasis of this point is to prevent any form of heretical doctrine and faith from gaining a foothold.

It is understandable that Kyongpuk Presbyterians are suspicious of the Ecumenical movement. The second part of their proposal for Church unity, withdrawal of membership in the World Council of

¹ Statement of Kyongpuk Presbytery Committee of Unity, September, 15, 1962.

Churches is not only approved for this presbytery but is demanded of all the other presbyteries in the Korean Church. Consequently, all the presbyteries have announced their plans for such withdrawal. These withdrawals were initiated and strongly supported by the Kyongpuk Presbytery.

If withdrawal were not followed, the Kyongpuk Presbytery insisted that it would resist all possible movements for Church unity. Sharing the conviction of the McIntire group that the World Council of Churches is pro-Communist, the Kyongpuk Presbytery views the World Council of Churches as an organization which cooperates with the Christians of Communist satellite countries.

The third part of the proposal of the Kyongpuk Presbytery centers around relation with mission boards of both anti and pro ecumenical sentiments. The plea for this continued relationship is based upon the Church's dependence upon financial and moral support from these boards.

In these three parts of the proposal of the Kyongpuk Presbytery, none can be separated from the other because they are very carefully arranged and thoughtfully considered according to the situation of the Kyongpuk Presbyterians.

2. Statement of the Kyongnam Presbytery Unity Committee

This presbytery is located at the end of the southwest coast of Korea. Pusan is the provincial city where there had been controversy about the Koryo Seminary, and the Reconstructionist Presbytery was separated from this presbytery.¹ Kyongnam (Southern Kyongsang Prov-

¹ Supra, p. 19 and pp. 39ff.

ince) Presbytery Committee of Unity in their statement said that they approved the General Assembly's plan which had already been suggested. The General Assembly's plan for the unity of the Church was made with the following five principles:

1. We reaffirm the withdrawal plan of the General Assembly from the World Council of Churches.
2. We will not keep a relation with the International Christian Council of Churches.
3. The ecumenical activities sponsored by the National Council of Churches for the benefit of the Korean Church should be done for spiritual purposes.¹
4. We will keep our relation with mission boards on condition that they hold a pure conservatism and refuse relationship with the World Council of Churches and the International Christian Council of Churches.
5. We propose to continue the General Assembly Seminary with a curriculum along the line of conservative theology.²

According to this statement of the Kyongnam Presbytery Unity Committee, it is noticeable that they used such terms as "spiritual purposes" and "conservative theology." As observed in the previous chapter, this presbytery is located in the area in which the extreme fundamentalist group of Reconstructionist Presbyterians have their Churches. They are active in the movement of the National Association of Evangelicals which is akin to the National Association of Evangelicals movement in America. The emphasis of the National Association of Evangelicals in Korea is more spiritual than doctrinal.

The area of Kyongnam Presbytery has been influenced strongly by the Koryo Seminary which holds the theology of Calvinistic predestina-

1 Statement of Kyongnam Presbytery Unity Committee, September 14, 1962.

2 Ecumenical activities are considered by the Korean Christians as Christian works rather than part of the evangelical movement. They believe that such activities are not ecclesiastical or spiritual.

The reason for this strong adherence to the predestinarian doctrine is to be found in the prison experience of the leaders of the Kyongnam Presbytery. Their preservation from persecution caused them to feel that they were of the elect while at the same time they believed that persecution was the judgment of God upon other Korean Christians.

Their proposals for unity center around what they believe to be of vital importance, the authority of the Bible and a strong Calvinistic theology.

3. Statement of Seoul Area Assembly Unity Council

The Seoul Area Assembly Unity Council issued their statement appealing to the representatives of the General Assembly for Church Unity. Their proposals centered around three key issues.

a. They stated that they believed the Church unity plan would be forwarded only as Church leaders were able to come to some understanding among themselves. Looking back to the controversies between the liberal and fundamentalist Churches, they considered that since the difficulties had been fostered by the debate between the two men, Kim for the liberals, and Park for the fundamentalists, they could be resolved only as the leaders agreed.¹ Subsequently representatives from the three assemblies who were concerned with Church unity met together in September, 1962.

b.. On the issues of non-membership in the World Council of Churches and the International Christian Council of Churches, Seoul Presbytery

¹ Statement of Seoul Area Unity Committee Council, September, 1962.

was in agreement with Kyongpuk and Kyongnam Presbyteries.¹

c. The Seoul Presbytery also based its theology on the Westminster Confession and Calvinistic theology thus agreeing with two other presbyteries.² An internal problem exists in the Seoul Presbytery. On the Committee for Church Unity are those who favor the Ecumenical group, those who oppose it and those who are neutral. The Anti- Ecumenical group opposes interference of mission boards in the affairs of the Church.³

Though the Seoul Presbytery has been able to advance certain proposals for Church unity, there is a power struggle going on in the presbytery of Seoul itself which threatens the unity of the group there.

In the statement issued September 20, 1962, the Seoul presbyters stated that if the leaders in each of the three assemblies could come to some mutual understanding about the unity plan the whole movement would be forwarded. They mentioned in their statement their regret that they had been responsible for the terrible arguments which have lasted for many years. They also noted that eight hundred thousand Presbyterians were eagerly looking forward to the leaders' reaching a final decision.⁴

1 Ibid., p. 1.

2 They emphasized the aspects of Calvinistic theology concerned with discipline and Church life rather than the doctrinal teachings.

3 Statement of Seoul Area Unity Committee Council.

4 Ibid., p. 1.

4. Statement of the Legal Assembly

In November, 1962, when statements were being issued which appealed for Church unity, the group called the Legal Assembly issued the following summons: "Those ministers and elders agreeing with the traditional faith of conservatism and wishing to reform the Forty-Seventh General Assembly should become members of the Legal Assembly." ¹

In this statement, the chairman, Byong Hoon Park, enunciated the policy and faith of the Legal Assembly as follows:

1. The constitution of 1934 should be reviewed before joining the World Council of Churches. The article giving foreign missionaries membership in the General Assembly under this constitution should be cancelled.
2. The Legal Assembly shall oppose the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical movement.
3. The Legal Assembly is a member of the International Christian Council of Churches and has close fellowship with Christian leaders of the international movement.
4. The Legal Assembly holds and conserves the spirit of the Calvinistic Presbyterian Church.
5. The Legal Assembly cuts off the relation with the mission boards of America and the World Alliance of Presbyterian Churches.
6. The Legal Assembly will set up an assembly seminary with a curriculum based upon the main tenets of fundamentalism.
7. The Legal Assembly will set up a joint conference for mission work and give a mission fund to each local Church belonging to this assembly.
8. The ordination and qualification examination for pastors will be held by each presbytery. A simple form will replace former complicated procedures.²

The Legal Assembly is a very extreme radical group. While it has received wide publicity it should present no serious hindrance to the achievement of Church unity because their leaders are not now in-

¹ Byong Hoon Park, "Summons of Legal Assembly," Christian News, October 29, 1962, p. 1.

² Ibid.

fluent in the Korean Church. Their numbers and geographical area are both limited.

C. Problems Encountered by Unification Plans

In the statement of appeal by the Seoul Assembly Unity Council issued in September, 1962, this group explained why they had not been able to promote further developments in the plan for Church unity. They mentioned first that there had been a lack of mutual understanding within the committee of the Church unity movement. They indicated that the Council urgently needed members who could trust one another and meet with openness of heart.¹

1. Theological Concern

As indicated previously, since the beginning of Church arguments, there persisted still unsolved questions. Compromise on theological positions still seemed impossible. Whenever any problems were discussed, the same theological problems were dominant.²

It is therefore important that these basic questions on theological positions be solved. But it is still more important for the Church leaders to have an open heart and trust in one another. Seoul Presbytery realized that it was necessary that they not insist that their own opinions were absolutely right but that they allow the opinions of others to be presented, whether on theological problems or administrative affairs of the Church.³

1 Statement of Seoul Area Assembly Unity Council, p. 1.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

2. Relationships with Mission Boards

Secondly, the Seoul Assembly Unity Council indicated the difficulty resulting from the influence of mission boards. The Seoul Area Unity Council suggested to the mission boards that they attempt to maintain neutral positions toward the unification plans. The Seoul Committee expressed fear of possible happenings which might cause Church schism again by the interference of the mission boards.¹

Kyongpuk Area Unity Council stated more specifically that mission funds were necessarily to be managed by the Mission boards. Some representatives in this Council suggested that funds should be managed under the Council of the General Assembly,² but the Seoul Assembly Unity Council felt that it would be wiser not to arouse feeling against mission boards since both the General Assemblies and the mission boards were independent organs and should respect each other's rights.³ The Anti-Ecumenical element of the Kyongpuk Area Unity Council strongly urged that the mission boards be responsible to the Assembly.⁴

On the other hands, the Ecumenical group of this Unity Council hoped that mission boards would not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church.⁵

Each presbytery of the three assemblies felt the problem re-

1 Ibid.

2 Statement of Kyongpuk Presbytery Committee of Unity, p. 1.

3 Statement of Seoul Area Committee Council, p. 1.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

garding mission boards to be slightly different. The reason was that Kyongpuk Presbytery had had troublesome arguments over the question regarding mission boards' affiliation with and membership in the World Council of Churches.¹ The Legal Assembly of the McIntire group insisted that American missionaries were agents of Communism.² During the McIntire controversy strong objections were manifest against American missionaries regarded as agents of Communism and against the mission boards for the same reason.

In general there arose a strong feeling against American missionaries and the mission boards. On the other hand, Seoul area holds a more mild attitude toward mission work regarding use of funds and affiliation with the World Council of Churches. Hence, the difficult problems remain unsolved regarding missionaries and mission boards.

It is necessary that the General Assembly discuss fully her attitude toward mission boards and must find a working agreement whether or not they agree in all points about mission work in Korea.

3. World-Wide Church and Communism

When the three major principles of the Seoul Area Assembly Unity Council plan are analyzed the first proposal regarding the plan for withdrawal from membership in the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches would seem to be a dangerous scheme because Korean Christians stand under the menace of Communism from the North. If they were to lose the friendship of the World Council

1 Supra, p. 62.

2 Byong Hoon Park, op. cit., p. 1.

of Churches and were removed from its world-wide work, there would be as it were a curtain drawn over the country. It is the Communists who will benefit from such a move. Their power will be increased if the Church agrees to this secession. In addition, the plan of the Anti-Ecumenical movement would cause a break in fellowship with other denominations. If the Korean Church withdraws from the Ecumenical movement, it means the suspension of ecumenical projects such as relief work and the administration of schools, hospitals, and universities.¹

In the discussion of the relationship with the World Council of Churches, no doctrinal problems were involved. The theme of discussion on the subject of the World Council of Churches was mainly concerned with the question of whether or not this organization is related to the Church in Communist countries.²

The key to the solution of the problem rests with the majority body of the Church. There may be disagreement between minority groups, but when the majority body leads toward the goal, there must be some way or another to promote the unity plan.

D. Suggested Ways for Restoring Unity

It is the purpose of this section to point out additional ways suggested by other concerned officers by which Church unity may be restored.

1 In Suh Kim, Struggle is Over, Seoul, April, 1962, p. 39.

2 The Christian News, Seoul, August 13, 1962, p. 1.

1. Leadership

The first great need is for adequately trained Church leaders.¹ In the past, the low standard of leadership has in a large measure been responsible for confusion on basic issues and has paved the way for far-reaching divisions which plague the Church today, chiefly from their shallow understanding of theology. Even before any large-scale unification plan goes into operation educational standards for Church leaders could be raised by individual presbyteries.² Ultimately there needs to be a uniform educational standard required for Church leadership.

The lack of leadership has created confusion. The Church situation is different from that in Western Churches in that the Korean Church has been led by the clergy alone. Laymen do not participate much in Church activities, which means that the leadership of the clergy is all the more important.

On the other hand, the problem of increasing seminary enrollment with the need for more adequately trained faculties existed at the time of the division and is a major issue facing the Church at the present time. United efforts can help to meet the needs and increase the effectiveness of Church leaders.³

1 At present in Korea, seminary education is given to those who have a high school education. The educational level of seminary is that of college in the United States. Sang Kun Lee, "Ethics of Unity," The Presbyterian Theology, vol. I, 1960, p. 4.

2 The Christian, no. 93, October 29, 1962, p. 1.

3 Ha Ku Chang, "Symposium on the Dialogue of Theological Education," Christian Thought, vol. VII, no. 45, July, 1961, p. 28.

2. Renewed Emphasis upon Adequate Training of Church Leaders Along with Urgent Need for Rural Evangelism

Sang Kun Lee states that the urgent need of rural evangelism must be brought before the Churches.¹ Evangelism has been greatly hindered by the bitterness of internal controversies, and the Church has been ineffective in its outreach for this reason. If the Church is confronted with the grave truth that others are actually being denied the chance to hear the Gospel message because of the quarreling within the Church, this could be a vital spark to fire the Church to renewed dedication and might help to overcome the barriers which exist at the present.

There are approximately fifteen hundred rural churches staffed by nine hundred pastors. Church leaders are desperately needed. A minister often pastors two or three Churches at a time.³ In the present state of divisions, churches often refuse to accept the ministry of a pastor of another presbytery. This heightens the shortage of leadership. Presbyterian Church leaders recognize these problems. They feel deeply the need for Church unity. In 1962, Sang Kun Lee, leader of the unification movement in Kyongpuk Presbytery, appealed to the divided Churches saying that Church unity is vital for the realization of Christian fellowship.⁴ If there is no true Christian

1 Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 24.

2 "The National Christian Council of Korea," The Church in Korea, National Christian Council of Korea pamphlet, 1961, pp. 21-22.

3 Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 24.

4. Sang Kun Lee is a graduate of the Biblical Seminary in New York (1955), and is minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Taegu. In addition to his pastoral duties, he is teaching in seminaries in both Seoul and Taegu.

fellowship, no Church can exist. He deplored the present condition, saying, "Today, in Korea such fellowship has been miserably destroyed."¹ Unless this Christian love and fellowship between Christians is recovered, the unity plan may well be impossible.

Further, need for Church unity is for the sake of evangelism. Evangelism, Sang Kun Lee emphasized, is the great mission imposed upon the Church.²

3. Resolution of Theological Differences

The problem raised here concerns Calvinistic orthodoxy. It is certain that there would be no opposition to this theology because both liberal and conservative Korean Presbyterians believe in Calvinism. They believe it to be the best theology which the Christian missionaries have introduced into the Church of Korea. Calvinistic orthodoxy has been tried and tested and found workable in the Korean Church. Koreans in the past have embraced it willingly. The problem is that because it is so little understood the Church now stands in a state of theological confusion, in understanding of orthodoxy and in defending liberalism.³ With adequate understanding of the theological basis of faith, the stream of liberal thought might be suppressed and there might be a safeguard against the radical activity of ultra-conservatives.

A good example of this theological confusion concerns the prob-

1 Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 24.

2 Ibid., p. 25.

3 Won Yong Kang, op. cit., p. 120.

lems over orthodoxy. So often during the arguments on doctrine, orthodoxy was discussed.¹ Orthodoxy, however, was accepted on the authority of the Church rather than on the basis of real understanding of its implications.

They use the term orthodoxy as a measure of faith.² Acceptance of the doctrine of the authority of the Bible, inerrancy, and verbal inspiration, have become the standards of orthodoxy and have become synonymous with faith. The most urgent task of the Presbyterian Church in Korea is to distinguish between fundamentalist theology and Christian faith.³ Leaders without adequate theological foundation in their own faith and without any knowledge of the theological positions of others have been responsible for this confusion. Equating faith with their own narrow fundamentalist and orthodox position, they fear those who represent any deviation from their standard (though in reality the deviation may be very slight), hence they have refused to have fellowship with those of different positions. Such refusals have numerous times resulted in church divisions. Leaders of vision in the Church recognize the seriousness of this problem and see it as one needing immediate solution if unity and fellowship are to be restored.⁴

The most important task for the Korean Presbyterian Church is to see that freedom of academic and theological research should be

1 Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 22.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

guaranteed. The need for sympathy and understanding for those holding different points of view in theology must be recognized in the seminaries. Orthodox leaders need an open mind and should not be ignorant of different points of view in theology.¹

4. Establishment of a New Morality for the Unity of the Korean Church

In the early period of the history of the Church in Korea, the accusation of corruption was unheard of and unknown. It is now a known fact that the Church has been in a state of confusion and chaos from corrupting influences. There can be no doubt that the Korean Church has suffered much from corruption.²

In regard to this, two facts must be emphasized. First, corruption is chiefly confined to the city churches, though some of these are free from its worst effects. Second, among students and laity there are many young men and women whose Christian character is equal to that of Christians anywhere.³

Some corrupt practices have been introduced from without. "The liberation of Korea initiated an era of intense political rivalry: economic opportunism and valuable material benefits for favored brethren, which placed a great strain on the Christian conscience of a young and ethically immature Church,"⁴ said one Canadian missionary.

The testing came with the arrival from America of millions of

1 Won Yong Kang, op. cit., p.120.

2 F. W. Schofield, "The Church in Korea Yesterday and Today," Christian Thought, vol. III, no. LI, March, 1961, p. 43.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

dollars for the work of the Church, along with unlimited supplies of food and clothing from the generous people of the churches in the United States. The opportunity to misuse those funds and supplies was widespread. The infiltration of the Church by such worldliness has been disastrous to its spiritual mission. This is the disaster which has for the time being destroyed the power of the Church and alienated sympathy and support for the Church among honest people.¹

Another form of corruption came from secularization and the benefit to be derived from increased financial aid from abroad. In some cases, the Church leaders have been accused of mismanaging relief funds, or using them for personal gain. It has been known to outsiders that one of the main causes of recent Church division arose from the misuse of Church funds by one group for bribery of officials, rigging of elections, and forging of documents.²

Sectarianism is partially responsible for corruption in the Church. One group criticizes another group, certain areas form groups in the Church which tend to promote sectional interests. These refuse to compromise with others. These practices disrupt the Church and produce corruption.³ As in the solution of all problems, the program for Church unity needs to have definite principles. If there is no

1 Ibid.

2 Harold E. Fey, "Will Korean Disruption Spread?" The Christian Century, vol. LXVI, December 16, 1959, p. 1463.

3 Sung Sik Kim, "Schism and Unity of the Korean Church," The Dong-A-Press, April 13, 1962.

ethical basis for the principles used in solving problems, no lasting results will be achieved.

5. Other Problems

Another task to be considered concerns disagreement regarding missionaries. Even several years ago it was considered common sense that Korean Christians should not reject missionaries because they were recognized as their benefactors, since they had brought Christianity to Korea. Encouragement to reject missionaries has come recently. It is mainly from Communist propaganda, and some group's agitation that they are pro-Communist.

In addition, the Korean people have expected much from the American people, but now, weary of them, they tend to complain about them and feel bitter toward American missionaries.¹

A solution for this problem may be found, if in the future mission projects are managed by the Korean Church with mutual understanding. The Korean Church would thus have a certain prestige knowing that it was an independent body. The leaders are justified in their desire to manage the Church in Korea by themselves without any interference from outsiders.²

The Church should also search for ways to arouse social concern. Because it has been strongly fundamentalist, the Korean Church believes that social concern is a form of secularization. The Korean Church has been mainly a suffering Church. In such a situation, it was natu-

1 Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 20.

2 The Christian News, no. 94, November 5, 1962, p. 1.

ral that the Christians' main concern was to be faithful to what they believed in the Church without any social application of what they believed.¹ In this regard, the following address was made by Sang Kun Lee, one of the contemporary Church leaders and a man of ability in the Church unity program. Speaking on the Korean Church as to its status, he says:

It is said that northern Europeans are the most immoral people of the Christian world as to their sex behaviour. But the Church in those lands is, in the minds of many, not only unable to warn or lead the people in the right direction, but tries to rationalize or justify the people's wrong doings. There the Church follows the steps of society. In America the situation is much better, but even there one finds that the Church, instead of being able to lead the people, all too often goes along with the people. What then, about the Korean Church? The Church of Korea neither follows after the society nor along with the society, but goes its own direction, no matter what goes on in the society. The Korean Church stands by itself and for itself, concerned not at all about society, and does nothing for society.²

The inevitable result of this is escapism in the Korean Church from the social demands for action. Personal devotion and loyalty to the Lord is the ultimate endeavor of Christians. They have confined their activities within the walls of the Church building. It is true that there were many who had zeal to work in the society as devoted Christians, but these were often looked upon by Churchmen as "secularized" or "dissenters."³

1 Yun Kuk Kim, "The Korean Church Yesterday and Today," Korean Affairs, vol. I, March/April, 1962, p. 101.

2 Yun Kuk Kim, op. cit., p. 102, quoted in Sang Kun Lee, op. cit., p. 10.

3 Ibid., p. 101.

Thus, the social sensitivity of Christians which should have been honored and nourished by the Church was blunted and the Church was, as a whole, not able to comprehend and discharge the responsibility of being "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth." The Church has tended to become "institutionalized" and susceptible to corrupting influences.¹

E. Summary

Chapter three has investigated recent attempts at unification in the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

Statements submitted as proposals for Church unity have been presented. These represent the presbyteries of Seoul Area Assembly Unity Council, Kyongbuk Area Unity Council, Kyongnam Presbytery Unity Committee, and the Legal Assembly, the McIntire group.

Certain fundamental problems have been encountered in the attempt to bring about harmony. These have been dealt with in some detail. Suggested remedies for Church conflict put forth by other leaders in Church affairs have been presented: first, renewed emphasis upon adequately trained leadership and the urgent need for rural evangelism, second, the need to resolve basic theological differences, and third, the need to establish a new standard of morality and fellowship within the body of the Korean Presbyterian Church.

While neither all the proposals for unity nor all the problems encountered could be presented, it is the opinion of the author that upon the ones herein presented rest the hopes and fears of the Korean Presbyterian Church of the future.

¹ Ibid., p. 102.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the contemporary theological conflict in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, with a view to discovering the means by which the present differences may be settled, and harmony restored.

Chapter one presented a brief historical background to the present situation. Those events were mentioned which had the greatest relevance for the present theological crisis in the Presbyterian Church: the influence of the old religions -- Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism; the coming of Christianity; the period of Japanese control; the liberation following World War II; and the Korean War.

Chapter two presented the development of the two streams of thought in theology, fundamentalism, and liberalism. The main divisions arising in the Church were discussed in some detail with an analysis of the theological basis for each. The influence of early fundamentalism was considered, particularly in its emphasis upon literal interpretation of the Bible. Three events, resulting directly from the literalistic interpretation, were studied -- the role of women in the church, the controversy over the authorship of Genesis, and the problem resulting from the translation of the Abingdon Bible Commentary. The rise of liberalism was discussed -- the influence of Chai Choon Kim, and the power of Chosun Seminary in strengthening the impact of liberalism. Major divisions and their theological bases received

special attention -- the division relating to Shintoism and literal interpretation of the Bible, division because of the influence of Chosun Seminary, and division created by theological problems resulting from relationship with the World-Wide Church.

Chapter three indicated recent attempts to restore unity, along with the results of such efforts. Statements submitted by specific groups, as proposals for church unity were investigated. Those from Kyongpuk, Kyongnam, and Seoul presbyteries, and the Legal Assembly, were contrasted and compared.

While it was seen that within recent years a genuine desire to overcome the problems arising from division is evident on every hand, matters have not been easily reconciled. The conflict in the Presbyterian Church was seen to be complicated by many factors. The intrusion of secular elements, the power struggle among leaders, and between the separate communions, and the use of false propaganda have all served to keep alive the misunderstandings of the past.

A deeper problem, that of a clash on the theological plane, between those of fundamentalist and liberal persuasions, was seen to be the most significant and pressing. Problems encountered by unification plans centered principally around theological concerns. Relationship with mission boards and ties with the world-wide church were also seen to be sources of difficulty.

In addition to proposals presented by the three presbyteries and the Legal Assembly the opinions of individual officials were

also considered. These indicated that a major step toward the restoration of unity lay with the leadership of the Church. They presented the need for present leaders to meet together for open discussion and exchange, along with a renewed emphasis upon adequate training of new leaders. Rural evangelism was cited as being an urgent need as well as a great opportunity for the Church to unite to present the gospel in the outlying areas. Resolution of theological differences was seen to be the most pressing need. It was recognized that differences which are the result of years of misunderstanding cannot be settled all at once, however it was indicated that if there were efforts made to establish a climate in which free and open discussion could take place, much could be done to bring groups, not widely separated theologically, to see that their problems stemmed, not from major differences, but often from quite minor matters.

In the light of problems arising from the intrusion of secular elements, the power struggle among leaders, and the use of false propaganda, it was seen that another way in which Church division may be overcome is by the establishment of a new morality among both the clergy and the laity.

In conclusion, the roots of the present theological crisis in the Presbyterian Church of Korea stem from conflicts between fundamentalist and liberal groups, which have grown up in the Church. A solution to the present problem will be possible only as leaders are able to unite for free discussion and exchange of ideas, and as a new spirit of forgiveness and cooperation enters the divided

churches. The situation is not without hope, but there remains much work to be done.

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